

# Islam Behind the Court Wall: Politics and Aesthetics of Javanese Islam in *Babad Tanah Jawi*

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## ABSTRACT

The *babad* studies on Islamisation in Java are commonly based on historical analysis, but rarely on its ideological author or aesthetical strategy. This article figures out R. Ng. Yasadipura I's strategy of describing Islam in the *Babad Tanah Jawi* is based on allegorical (in Javanese term, *pasemon*) technique, a playful literary method of writing that reveals and conceals the events and characters in the manuscript. This strategy is 'political' as it presents a prophetic future, which possibly unveils a prophetic interpretation of Javanese courts. Using Levi Strauss's structural approach, this study aims to understand the structural model of Islam in Javanese worldview based on a series of events in *Babad Tanah Jawi*. The representation of Islam in *Babad Tanah Jawi* is at the position of 'in-between' space', intertwining between Javanese Islam and Arabian Islam, between peripheral Islam and central Islam. This unidentifiability is a logical consequence of Yasadipura I's multiple roles during Pakubuwana II to Pakubuwana IV, ranging from *santri* (Islamic student) to *menteri* (royal advisor) impact on his depiction of Islam in terms of illusion and allusion.

**Keywords:** Islam, Yasadipura I, Politics of Aesthetics, *Babad Tanah Jawi*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the mid-19th century, *Babad Tanah Jawi* attracted a lot of Dutch scholars' attention in researching the history of Java [1] - [12]. As a result, *Babad Tanah Jawi*, in its original form of a *trembling* (a traditional song) version, was converted into a prose version. This latter version came to be known as *Meinsma Babad* [13], [14], because it was edited by a Dutch scholar Meinsma, printed twice, translated into Dutch at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the same period, Dr. Brandes produced two editions of the alphabetical topographic register [15], [16] and characters names contained in *Babad Tanah Jawi*. Both (*Meinsma Babad* and two registers from Brandes) were references that the scholars generally used in studying the *Babad Tanah Jawi* [11], [13].

Almost all the stories in *Babad Tanah Jawi* are always associated with the Mataram kings' majesty. The story of the Coastal court, from which orthodox

Islam emerged in the late 19th century, is presented as long as it relates to Mataram dynasty history. In the early 19th century, *Babad Tanah Jawi*, written in Mataram royal circle, was associated with *Serat Kanda* from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century Coastal literature mostly recounted orthodox Islamic life. These manuscripts provide a comprehensive overview of human history in Java. At this point, negotiation between Islam and Java emerges.

The contestation appears, among others, through a dialogue between M.C. Ricklefs and Anthony Day. Based on *Serat Kandha*, *Babad Kraton*, *Major Babad*, and *Meinsma Babad*, they had different testimonies about whether Islam in Java had risen in the early 17th century or the late 18th century? According to Ricklefs, the earlier version of *Babad Kraton* (1777) was more authentic in showing the fall of Majapahit than *Major Babad* (1836) and *Meinsma Babad* (1838) with the representation of a more substantial Islamic nuance. *Babad Kraton* describes a major confrontation between Majapahit and Demak, while the later versions, *Major Babad* and *Meinsma Babad*, describe

the affective relationship between Brawijaya and Adipati Bintara [13].

Anthony Day criticized Ricklefs' testimony because he implied that revivalism of Islam only emerged in the late 18th century. Whereas in the early 17th century, referring to Coastal literature, such as *Serat Nitik* and *Serat Kandha*, Javanese Islamic students have contributed to the production of Islamic knowledge. Day argues that *Serat Nitik*, *Serat Kandha*, and *Major Babad* have similar stanzas, especially in describing the ways Brawijaya had an affective acceptance of Islam under the reign of his son, Adipati Bintara [17].

A similar contestation has arisen between Pigeaud and Florida, where the former put *Babad Tanah Jawi* as historiography while the latter set it as a literary work. In his *Synopsis of Javanese Literature*, Pigeaud mentions that Javanese coastal literature is full of ancient mythology, pre-Islamic legends, and orthodox Islamic teachings. Moreover, the author of coastal literature prefers to describe strange events about Java than Surakarta literature, which describes Javanese life itself. Secretly, Pigeaud had a jealous tone towards the Coastal manuscripts. In contrast, he had praised *Babad Tanah Jawi*—although its content is limited to stories of the Mataram dynasty—as a more 'academic' manuscript than *Serat Kanda* [17].

