



The Form of Kejawen Islam in Nyanggar Janur Kuning Rituals in Indonesia

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Abstract

Java is an island rich in ancestral heritage. Many of these traditions are still maintained in the modern world. The tradition that still survives is the *Nyanggar Kuning ritual*. That tradition is a form of Islamic and Javanese syncretism. Although claimed as a legacy of Javanese tradition (kejawen), the tradition actually developed after the colonialism in Indonesia ended. Until now, the relics in the form of rituals are more familiarly called religious tourism. The religious identity that appears in these activities is of course clearly Islamic. Indirectly, *Nyanggar Janur Kuning* is the way for Islam in controlling the Java region by infiltrating culture. This tradition is a politics conveyed by people who have power and authority. This paper tells the view of *Nyanggar Janur Kuning* from the perspective of post-colonialism and it also presents some evidences that Javanese culture is never entirely pure.

Keywords: *Post Colonialism; Islam; Java; Syncretism*

Introduction

One of the regencies in central java, Boyolali, has been popular with some of favorite spots among visitors such as religious spot. The religious spot is usually kinds of mosques, old building and not to mention the tombs. Some of Tombs in Indonesia have been connected to both cultural tourism and also religious spot to do any kinds of ritual activities. *Yosodipuro I* is a tomb located in Boyolali regency which is famous both local villagers and outsiders. The name of 'Yosodipuro' is derived from the name of the first poet of Surakarta Palace which wrote some books entitled *Serat Cebolek, Serat Sasanasunu*. And until now it is still popular among Javanese. The tomb is believed with its super magical power that can give best solution over human's problems by giving the best ritual to their ancestors.

Any visitors can come to visit the tomb of *Yosodipuro I*. The tombs usually have many visitors in Thursday night, especially in *Paing* (based on Javanese's calendar). It is because that day is believed as the day when *Yosodipuro* died. They can try any kinds of possibility of luck in that place by doing the ritual. The first thing that visitors can do is the activity of *nyanggar janur kuning*. *Nyanggar*, in Javanese, is related to the word *sanggar* which means a place. Meanwhile, *Janur*, is derived from the word 'nur' which means an inner feeling (conscious). *Kuning* means *wening* or silence. The caretaker of the place gave us explanation that the ritual activity is a testament from *Yosodipuro I*.

Literally, the word *nyanggar* is an activity of telling fortune by combining the local culture and the prayers of Muslim people. In this ritual, the young coconut leaf becomes a media. The leaf will be sign with certain number given by the caretaker. All the leaves are submitted to be processed. The caretaker will do the ritual using the leaf by praying using local language. During this ritual, incense (Javanese means *kemenyan*), rose and any kinds of do'a (prayers) is processed. The ritual is done in front of the gravestone of *Yosodipuro I*. In this process, the late of *Yosodipuro I* is believed as the mediator of God. Usually, the ritual is done in the late midnight. Using the Arabic language, the caretaker will tell the fortune to the visitors.

The tourism labeled with religion clearly displays very clear syncretism in the Java area, especially in the Pengging area, Boyolali. Syncretism, in this case, is the merging between *kejawen* or can also be called the religion of Java (Javanism) and Islam. The essence of Javanese religion in general is worship of ancestors or ancestors. The embodiment is realized through a mystical attitude. Although outwardly they worship the spirit and also other forces, but essentially it is centered on God. Javanese religion is basically based on mystical attitudes and behavior that still positions God as the main force and positions ancestral spirits as intermediaries (Endraswara, 2003:59).

The above events are underlying this study to reveal that the yellow coconut leaf 'nyanggar' not solely used as a form of contemplation, religious tourism and tradition in pure Java. *Nyanggar* implicitly declared the spread of Islam through the central figure who can move the device palace Java community to embrace Islam. Javanese culture is always open with various cultural things that come like Hinduism and Buddhism. Islam is also included in Javanese culture, although in the end the cultures are adapted to the needs of Javanese culture. In fact, many cultural practitioners claim to be Muslim but are oriented to cultures determined by pre-Islamic times (Suseno, 2001:1).

