

THE JAVANESE PHILOSOPHY OF MANUNGGALING KAWULA GUSTI IN SUNAN KALIJAGA'S KIDUNG RUMEKSO ING WENGI

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Abstract: Manunggaling Kawula Gusti is the embodiment of perfection that the Javanese culture wishes to covet. As a philosophy of life, manunggaling kawula gusti shows the closeness of the Javanese and their God; the unity of the two, so that it will always be upheld by anyone who claims their life as the true Javanese one. The kidung or song of Rumecko Ing Wengi is an art created by one of the well-known Walisongo, Sunan Kalijaga. The inherent syncretism within the Javanese culture makes the song something that stands in-between two fusing cultures. The fusion does not even reduce the sacredness between the two, but it actually adds the richness of and even produces a meaningful form of highly respectable culture. The study uses a descriptive qualitative method with data that is written as the kidung's lyric itself. The obtained data will then be interpreted using the paradigm of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory which aims to form a new level of meaning for the song itself. The interpretation results in a discovery of expressive utterances that lead to the meaning of the Javanese philosophy of manunggaling kawula gusti. Through the interpretation of kidung's lyrics, the philosophy of manunggaling kawula gusti can be grasped by the image of human embodiment which is formed on the unity of the chosen humans with high spiritual knowledge and manners.

Keywords: Manunggaling kawula gusti, semiotics, human existence

INTRODUCTION

The Javanese culture forms all of every aspect of human life who claims to be Javanese. The culture itself consists of 2 cores as the basis, namely form and content (Koentjaraningrat, 1994). Within its core as the form, culture is about a system of ideas, a system of social behaviour and action, as well as the physically constructed objects or cultural relics (Koentjaraningrat, 1974; Simuh, 2019). In addition to form, a culture contains 'contents' which are universal elements of the world, such as: language, economy, technology, organisation, science, religion and art (Koentjaraningrat, 1974, 1994; Simuh, 2019). It is from those components that the value of Javanese culture itself is formed, provoking the creation of norms that shape the Javanese mindset and attitude of determining action.

Javanese society applies value whose peak is to reach a high philosophical-spiritual level within human life. Such value spread to every element that makes up the Javanese culture and culminated one's closeness to his God; raising awareness of one's true identity and existence that leads to the harmony of one's ego and universe (Ciptoprawiro, 1986; Suseno, 1984). Knowledge and science, in Javanese culture, are not the philosophy itself, but it is only a means to reflect on, thus making the Javanese culture is fragmentary and closely related to the one that subtle, not the one that is rough or directly intersects with physical reality within the world (Ciptoprawiro, 1986; Geertz, 1976).

The nature of subtlety is nothing but significant characteristics that were made to always exist in every component of Javanese culture. As for the subtlety, it will never be captured by the five senses, but rather with the feeling of the inner realm (Ciptoprawiro, 1986). Both experience and appreciation of the inner realm are nothing but the appreciation of the mysticism concept about prioritising the depth of certain feelings over what is believed about

the existence of the universe (Russell, 1959). Mysticism is then becoming the core of the Javanese culture itself, and because of that, the highest truth within Javanese belief is found through the understanding of the supernatural (God, spirits, gods) and about the relationship between the supernatural and physical (Ciptoprawiro, 1986; Simuh, 2019).

Contemplating those things, one requires to surrender and detach oneself from any material things; absolutely, glorifying inner strength and the fortitude of faith (Koentjaraningrat, 1994). The Javanese humans who have reached such levels of meditation will be able to understand the essence of self-identity and harmonise the harmony between inner and physical (Koentjaraningrat, 1994; Suseno, 1984). Also, they can appreciate the truth of the God within the true nature; pantheistical—the biggest big, the omnipotent, the limitless, and monistic—the Big and Small at the same time, the most substantial to every element, even the smallest in the universe (Koentjaraningrat, 1994). Through the understanding of such insight, one will reach the highest wisdom that stands at the peak of the Javanese life, the *manunggaling kawula gusti* or the unity of servant and God he worships.

