



## ***Sholawat Montro* as the Media of Learning Culture and Corroborating Santri's Identity through Prophetic Art in Javanese Traditional Santri Community**

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### **ABSTRACT**

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Preserving art can always be associated with spiritual aspect and art appreciation is closely related to subtlety of feeling and intuition. Art can also be used as a means of learning culture (enculturation), a social process carried out by an individual in learning and adjusting his/her thought and attitude to custom, norm-related social system, social order, and regulations living in its cultural characteristics. This research will discuss *Sholawat Montro* art variety using a qualitative research method. This *Sholawat Montro* art was found firstly in Kauman Hamlet, Pleret Sub District, created by Kanjeng Pangeran Yudhonegoro (Prince Yudhonegoro) or the Son in Law of Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII. This art contains a group of performer and music players, all of which are men who sing songs praising Allah SWT and Prophet Muhammad SAW by means of singing (Javanese: *nembang*), accompanied by *gamelan* and *terbangan* traditional music. This prophetic art arises as a means of enculturation and a process of social learning for its proponents. In Javanese conception, there is a fine-rough pair (Indonesian: *pasangan alus-kasar*) traditionally constituting a parameter to assess the quality of Javanese people in general and *priyayi* in particular. The consciousness of the importance of having fine (*alus*) attitude is represented by the reality that immature children are called *durung Jawa*, meaning having not reflected Javanese people yet. To be an adult Javanese, an individual should be able to conduct him/herself in accordance with etiquette and to comply with his/her obligation. He/she is also expected to learn spiritual aspect by knowing the rules.

### **KEYWORDS:**

art, enculturation, prophetic.

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Sholawat Montro* art can be called a prophetic artwork. Etymologically, the term prophetic derived from English prophetic, meaning: (1) *of or pertaining to a prophet: prophetic inspiration*; (2) *of the nature of or containing prophecy: prophetic writings*; (3) *having the function or powers of a prophet, as a person*; (4) *predictive; ominous: prophetic signs; prophetic warnings*. In Arabic vocabularies, according to Ibnu Manzur, the word *nabi* is explained with the stem *al-nubuwwah*, *al-nabawat*, and *al-nabi*, meaning high land, road. Its plural

form is *al-anbiya'* meaning: the road being a guide and a person glorified due to his abilities. The lyric of *sholawat montro* contains praise, story, and message and teachings of Prophet Muhammad SAW.

This research aims to discuss the *Sholawat Montro* art born in Wonokromo Village, Pleret Sub District, Bantul Regency. *Sholawat* art has been passed down from generation to generation and across generations. This art arises as a means of enculturation for the people, generally Javanese people having traditional *santri* as their identity. The identity of people as the heirs of Mataram Islam Palace's tradition, characterized with the residential areas formerly belonging to the Palace area during Sultan Agung Hanyokrokusumo's reign, creates a unique tradition of inheriting values, because on the one hand they are Javanese culture demonstrating community, but on the other hand Wonokromo villagers are the heirs of Islam tradition. The local area has been an Islamic boarding

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school/education area since ancient times. The current condition shows that many traditional Islamic boarding schools (Indonesian: *pesantrens*) are still found in the area.

Durkheim (1964: 36) concluded that a religious phenomenon consists of two elements: beliefs and rites. *Beliefs* are conception thought, while rites are the form of action or deed. Beliefs as the concept of thought and rites as the form of deed create conscientization (awareness or consciousness). Paulo Freire puts forward the concept of conscientization in education. Conscientization is a process by which human beings gain more in-depth awareness continuously of cultural reality encircling their life and ability of changing reality. Wonokromo villagers' conscientization builds on their proximity to belief system and identity as the residents of santri area since Islamic Mataram's rule under Sultan Agung Hanyokrokusumo's leadership.

## B. METHOD

This research used a qualitative research method. A qualitative research method, according to Bryman (2012), is a research strategy usually emphasizing words more than quantification in data collection and analysis. As a research strategy, this method is broadly inductivist, constructionist, and interpretivist in nature. However, a qualitative research not always uses the three features concomitantly. The basic features of qualitative research have been a more popular approach to social-cultural research.