This paper will later look at the situation of cultural change from a post-colonial perspective. According to Williams in Barker (2005:50), cultures are substantially the things that happened constantly in everyday life, there are the meanings of specific and general at issue in the culture. These meanings will intersect as a whole traditional way of life and creative innovation that will continue to grow. Opinions on culture is also expressed by Hall in Barker (2005:50) that culture is an expression that depends on the similarity interpreted by its members on how to understand the world. Jorge de Alva in Loomba states that the postcolonial understanding is as a subjectivity of resistance to the discourses and practices of imperialism or colonialism (2003: 16). According to Moore-Gilbert, post-colonialism is not only limited to efforts to resist the search for a country's independence or resistance to the dominance of colonialism and its legacies. In this case, referring to many considerations, post-colonialism cannot be interpreted as a single, static concept (Faruk, 2007:5). Post-colonial itself means a collection of theoretical and critical strategies that have assumptions to question the position of the colonial and post-colonial subjects. This opinion was conveyed by Makaryk in Faruk (2007:14). In essence, this article will convey that religion, especially Islam, is a form of colonial heritage absorbed by people in Java.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative method. The qualitative method was used to get in-depth data, a data that contains meaning. Qualitative research is a discovery that can even help overcome problems and improve the standard of living of humans because research with qualitative methods is sensitive to the social context that exists on the object of research (Sugiyono, 2012:3). Through qualitative methods, researchers will concentrate on the meaning generated through observation participant and generally this type of research in the realm of cultural studies focuses on the cultural significance (Barker, 2005:36). The data in this study include qualitative data because they do not use numerical calculations but rather in narrative form (Maleong dalam Pitana, 2014:23). Primary data in this study were obtained from a series of ritual '*Nyanggar Janur Kuning*' and the context of the events surrounding the ritual. Secondary data was

data that supports primary data, including the biography of the late *Yosodipuro I*, and the social background associated with the research topic.

Results and Discussion

In the 16th century Islam entered Java. Islam undermined the caste hierarchy system adopted in pre-Islamic times because it had no caste system. In Indonesia, the caste domination inherited by the glory of Hindu-Buddhism is in fact still running even though the Javanese kingdom had adopted Islam. Islam is only a theory, in this case, the Mojopahit empire still applied the caste system even though it embraced Islam (Lombard, 2008:58 vol III). In the end, Java absorbs all input coming from various parties. According to Muldern (Endrawarsa, 2012: 20), *kejawen* (Javanism) is expressed as a religious lifestyle, which has a mystical nuance. There are ethics, customs, and other traditions to form Javanism. Tradition is Javanese politics, typically emphasizing signs of concentration of power, not on application and use (Anderson, 2000:59).

The next century, before the 1770s, the Dutch dominated the order of the imperial system in Java. As a whole the Kasunanan Palace of Surakarta can not be separated from colonial factors. The Dutch dominated the rules in Java through the power of the king, because the king is the source of the truth exemplified by the people. Along with this, the Javanese elite were mapped in such a way as to get special facilities. In short, The Dutch gave some changing in social life. It can be seen through the dress code that was also regulated by the Dutch. The use of batik motifs that are entitled to be used by the people and the king is distinguished (Pemberton, 2003:58). For example, parang motif should only be used by kings, while the poor people should only use striated motif. There are also restrictions on areas that should not be reached by ordinary people and only intended by the royal elite. Based on Anderson (2000:57-58) in terms of power, a ruler in Java must collect objects or people who are believed to have extraordinary powers. These people will then be forwarded to continue the existing power with the aim of maintaining the dynasty that has been built.

Relating to the case of *Yosodipuro I*, The tomb is used to be a public tomb, but before 1930 the tomb may only be visited by family and close relatives of the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace. *Yosodipuro I* was a palace poet and the king's whisperer. He is believed to be an expert in predicting and reading the future of the palace. Even the literary works that he wrote are also believed to be the way of life of the Javanese people to this century. The palace that had embraced Islam had a great influence on the people who enslaved themselves to the Surakarta Palace of Sunanate. Islamic inheritance only applies to the outer layer and does not affect old values. Islam changes the perspective that the king is no longer the incarnation of god but God's representative in the world. The basic relationship between "servant and lord" is further interpreted as a reciprocal relationship (Lombard, 2008:65 vol III). "Javanese" figures thus emerge with differences that have been built by the Dutch. This is also evidenced in classical texts in Surakarta. In summary then Java made its own label in the name of "Javanese culture".

In brief, supplementary will be the first (Pemberton, 2003: 86). From this, it has highlighted a resistance. The labeling of "Javanese culture" actually illustrates that Java does not want to be defeated by the new culture that enters. Resistance is the essence of the post-colonial theory. Anderson (1999: 8) states that post-colonialism is daily resistance, as it is revealed that it is a form of mode or tactic of resistance of the subordinate people with no background of politics which is carried out with a "mock" movement to review the "modern politics" of the elite authorities. Lubis (2006: 201) has stated that tactics or strategies can change societies from those which tend to be positioned at the "two poles", with a single and communal identity in to a society that integrates local and global communities simultaneously.

Like in puppet, a traditional performance in Java, actually the yellow palm tree in the puppet is a way of spreading the Islamic religion carried by *Yosodipuro I* through the ritual. As the proof, all the prayers are used in Arabic and in accordance with the prayers in Islam which combined with Javanese. *Yosodipuro I* as a trusted figure of the king of the Surakarta palace had succeeded in introducing Islam to the wider community. This figure teaches Javanese Sufiism which is referred to as a folk religion that smells like foehlor and tradition. It is statistically proven that the majority of Muslims are Javanese, but most adhere to worldviews and spiritual patterns which are hardly touched by Islamic principles (Lombard, 2008: 84 vol II). Javanese Islamic teachings which are identical with mysticism are conveyed without coercion, but through tradition (Endraswara, 2003: 65). The rite carried out from the ancestors tells that the authority possessed by the rite was the same as the authority of tradition and it is social in nature. Rites are held to maintain relationships in the past and preserve group identity (Durkheim, 2011: 533).