Furthermore, this research aims to analyse a form of Javanese art with powerful mystical nuances. The art is the song or *kidung* called *Rumekso ing Wengi* by Sunan Kalijaga (one of Walisanga) whose literal meaning is the protection at night (Chodjim, 2018). The Javanese people—at least in the past—believed that this *kidung* was a form of *Mantra Wedha* or the healing prayer (Chodjim, 2018). The *kidung* itself is made up of 45 stanzas with a *dhandhanggula metrum* (Sakdullah, 2016). *Metrum* in every Javanese song is like a character or impression whose use is connected and harmonious with its form and content (Darusuprpta, 1989; Zoetmulder, 1983). In this case, the *dhandhanggula metrum* affiliates with the flexibility, practical and adaptability attitude possessed by Sunan Kalijaga as its creator (Chodjim, 2018; Darusuprpta, 1989). This *kidung* was believed to have magical properties to ward off evil and disasters, such as plague or natural disaster (Suwatno, 2012). The content is a prayer request to prevent and to fortify the coming of threat or danger at night when humans are asleep, both physically and supernaturally (Sakdullah, 2016). In addition, it also contains a request to keep away all kinds of diseases and anything that threatens the existence of the soul of every creature, such as: thieves, killers, pests, poisons, etc (Chodjim, 2018). Apart from worldly salvation, the *kidung* also contains a spiritual salvation about realising the very nature of *ingsun* or human and the relationship with the God is worshipped (Chodjim, 2018).

The researcher actually thinks that this song has a deeper meaning beyond what has been interpreted; more than just a *tembang macapat* of requesting safety and the reminder of the *ingsun* origin. There were actually some previous studies conducted in various perspectives, such as: theology (Nafsiyah & Ansori, 2017; Prasanto, 2019; Sakdullah, 2016), hermeneutics (Aryanto, 2021; Pamungkas et al., 2021), and semantics (Agung et al., 2016). In this regard, researcher wishes to investigate further about what is actually lying beneath the meaning and purpose of the *kidung* by using the theoretical point of view provided by the Roland Barthes' semiotics tradition of the formation of myth (Barthes, 1972). Through semiotics, the researcher considers the *kidung* as a sign that means beyond the form (*tembang macapat*) and what is substantial within the content (a *Mantra Wedha* and reminder of the nature of human identity). The researcher suspects that this *kidung* can also be interpreted as the vessel that contains the Javanese philosophy of *manunggaling kawula gusti*. By interpreting the lyrics of the *kidung* itself, the researcher examines that it has coherence with the philosophical concept of *manunggaling kawula gusti* which is always glorified by the Javanese culture.

METHOD

This research is designed as the qualitative with the descriptive approach that intends to explicate the formation of meaning that represents *manunggaling kawula gusti* concept which

is implicitly embedded within the lyric of *Rumekso ing Wengi*. The research uses main data in the form of lyrics inside the song itself. The data collection process is by transcribing the text lyrics and translating them into English. The analysis technique is to repeatedly read both the original and translated lyrics which aims to gain maximum understanding for the formation of proof and argument that can be accepted by the logic of scientific thought. The understanding gained through the interpretation process will be much supported by perceptions and frameworks of thought based on the theoretical point of view of Roland Barthes' semiotics.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Philosophy of *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti* within *Rumekso ing Wengi*

Manunggaling kawula gusti is a complex philosophy that requires peace of mind and soul to interpret it relatively. Thus, its meaning will be largely determined by the free-will and the personal moral dictation that humans possess; in other words, its truth is something relative. Literally, a shallow understanding of the manunggaling kawula gusti will direct the contemplation of radical unification of God and humans that man is as sovereign as God; more or less, it provokes a man to feel himself as the most veritable God in his existence. That kind of thing is not what Javanese humans wish for. The perfection that is being wished for is how to reach the understanding of absolute consciousness that God is both immanent and transcendent (Suseno, 2006). Man needs to contemplate God's immanence by believing that He is close to man, and even closer than the vein; God's substances exist within the human body. Also, man needs to comprehend that God is transcendent because He is so far away that even the five senses and mental vision cannot reach Him; that between the existential nature of God and man is beyond different. Those two concepts need to coexist; thus the 'unification' of man and God can be comprehended that both are the same because every element that manifests man is inevitable to God's will and substance; also, man and God are beyond different because no human beings are able to match His greatness and sovereignty.