This, according to Blaikie (2000), refers to the technique of collecting data as the most important part of research method, i.e. how the data are obtained and manipulated to be analyzed. The qualitative type of research has some data collection types: participatory observation, (semi structured and unstructured) observation, interview, in-depth interview, life history, group interview, and document content analysis (Blaikie, 2000).

The appropriate data collection will result in data with high credibility and vice versa. Therefore, this stage may not be wrong and must be carried out precisely in accordance with procedure and characteristics of qualitative research (as discussed in the previous material). It is because mistake and imperfection in a data collection method will have fatal consequence, non-credible data, leading to the result of research that cannot be accountable for.

This research took place in Wonokromo Village, Pleret Sub District, Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta. Just like Kauman Village, this village is located in Pleret Sub District, the place where *Sholawat Montro* was found firstly. This sub district has been known as *pathok negoro* region since ancient times. *Pathok negoro* region is the one located inside Islamic Mataram Palace's jurisdiction, as the place where *muftis* (religious advisors) resided and

Islamic scholars or ulemas (Indonesian: *ulama*) carried out religious education activities. In Javanese term, *pathok* is defined as a piece of wood stuck as a marker (a signifier), while *nagoro* is defined as a city where the king reside. When combined, the words refer to the definition of a sign of kingly power that cannot be changed. As a part of Palace's power structure, it is unsurprising that Masjid Pathok Negoro Wonokromo (*Pathok Nagoro* Mosque of Wonokromo) established in the region since 1755 seems to be replete with Javanese Islamic symbol, such as the shape of Wonokromo Mosque's three-story roof, in fact having special meaning. The three-story shape symbolizes that the mosque aims to realize "*syariat* (worship implementation), "*hakikat*" (knowing Allah), and "*ma'rifat*" (highest knowledge on Allah). In this hamlet there is one of artistic styles, *Sholawat Montro*. What is interesting in this art is the strong combination of Javanese tradition and Islam recognized as the guardian of Java land (*wali sanga*)'s legacy, ending up in Islamic ascetic spirituality (*tasawuf*).

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Wonokromo Hamlet is the name of one out of 12 (twelve) hamlets located in Wonokromo Village, Kapanewon Pleret, Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta. Wonokromo village is a rural area called as santri's village (Indonesian: *kampung santri*) along with the development of many Islamic boarding schools in the region. The village is known to have historical heritage in the form of *masjid* (mosque) called "*Taqwa*". In addition to being used as the worship place, Masjid Taqwa Wonokromo has political function as an institution strengthening Islamic ideology, community's culture, and as the base of struggle to fight against the colonial.

Santri's values developed and inherited until today are still developing and held tightly until today by most of Wonokromo villagers. This fact is proven by the activities related to the implementation of religious cultural rites and artistic performances as the manifestation of Islamic culture enculturation and Javanese local culture. The integration of religion into culture is manifested, among others, in traditional Islamic boarding schools. The traditional Islamic boarding schools developing is the manifestation of acculturation between Islamic and Javanese cultures. The manifestation of acculturation in traditional Islamic boarding school can be seen, among others, in the relation between santris and *kyais* resembling the relation between *cantrik* (pupil) and *empu* (master) *orbegawan* (saint) being the caretaker of hermitage in Javanese culture. A santri's special respect for *kyai* is just like a child's respect for his parents (even cult in some cases), *ngenger* tradition, where the santri joins *kyai*'s family, he helps *kyai* in the ricefield or garden, or helps *kyai* trade, resembling the Javanese traditional caretaking pattern

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in ancient times. Based on the Republic of Indonesia Minister of Religion's Data (2017), there are 18 (eighteen) Islamic boarding schools in Wonokromo Village, Pleret Sub District, Bantul, Yogyakarta consisting of those for Kids, adolescents, and adults.