Caretaker testified that after the Dutch left Indonesia in 1930, common people could visit the tomb to perform rituals in accordance with the royal court freely. There were indications that the Dutch consciously separated the distance between the Javanese elite and the lower classes so that the information conveyed by the elite was also hampered. After the Dutch began to leave Indonesia, *Yosodipuro I's tomb* began to crowded, which means there is no gap for people to get information freely. *Nyanggar kuning* in the end is not merely a cultural heritage from Java. Java as a supplementary opposition actually always opens the discourse and names a situation as "Javanese culture" because basically the Javanese people always show dominance even in stressful situations. *Nyanggar* is not merely a religious tourism which is used as a form of contemplation but it is a form of Islam that occurred in the colonial period. The Dutch has mapped the position of the social order in Java. Raja was an exclusive form of the Javanese device of the past. Java was a breath of fresh air for the people of Java in general after Dutch left Indonesia. The boundary between servant and lord started to blur though not completely. People are starting to do a hereditary carried out by the royal family of the palace. *Nyanggar* that can only be done by the royal family has begun to be carried out in the tomb of *Yosodipuro I* by various groups. Meanwhile, Islam only moves outside the skin of the joints of life in Javanese society. They only imitate but not completely correct on what they understand towards the Javanese tradition.

Yosodipuro I is a crowded tomb along with the myth surrounding the *Nyanggar* tradition. Myth itself is a communication system, which conveys a message. Myth is a sign system. Myth is a kind of speech. Everything can become a myth as long as it is conveyed through discourse. Myth is not defined by the object of the message but has been modified with various things satisfying and is literary stories, in short myths arise because of the social conditions added from the pure material of an object (Barthes, 2007). Many do rituals as a fad only and some do the ritual with all their heart. They do believe that God is indeed close to the palace figure, *Yosodipuro I*. There are no restrictions on *musrik* and this ritual runs without conflict and coercion. Being a religious tourism destination, the place also receives financial benefits. The community began to feel the benefits of the crowd created in that place. They use the crowd as a field to earn money, such as opening parking for visitors and selling various foods.

Western politics is actually also unavoidable from the joints of life in Java. The Western political perspective was then adopted by Java to form a separate power which was called as the tradition of Javanese. According to Anderson (2000: 46-47), the formulation in power between Western politics and power in the Javanese tradition is contradictory. Both are then continuous and reduce the consistency of tradition. Tradition of *Nyanggar* which occurred at the tomb of *Yosodipuro I*, it is a tool to gain power through tradition. In this case Islamic teachings are inserted so that later Islam has a strong power in life in the land of Java. This tradition is a form of hybridist that occurs because so many interactions occur in it. All mixed into one starting from beliefs, culture, myths, and customs.

Post-colonialism is not merely interpreted as a relic after colonialism, but a phenomenon that goes beyond colonialism. Now, *Yosodipuro I's tomb* in Pengging, Boyolali, Central Java is only known as

a religious tourist spot. The fact that lies behind religious tourism in fact has a long historical story. The development of diverse myths about the *Nyanggar* makes the area around the location become crowded. Regrettably, the government does not regulate well. The place is crowded at night from 20.00 - 04.00 WIB. The place is also far from monitoring fees / retribution set by the government. Almost every house in the area of the tomb opens a parking lot at various rates. The caretaker, commonly called *Mbah Tjoyo*, said that he did not get compensation from the government even though there were 200 people interested in the rituals of *Nyanggar* until last Friday night. The caretaker always gives information from all kinds of questions posed by tourists even though there is no fixed fee. He claimed that everything he did was sincere. He claimed to live on the compensation of tourists who gave him money. It is better for the *Boyolali* District government to take a stand with the situation so that the welfare of the caretaker is also guaranteed.

Conclusion

The highlight of the post-colonial impact is a form of cultural hybridity. The form of hybridity that appears from *Nyanggar Janur Kuning* is syncretism and tolerance that occurs between people in social life. Syncretism then gave rise to interesting myths to make the place become popular. If everyone is aware of diversity, social conflict will be muffled. However, it is impossible to see Muslims in Indonesia especially in Java as a pure Islam. Thus it can be said that Java took the fight by building its own label as a form of *kejawen* (Javanese culture) or making all new things including religion in accordance with the mindset handed down by the ancestors. It can also be said *Nyanggar Janur Kuning* is an effort to spread Islamic Sharia, so that people in the past understood Islam's teachings easily. Times passed, now people place the location and tradition as a tourist spot. It is expected that all parties view the situation as cultural diversity and see from different points of view because in essence, there is no single truth in this world.

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