Understanding Manunggaling kawula gusti means embracing a view of appreciating the unity of God within his ego. In every form of human existence (the physical body and the spirit within), humans need to acknowledge God's ownership of everything within and beyond; of everything that makes himself up. The unity is the peak-point of sufism's perfection which even when one looks at the mirror, what is reflected is the face of God within himself (Simuh, 2019). Reflecting God's face does not mean that the physical face of man represents His image, but rather His manifestation is being felt encapsulating the whole elements of the human existential matters; man needs to contemplate that God coexist within and beyond.

Rumekso Ing Wengi is a kidung or a song that has a very strong mystical impression, which, if appreciated deeply, will create a metaphysical energy that can penetrate the deepest recesses of the human inner realm (Chodjim, 2018). Deep appreciation will concentrate one's awareness to the understanding of their existence and true nature; to the true manifestation of God within human inner and outer senses. The embodiment of manunggaling kawula gusti is implicitly found in several verses of the kidung as follows:

Table 1. Some verses in original and translated version

Original	Translated
<i>"Ati Adam Utekku Baginda Esis; Pangucapku ya Musa; Napasku Nabi Ngisa linuwih; Nabi Yakup Pamiyarsaningwang; Yusup ing rupaku mangke;</i>	My heart is Adam, my brain is prophet Sis; My word is Moses ; My breath is the noble prophet Isa; Prophet Jacob is my hearing; Joseph becomes my face;

Original	Translated
<i>Nabi Dawud suwaraku;</i>	Prophet David is my voice;
<i>Jeng Suleman kasekten mami;</i>	Prophet Solomon is my magic;
<i>Nabi Ibrahim nyawaku;</i>	Prophet Abraham is my life;
<i>Edris ing rambutku;</i>	Idris within my hair;
<i>Baginda Ngali kulitingwang;</i>	King Ali as my skin;
<i>Getih daging Abubakar singgih;</i>	Abubakar is my blood, Umar is my flesh;
<i>Balung baginda Ngusman;</i>	King Ustman is my bone;
<i>Sungsumingsun Patimah linuwih;</i>	My marrow is a very noble Fatima;
<i>Siti Aminah banyuning angga;</i>	Siti Aminah is the strength of my body;
<i>Ayup ing ususku mangke;</i>	Ayoub within my intestines;
<i>Nabi Nuh ing jejantung;</i>	Prophet Noah became my heart;
<i>Nabi Yunus ing otot mami;</i>	Prophet Johannes is in my muscle;
<i>Netraku ya Muhammad;</i>	My eyes are Muhammad (SAW);
<i>Pamuluku Rasul;</i>	Rasul is my countenance;
<i>Pinayungan Adam sarak;</i>	In the protection of Adam and Eve ;
<i>Sampun pepak sakatahe para;</i>	It is complete then;
<i>Nabi dadya sarira tunggal”</i>	The prophets become one body

Examining the verses above, all of them were meant to imply how the manifestation of God’s characteristics and attributes is. Through the human form that is created by every mentioned Islamic figure, the meaning is that humans who have united with God, the essence of their life is composed and/or represents the grace of each mentioned figure. Historically, every name that appear are the blessed; the *rasul*, prophet, Muhammad’s companion, mother and his daughter. Every name above are the blessed humans, whom God (Allah) has given different privileges and blessings. The affiliation of bodily elements to each of those names is also determined by each blessing that each figure has.

For example, “Napasku Nabi Ngisa linuwih” can be interpreted that the breath is the most basic requirement for humans to live. Humans breathe the air that God has given solely just because of the purity of His love for all creatures. For this reason, this life needs to be appreciated as a form of gift based on the purity of His free-will and love; the willingness of deciding to create us, humans, from a tiny part of His infinite-inconceivable substance. The purity is likened to the pure spirit—a soul, actually—that God breathed directly into mother Mary’s body who became the prophet of Isa (Jesus) because we know that he was born without a father which is why he was also called as the son of God (Noegel & Wheeler, 2010). The life of prophet Isa was formed not because of the biological relationship that mother Mary had with someone, but God directly blows pure soul into her womb. Therefore, humans are one with God when they are able to appreciate that their lives are purely because of God and He is the only purest ‘substance’ to the source of humans’ lives.