Santri identity of people in Wonokromo hamlet has a fairly long history. Such condition can be traced, among others, through the existence of an old mosque called *Masjid Taqwa*. *Masjid Taqwa* was established in 1775 AD with *sengkalan* (a series of words used to mark times with each word representing number) "Nyoto Luhur Pandhito Ratu" meaning 1682 of Javanese Year. This mosque was established by KH. Muhammad Fakhri alias Kyai Welit. It was constructed on *tanah perdikan* (fief land) gifted by Sultan Hamengku Buwono I. For your information, the term *tanah perdikan* derived from Sanskrit "Maharddhika" meaning freedom. The freedom here is defined as freedom from the obligation of paying tax to the kingdom and freedom to do activities in the village area. This *tanah perdikan* was usually given by the king to local officials, figures with certain superior competency and intelligence or the ones considered meritorious to the Palace.

*Shalawat Montro*, as one of traditional arts, belongs to Islamic traditional art containing Javanese local cultural elements experiencing acculturation process with Islamic culture or *santri*. This art's color is based on Islamic and Javanese values arising as a harmonious combination. *Shalawat Montro* is, in principle, an art manifested into sending *shalawat* to the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W, through a chanter chanting it accompanied by dancing movement and song. *Shalawat Montro* is a traditional art

coming from Islamic teachings, containing perceivable, analyzable, and observable complete values. The values contained in the art not only religious ones but also other values such as moral teaching, character education, manners, and even love-to-homeland teaching.

Actually, *Shalawat Montro* contains not only *Shalawat* to the Prophet but also songs or poems in Javanese constituting either the composition of *shalawat* reading or poem or song created purely and being the part of such art. This art is different from other Islamic traditional arts like *hadrah*, *barzanji*, *Zafin*, or *Diba'an*.

The term *Shalawat Montro* consists of two words: *Shalawat* and *Montro*. The word *Shalawat* derived from Arabic terminologically defined as reading source. This art is performed by several persons including *wiraswara*, *wiyaga* and *wiraga*. *Wiraswara* is the one chanting *shalawat* reading and the Prophet Muhammad's birth story. He is also called narrator (Indonesian: *dalang*), because he serves to tell the Prophet Muhammad's history. *Nayaga* is the ones playing music to accompany *Sholawat* to the Prophet chanted. Meanwhile, *wiraga* is dancers following *shalawat* chanted and music instrument/*gending* played by *wiyaga* to accompany certain readings including prayer or praise to the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. Meanwhile, *montro* derived from Javanese language meaning the name of cucumber flower. This can also be called *Gending Montro*. Based on the three definitions, the last definition is the one intended in *Shalawat Montro* art. Thus, *Shalawat Montro* is the *shalawat* chanted and accompanied with *gending montro*.



Figure 1

*Sholawat Montro* performance in a *Maulid Nabi* (Prophet Muhammad's Birthday celebration) event in Masjid Taqwa in Wonokromo Village (Mukhlis Alkaf's primary data)

In a *Shalawat Montro* show, there is the role of a *dalang* required to have certain competency and

qualification better than other players'. The *dalang* should have, among others, ability of reading *Pegon* Arabic letter (Arabic Letter modified to write Javanese, Sundanese, Malayan, and Indonesian languages), good voice, and of course in-depth knowledge on religion. Therefore, a *dalang*

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in *Shalawat Montro* art is usually a religious leader or prominent figure within community. A *dalang* or a *wiraswara* is also required to have another precondition, the commitment to be good role model to the public. The preconditions are not written in a rule but it is an informal precondition having enacted in the art. A *dalang* has an assistant who should follow him in each of shows. An assistant of *dalang* functions to replace the *dalang* in either chanting *shalawat* or reading *manaqib* or Prophet Muhammad's life history when a *dalang*'s stamina starts to run out.

Basic instrument of *Shalawat Montro* art consists of four traditional music instrument types: *rebana* or also called *truntung*, *kendang*, *kempul* and *gong*. These four types of music instrument are played by the players called *wiyaga*. Considering the types of music instruments used, it can be concluded that cultural acculturation has occurred in the background of *Shalawat Montro* art creation. Information showing the acculturation process can be seen from several music instruments used including *rebana*. *Rebana* or tambourine is a desert (Middle East and surrounding)-typical music instrument. Meanwhile, *Kempul*, *Kendang* and *Gong* are archipelago-typical traditional music instrument or particularly the music instrument belonging to Javanese ethnic. Recently the types of music instruments used increase in number so that there are six types of music instrument. The additional music instruments are *keprak* and *jidor*. *Keprak* or *kecrik* functions to be complementary sound, the sound resulting in gurgling sound, while *jidor* functions as a bass. From this, it can be predicted that some modern music instruments, such as guitar or organ, will likely be added recalling the modification made continuously to keep the art popular with the public.