On the other hand, Nancy K. Florida, in *Javanese Literature in Surakarta Manuscripts*, designates a different testimony. The romantic colonial gaze on these manuscripts as 'avant-garde' literature (*sastra adiluhung*) is essentially a perfection that, unfortunately, can never be achieved [18], [19]. Yet, behind these Javanese classical 'avant-garde' literature, there is an invisible power intertwined with the *Kromo* Javanese language. This language has undergone many refinements as it transcends the limits of ordinary people's understanding.

Furthermore, Florida also figures out that within Surakarta court, a door of Islam was secretly opened by the kings and his poets. The door was opened, partly, through *Serat Wulang Reh* by Pakubuwana IV. This manuscript depicts Islamic theosophical and cosmological teachings on the relationship between humans (*kawula*) and God (*gusti*). *Taj al-Salatin's* manuscript, consisting of Islamic moral teachings on state administration, was also mandatory reading for all Javanese kings and kings [20], [21]. Another fact is that the great Surakarta Court poet, starting from R. Ng. Yasadipura, R. Ng. Ranggawarsita, to R. Ng. Ranggasmita comes from one family genealogy, all of whom are interested in Islamic teachings.

However, the dispute between Ricklefs and Day, nor between Pigeaud and Nancy, as described above, in essence, figures out similar lineage. Firstly, *Babad Tanah Jawi*, containing mostly the story of Mataram Court, is inseparable from the double genealogy between the Islamic influence of Demak and its contestation with the previous Hindu court, Majapahit. Secondly, *Babad Tanah Jawi*, written by Yasadipura I, also intersects directly with other manuscripts, whether written before or after Yasadipura I's life, or which narrates the life of Coastal Islam in the early 17th and 18th centuries.

Almost the entire content of this text demonstrates an affective acceptance of Islam as a 'new' religion in Java and Javanese; this religion peaked when the Muslim saints were willing to help the Adipati Bintara establish an Islamic empire after the fall of Majapahit. Adipati Bintara, who later had the title Raden Patah, instead of carrying out a rebellion against Brawijaya, actually had a dialogue with his father to establish the Demak court. Yasadipura I also kept his metaphorical words to explain how prayers, wirid, hajj, and daily Islamic life were lived so dynamically and obeyed by the kings of Demak, Pajang, and Mataram.

Unlike *Serat Dermagandul's* depiction of the total rejection against Islam in Java, *Babad Tanah Jawi* represents the acceptance of Javanese kings towards this religion, making it even more powerful, a fully integrated power into a royal dynasty, nor asymmetrical power with God supreme cosmos. In many scenes, it is clear how the kings and the headmasters carried out Islamic law, while at the same time not forgetting the previous ancestral traditions of Hindu-Buddhist.

In stanzas 47-48 (Volume I, *Pupuh X*), Asmaradhana, Yasadipura I describes his admiration for *Wali*. In the land of Cempa, King Campa received a great guest who was none other than Makdum Ibrahim. The elder *Wali*, Sunan Maulana Malik Ibrahim, pleaded with Campa King to get into Islam. Without any significant refusal, Campa King suddenly joined Islam, followed by the entire population of the land of Campa.

Unfortunately, a king of Blambangan did not follow the Muslim king of Campa. In Stanza 39 (Volume II, *Pupuh XI*), Blambangan King was unwilling to get into Islam, so Sheikh Wali Lanang left the country. Shortly, after he left the Blambangan kingdom, the country suffered from a disease outbreak. His real name is Syeh Maulana Ishak, marking the misery of Blambangan entire country.

In stanza 56 (Volume III, *Pupuh X*) on the story of Raden Patah, who was upset when prophesied to be king by Arya Damar, Yasadipura I writes metaphorical stanzas to describe his inner sense. Raden Patah's soul is

symbolic like a sandalwood tree, like the bright sky from ordinary people. All the trees and animals seemed to weep for his despair. This poetic personification of Raden Patah, a candidate for the only sovereign of the Islamic Demak dynasty, undeniably shows that he has succeeded in having a particular position in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*.