The others, there is prophet Nuh or Noah ing jejantung (in the heart) whose interpretation is that humans are perfect when the long-life given to them can be useful as the one that God had given to Noah which he went through beneficially to every being. As we know, Noah was described as the prophet with the longest life with approximately more than 900 years and along with his long life, He is able to perform kindness, trustworthiness and usefulness for fellow living creatures and Allah (Segovia, 2015). The story that the prophet of Noah continued to keep being the God’s preacher throughout his life and created a giant ark to save fellow living beings in the flash-flood that hit the world imply that the given age should be passed beneficially and going along, in line, with His commandments. Therefore, humans are

manunggal with God, when the life given to him can be passed with fully beneficial and consistently in harmony with what God has determined.

Again, there is “Netraku ya Muhammad” which can be interpreted that humans should have an insight like the prophet and apostle of Muhammad SAW who can see the truth in the highest and noblest form which are Islam and Allah SWT (Ramadan, 2007). The eyes are one of five senses of human to see, if used incorrectly, it will cause blindness. Ultimately, it will make someone being blind in seeing the truth, so that they are unable to see and appreciate how Islam and Allah SWT are the absolute truth. Eyes are also the ‘senses’ that exist at the deepest recesses of human beings (inner eyes), that are capable of being used to see and appreciate the beyondness of truth—if fully open—, that are not even captured by the physical five senses and logic. The blindness of these two kinds of eyes manifest in an inability of forming perception and understanding to the absolute state of truth. Thus, the best form of the human eyes is the one that belongs and/or is similar to the prophet of Muhammad; the one that humans used to see with believing and appreciate the truth of Islam and Allah SWT. Man is manunggal with God when one is able to contemplate the truth of religion and God without the slightest doubt within their feelings.

As stated in several interpretations, the verses can be said as they imply an image of how God would look if He took a form of the mortal (humans); a myth of manunggaling kawula gusti that stands at an advanced level of semiological connotation. The mentioned humans above can be understood as special individuals whose lives are always carried out with the absolute truth of religion and God, especially Islam and Allah SWT. A special and deep appreciation of the verses will make people able to comprehend the desired meaning of manunggaling kawula gusti. Therefore, as what had been explained, it is logical to say that the verses are images of the embodiment of God’s nature and characteristics which are implicitly divided into the good, the nobility, the height of knowledge and ethic, as well as the inner depth of those mentioned figures.

Surely, standing on the same level as those had been mentioned is a hard matter since understanding manunggaling kawula gusti must be accompanied with the high level of religious understanding, firmness of faith and consistency in practising every level of worship. In the context of Islam, the level was divided into 4 hierarchy of worship, that in the tradition of Sufism was called as the path of taraq, namely: syariat, thariqat, hakikat and makrifat (Badrudin, 2015). The goal is to know that Allah is a matter closer than any other things are close and understand Him as the only substance in the creation of the soul that inhabits the physical human body. The unity of man and God is a state in which one’s ego fuses, and its existence is replaced by the “EGO” that might be achieved if humans live their life as the same as all the chosen humans above. In short, the kidung Rumecko ing Wengi contains the value of the philosophical thought of manunggaling kawula gusti that can be obtained by reflecting and appreciating the practices and behaviours of the saint figures; the figures who embody the good of the divine.

CONCLUSION

Researcher concludes that kidung Rumecko ing Wengi can be considered as a Javanese cultural art containing the values of manunggaling kawula gusti philosophy. In addition to reminding humans to always pray to God they worship and about the nature of their existence, this song provides a further understanding of the philosophical value of manunggaling kawula gusti. The manunggaling kawula gusti is being implicitly recited within the manifestation of a perfect human that was born from the fusion of merit and piety possessed by each selected human mentioned by the lyrics. Humans are manunggal with God if they live their lives based on every practice that has been done by the special persons mentioned. Humans are one with

God when they realise that every element of their lives are purely created based on God's will and divine substances. Humans are manunggal with their God when their lives are always beneficial to every living creature and nature. A man unites with God when he lives his life based on a deep level of believing towards the truth of God and religion. Thus, the kidung Rumeckso ing Wengi gives meaning to the manunggaling kawula gusti through the manifestation of humans that was formed by the unity of knowledge and ethic of the mentioned saint figures within the lyrics.

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