The next performers involved but found difficulty in *Sholawat Montro* show today are, among others, *wiragas* or dancers. They are the ones performing dancing movement following music play and *shalawat* chanting. Their number is quite large, about 24 persons. But the number is not standard, because there is actually no definite rule on how many dancers should be involved. The number of dancers is often less than 24 in a show or more than 24 persons in another occasion. Today, *Shalawat Montro* performance is usually held in certain events such as folk cultural festivals including *Sekaten*, *Rebo Pungkasan* or recitation events and celebration in an individual's house. In the past, this art performance was not only in the context of cultural show but is also intended to other interest, particularly prayers or supplications held by a person or a community in a hamlet. For example, there is an individual inviting this art group to perform in his house because he has not had any children in a long time. Through the performance, he expected to get a child or descent. *Sholawat Montro* is also often performed when an individual invites the group for promise or *nadzar* purpose; for example a family invites the group because one

of its children passed successfully through the selection test of TNI (Indonesian Army), Civil Servant, or admission test in a university. It could also be held by an individual who promise or *nadzar* that if he or his child is cured from his or his child's prolonged disease, he will invite *Shalawat Montro* art group to perform in his house. Also, the invitation to perform can come from the people as an attempt of asking God to free their paddy plants from pest and disease, or asking for certain desire.

### CONCLUSION

Generally, art has taken many parts in both social and religious activities and objectives since the beginning of human civilization. In the simplest form of art, art esthetics can present and contain various motives in certain meaning anticipating the religious ideals all at once. Various religious objects like temple, church, shrine, and mask and traditional weapon passed down from one generation to the next are usually associated with worship or veneration to spirits considered holy.

The influence of Islam religion coming into Java land, particularly since the rise of Demak rule's influence, has given distinctive color to religious activities and perspectives of Javanese people. Demak Kingdom's rule supported by 9 (nine) guardians called *wali songo* has given color to Islam religiosity in Java land. The religion disseminating model developed by *wali songo*, particularly Sunan Kalijogo as one of *wali songo* figures, has provided an accommodative religion dissemination method adapting local wisdom. Sunan Kalijogo, believed to be the only one of *Wali Songo* having Javanese native blood, had packaged a variety of *dakwah* (proselytizing) methods attempting to integrate Islam tradition into Javanese tradition so that Javanese people accepting the *dakwah* process would not feel colonized or intimidated. They accepted Islamic teachings naturally and joyfully, because the *dakwah* was preceded by the successful integration of *dakwah* method into art. The ordinary people saw the proselytizing figures such as *wali songo* particularly Sunan Kalijogo as the part of their own family, rather than the other (*liyan*).

*Sholawat Montro* art is a sample form of art being the product of acculturation and harmonious integration of Islam religion and Javanese tradition. Strong effect of Islamic art on local culture has resulted in a harmonious combination in the form of prophetic art popular with the community.

In Wonokromo Villagers with a long history as the region developing Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) tradition, and attachment to Yogyakarta Palace as Javanese culture center, *Shalawat Montro* art becomes a means of learning culture or known more as enculturation phenomenon. Through *Shalawat Montro*, santris will learn to comprehend Islam religion teachings and Javanese wisdom teachings all at once. They feel responsible for preserving