It is not surprising that Yasadipura I has a particular interest in Islam. In addition to the Islamic student family genealogy, which I will explain in more detail later further, some works of Yasadipura I did display an esoteric interest in Islam. For example, *Serat Cabolek*, a critical edition and translation by Soebardi in 1975 [22], in brief, is a story of the theological dispute between Haji Akhmad Mutamakin from Cabolek (nearly Tuban) and Ketib Anom Kudus. The orthodox scholars, led by Ketib Anom Kudus and conveyed to Kartasura king (Mangkurat IV, or after his death known as Pakubuwana II), accused Mutamakin since his spreading of forbidden teachings.

In this council, Akhmad Mutamakin frequently refers Bimasuci, his theological accountability for Javanese syncretism, which attempted to unite pre-Islamic mystical views with the formal Islamic creed. During this long theological dialogue, Mutamakin appears to be a 'spokesman' for Yasadipura I highly concerned about the dimensions of Javanese-Islamic syncretism. It does not include the other works of Yasadipura I, such as *Serat Menak*, *Tajussalatin*, and *Serat Ambiya*, which are adaptations of Islamic Malay traditions.

This study, furthermore, is highly contributing to contemporary interdisciplinary studies of Javanese Islam for two reasons: formal and material perspectives. In the context of a formal object, the novelty of this study lies not only in the attempt to decipher the political, intellectual, and religious biographical traces of Yasadipura I. Instead, it relates them to the aesthetic strategy he employs in describing the position of Islam in *Babad Tanah Jawi* and his attempts to rethink the conventional definition of aesthetics and reinterpret it into a 'political' framework. In the context of material objects, the novelty of this study lies in its attempt to make the *babad* an object of literary study that consists of Islamic philosophical and political teachings that go beyond most studies of *babad* as historical objects. It also attempts to ideologically rethink its author's position as a 'political' subject. All arguments presented in this research are directed to explain these novelties as inseparable elements.

This paper aims to explain two critical issues. Firstly, how does the 18th-century chronicle, *Babad Tanah Jawi*, provide a structural testimony about

Islamic life within the court walls, describing contestation or negotiation between Islam and Java? Secondly, how does this testimony demonstrate an aesthetic strategy that is possibly regarded as 'political' work of Yasadipura I in describing Islam? This paper uses a structural approach to determine the contested patterns between Islam and Java in *Babad Tanah Jawi*. Yasadipura I puts Islam in constant contestation with Java in *Babad Tanah Jawi* as a 'political' subject. This contestation resulted from an ideological representation of Yasadipura I's multi-class identity, ranging from Muslim student from Kedu to prolific author of Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic manuscripts.

## 2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative study with a structural approach to Yasadipura I's depiction of Islam behind the court walls. This study will structurally analyze particular events related to Islam in *Babad Tanah Jawi* using Lévi Strauss structural analysis of myths [23]. This model is used to gain an interrelated relation system among scenes and figures regarding Yasadipura I's imagination of Islam. There are two stages to analyze the structure of *Babad Tanah Jawi*. First, analyzing Islamic events and characters behind the courts' wall based on the structure of Javanese politics during period of Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic courts. Second, analyzing Islamic events and characters behind the courts in the structure of Javanese aesthetics including *manunggaling kawula gusti*, *loro-loroning atunggal*, *telu-teluning atunggal*, *patat kiblata limo pancer*, and *nawarupa*.

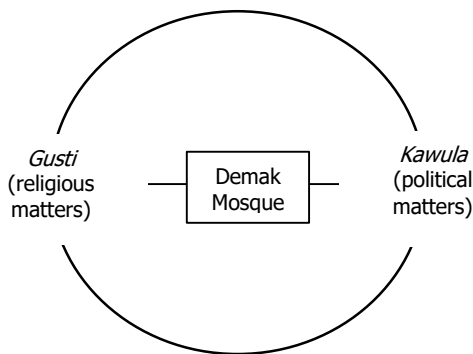
The data source comes from the Balai Pustaka version of *Babad Tanah Jawi*. However, due to limited space and time, the only volume I-V was chosen (because these volumes cover at least the early genealogy of Javanese kings from Prophet Adam to early Mataram). Therefore, this study has taken the corpus of data from discourses relevant to the main issue: Islam behind the court walls. It consists of two discourses, e.g. (a) the structure of events and figures describing the relationship between Islam and structure of politics and aesthetics of Javanese courts in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*; and (b) the aesthetic strategy of Yasadipura I as 'political' dimension in describing Islam in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*.

## 3. ISLAM IN JAVANESE AESTHETICS: POLITICS OF 'IN-BETWEEN SPACE'

The structural analysis of *Babad Tanah Jawi* figures out that Islam is in an 'in-between' space in Javanese politics and aesthetics. By 'in-between', it is possible to refer uniting or separating. It unites the opposing elements around it, but at the same time it provides a demarcation between these elements. The

way Islam has taken in-between space is easily to identify in the role of its characters, such as Muslim rulers of nine Muslim saints (*Walisongo*), or in symbolic events, such as the construction of Demak Mosque in uniting opposing elements. The Javanese aesthetics includes some elements, such as *manunggaling kawula gusti, loro-loroning atunggal, telu-teluning atunggal, patat kiblata limo pancer, and nawa rupa*. By analyzing the symbolic classification of these elements, this study will find out how Islam is involved in political issues of the court in terms of the Javanese aesthetics.

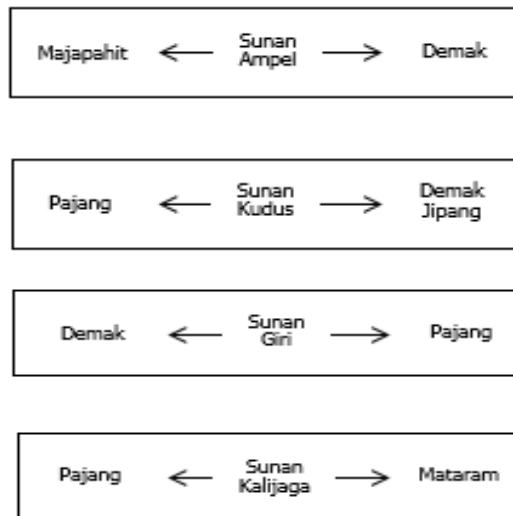
The construction of Demak Mosque [24], [25] symbolically represents the role of Islam in the aesthetics of *manunggaling kawula gusti*. The mosque is a divine symbol for all of the profane affairs among all *Walis*. In one side the mosque unified the sacred and profane affairs in a sacred building as the center of Islamic civilization in Java. Still, in other side it separated the divine sacred symbol '*Gusti*' (religious matters) from the worldly profane symbol '*kawula*' (political matters), since this building is outside the court walls. Figure 1 implies that from the very beginning, the mosque is in-between space, uniting (*manunggal*) the *walis* and the rulers and separating the religious affairs (*Gusti*) from political ones (*kawula*).



**Figure 1** Demak Mosque as ‘in-between’ religious (*Gusti*) and political (*kawula*) matters

The politics of ‘in-between space’ of Islam in aesthetic of *loro-loroning atunggal* is possible to identify through the role of Sunan Ampel in uniting Demak and Majapahit through the politics of recognition (recognizing Brawijaya as a tolerant Hindu-Buddhist king of Majapahit, at the same time giving political blessing to Raden Patah as the first Muslim king of Demak). Also, it is on Sunan Giri Prapen's role in mediating Demak Bintara and Pajang through politics of legitimacy (authorizing Raden Patah to become King of Demak) legitimizing Jaka Tingkir to become King of Pajang). In addition, it concerns Sunan Kudus's role in uniting Pajang and

Demak Jipang through the politics of consolidation (uniting, even advising, Arya Panangsang and Adipati Pajang on behalf of their religious teachers). Furthermore, it links to Sunan Kalijaga's role in uniting Pajang and Mataram through the politics of reconciliation (resolving the dispute of the Mataram fief land between Ki Pamanahan and Adipati Pajang). Figure 2 displays how Muslim *walis* as religious leaders are involved with uniting (*manunggal*) every two (*loro*) political matters of court through politics of recognition, politics of legitimacy, politics of consolidations, and politics of reconciliation.



**Figure 2** Muslim *walis* as ‘in-between’ in every two (*loro*) political disputes of court

The politics of 'in-between space' of Islam in terms of the Javanese aesthetic of *telu-teluning atunggal* is possible to identify through a political vision of three advisors of Pajang and three infantry soldiers of Mataram, and their religious experience in studying Islam under the guidance of two great Muslim teachers, Syeh Siti Janar and Sunan Kalijaga. They were (1) Ki Ageng Butuh, Ki Ageng Ngerang, and Ki Gede Tingkir in the early period of Pajang court, who had a political vision of promoting Jaka Tingkir as King of Pajang and had the shared religious experience as students of Syeh Siti Jenar; (2) Ki Pamanahan, Ki Panjawi, and Ki Juru Martani in the early period of the Mataram court, who had a political vision of promoting Panembahan Senapati as King of Mataram, and had the shared religious experience as students of Sunan Kalijaga. Figure 3 demonstrates the role of Islam, through Syeh Siti Jenar and Sunan Kalijaga, to unite (*manunggal*) three (*telu*) court guardians of Pajang and Mataram with the shared political vision religious experience.