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Javanese local wisdom, on the one hand, because they were born and raised in Java land, and born from Javanese parents and ancestors. On the other hand, they, as *santris*, are scholarly responsible for mastering Islam religion science that will equip them to carry *outdakwah* (proselytization) when they are adult and get into society. It is in this occasion that the term enculturation is close related to the process of integrating culture into an individual's life as the part of a society. People (community) and *santris* have carried out a process of internalizing Javanese local wisdom values and Islamic teaching values all at once consciously and *unconsciously*. Enculturation, in this case, can be defined as a process performed by an individual to learn culture generally in a long time. Thus, enculturation can be called as a process of culturing, either through formal media such as school and *pesantren* or through informal media such as social environment unconsciously and, running reasonably. The enculturation process here is a long endless process that will run from one generation to the next, and can result in cultural change. This is due to individual's ability of responding to culture accepted. If there is respect for culture, the enculturation process will run well. In contrast, if there are declination and rebellion from the individuals, the enculturation will fail. In Wonokromo villagers, it can be seen that enculturation process can run well in the presence of santri's culture respected and upheld. Meanwhile, the enculturation process shown by santri community in Wonokromo Village can be seen in the process of learning religion since very early age, rite of reading *barzanji* every Thursday night, and how they have art. One of arts discussed specifically in this study is *Sholawat Montro* art.

*Sholawat Montro* art is eventually a means of corroborating santris' identity, a corroboration followed with the sense of pride with being responsible as the generation that will continue the baton of Islam proselytizing within society. Identity, in this case, refers to English word "*identity*" meaning characteristic, sign or identification inherent to an individual, a group or something distinguishing it from others. Identity, in this case, can also be defined as a whole or totality indicating specific characteristics or condition of an individual or self identity of biological, psychological, and sociological factors underlying individuals' behavior. Among the *santris*, the identity as a learner of Islam religion can be seen from their daily activities, how they dress and how they view artistic expression.

The process of establishing self-identity in adolescent *santris* related to prestige and the place where they learn, needing a behavior modification, is the creation of santri identity. The creation of santri identity intended here is an attempt of creating individuals' behavior "having *akhlak al karimah* (good behavior) and complying with *pesantren*'s regulation totally and always upholding and applying the

values of sincerity, modesty, individuals' freedom, solidarity, and self-control" being the typical characteristics or self-identity as a *santri*.

Young generations with identity as "*santri*", will develop their sense of pride and self-confidence in holding the identity, because the social position of *santris* amid society tends to be appreciated positively and respected, or in young generation's term called "impressive (Indonesian: *keren*)". *Santri*, as an identity will refer to an individual learning in *pesantren*. *Pesantren* is a traditional Islamic dormitory (boarding) school or education institution. During the period when the santris were mostly adolescents, the existence of peer has very strong influence on various aspects of life, way of thinking, lifestyle, and decision making.

Considering the values contained in *Sholawat Montro* lyrics, it can be concluded that this art contains various teachings and values including, among others, religious, artistic, educational, and character development values. Broadly, it can be explained as follows. Firstly, *Sholawat Montro* prophetic art is the one affected strongly by Islam religion teachings in its creating process. Considering the lyric of poem, in addition to containing laud and praise to Prophet Muhammad appearing dominantly just like *Sholawat* in general, it can also be seen that the mission of *sholawat* lyric is to be means of proselytizing (Indonesian: *berdakwah*) and an attempt of disseminating Islamic teachings wisely, prudently, and entertainingly. This accommodative *dakwah* method was told to be a *dakwah* model developed by *wali songo* when they developed *dakwah* in Java land. *Sholawat Montro* can be a medium of delivering Islamic teachings and religious messages wisely, prudently, and entertainingly. *Sholawat Montro*'s ability of combining Islamic teachings and Islamic tradition coming from Arabia and Javanese culture as local element is also an important element in relation to this art's effectiveness as a medium of enculturation.

*Secondly*, *Sholawat Montro* is a religion-based art. Art is one of cultural elements. As the element of a culture, art is an integral part of human civilization. Through art, human beings express esthetic instinct, attempt to interpret beauty as the part of human spirituality. This instinct is inseparable from human himself. As an art, *Sholawat Montro* can be a means of revealing esthetic instinct of community and santri young generation in performing or merely watching the show.

*Thirdly*, *Sholawat Montro* contains educational and character development values. Character educational values contained in *Sholawat Montro* can be seen in the content of teachings in its lyrics or poems. Through messages displayed during the show, the performers and the spectators can absorb the teachings and educational and character education value orders. The process of absorbing values in attending the show is expected to touch the spectators and the performers's inner feeling and to direct their mind. It is

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in this case that the process of enculturation and corroborating santri's values and identities will find its way.

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