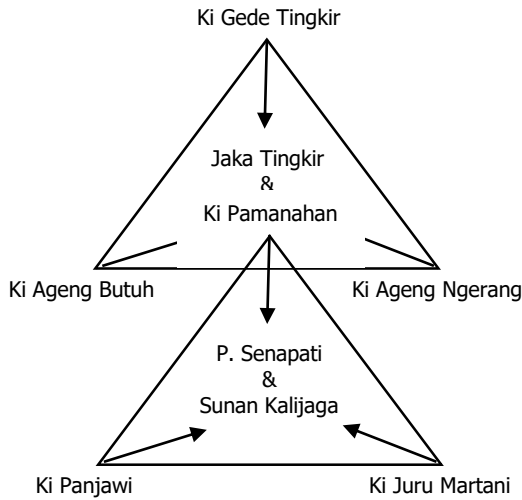


Figure 3 Syekh Siti Jenar and Sunan Kalijaga as 'in-between' in three (*telu*) court guardians

The politics of 'in-between space' of Islam in terms of Javanese aesthetics of *papat kiblat limo pancer* is possible to identify through Sunan Giri Prapen in uniting the four elements of the courts (Majapahit, Demak, Pajang, and Mataram). They had a political dispute of power among each other. In these four elements of the court, Sunan Giri Prapen seemingly appeared as the center of political legitimacy among the four elements of the court. Amid various political turmoils and power struggles in each court period, Sunan Giri Prapen was still an important Muslim figure with a bargaining position among them. Figure 4 demonstrates the multiple important roles of Sunan Giri in the mid (*manunggal*) of four (*papat*) elements of court. Sunan Giri (Prapen) was recognized his strength by Brawijaya Majapahit. Sunan Giri Prapen endorsed Raden Patah as King of Demak. Sunan Giri Prapen legitimated Adipati Pajang as Sultan; and Sunan Giri Prapen also predicted that Ki Ageng Pamanahan's descendants would become the new rulers of Java (Mataram).

The politics of 'in-between space' of Islam in terms of Javanese aesthetics of *nawarupa* is possible to identify through the narratives about the power of Lord Vishnu in the eight directions of territories (*Gunung Merapi, Pamantingan, Kabareyan, Lodaya, Kawah Kuwu, Beringin Tujuh, Kayu Landeyan, Hutan Roban*) and the submission of the eight kingdoms (*Raja Lodaya, Raja Gunung Merapi, Raja Kare, Raja Waringin Uwok, Raja Gunung Agung, Raja Gunung Perahu, Raja Dlepih, Raja Gunung Bledhug*) to Nyai Roro Kidul. Regardless of the correct position of these eights territories, Lord

Vishnu and Nyai Roro Kidul had a relationship with Islam in *Babad Tanah Jawi*. It is told that Lord Vishnu had a genealogical lineage of Prophet Adam and was assigned to the Java in preaching a 'mimetic' Islam which is different but similar to Islam in Mecca. In contrast, Nyai Roro Kidul had submitted to Panembahan Senapati as a Muslim ruler of Mataram who studied Islam under the guidance of Sunan Kalijaga. Figure 5 demonstrates how Islam, through a genealogical relationship between Prophet Adam and Lord Vishnu and mystical relationship between Panembahan Senapati and Nyai Roro Kidul, united (*manunggal*) the eights (*nawarupa*) kingdoms of Gods.

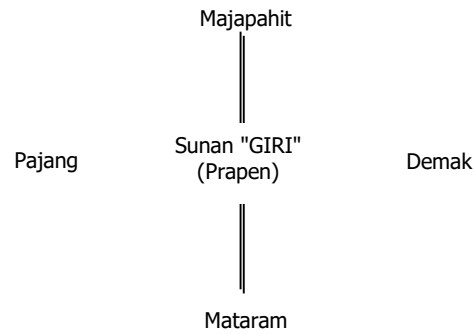


Figure 4 Sunan Giri Prapen as 'in-between' in the crucial events of four (*papat*) courts

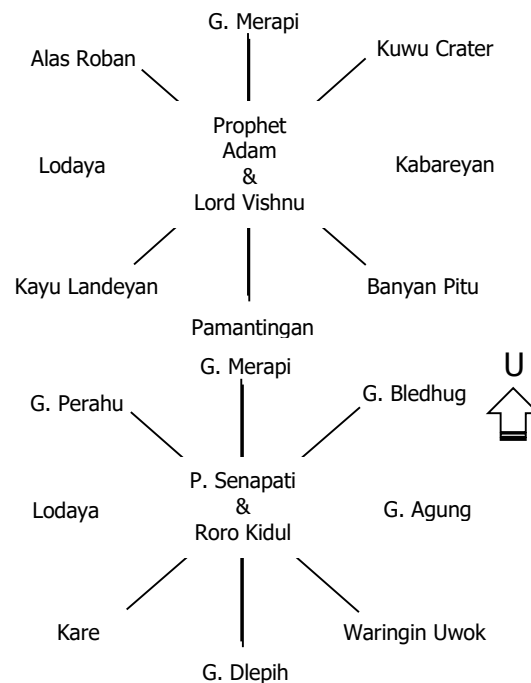


Figure 5 Adam and Senapati as 'in-between' in the eights (*nawarupa*) of kingdoms in eights directions

The previous structural arguments demonstrate the interpretation of Javanese aesthetics, ranging from *manunggaling kawula gusti, loro-loroning atunggal, telu-teluning atunggal, papat qibla limo pancar, to nawarupa*, is not singular. The Javanese aesthetics structurally, politically, and symbolically also appeared in the structure of political power of the court, and uniquely Islam—both through its genealogical politics and through its mystical legitimacy—presents as a center of unifying (*manunggal*) the various conflicting elements of court in each of these aesthetics.

The political strategy Islam used in Javanese aesthetics is politics of 'in-between space', politics of 'liminality'; neither in front, nor behind; neither on the right, nor on the left. It is in undecidability, but it is precisely this culmination of the perfect wisdom of Islam in this text. It figures out that Yasadipura I presents Islam in a 'borderline' position that is difficult to identify. Still, this position makes it resilient and capable of creating *sak Madya*, harmony, and conformity of life.

By having politics from the periphery, Islam is depicted as taking positions of 'liminal' and 'in-between space', no longer dichotomy and opposition. This religion puts itself into an 'adequacy' (or in Javanese term, *sak madya*), a process of negotiation and contestation with various conflicting elements, without having to side with one of them. This text represented Islam in the structure of politics and aesthetics of the court by putting itself at the center of the complex political constellation of Javanese reigns. The logical consequence is that this text, to some degree, succeeded in depicting the distinctiveness of 'Islam' in Java from Islam in Mecca. The representation of Islam in *Babad Tanah Jawi* is a flexible Islam, capable of being a mediator, consolidator, and even reconciliator in implementing any Javanese aesthetics in terms of politics of the court.

#### **4. CHRONICLE'S POLITICS OF AESTHETIC: BETWEEN PASEMON AND PROPHECY**

The opening stanzas of *Babad Tanah Jawi* seemingly put the text into a kind of 'heirloom' (*pusaka*). This sacred heirloom will not suffer a similar fate as the heirloom of *Jamus Kalimasada* during Bratayudha War. However, as an heirloom, it has to give promising hopes (*prophecy*) for its holders in the future. It seems that the designation of those hopes appeared from the beginning of stanzas because the author, Yasadipura I, composed this text as a prayer and offering to Pakubuwana IV.

This text ranges as historical, mystical, *suluk*, even prophetic texts. It combines the past and supranatural events, inserted with religious advice and hopes (or predictions?) for the future. The author felt it necessary to revive the past glory of the Hindu-Buddhist courts after the *Geger Pecinan* incident and the Mangkubumi War into the Javanese manuscripts.

The most interesting of this aesthetic revivalism [18], [26] is that Yasadipura I used a *pasemon*, an element of playfulness between allusion and illusion, a textual strategy based on a symbolic technique: between revealing and covering. This aesthetics is uniquely used in most of his manuscripts. For example, this prophecy on the court's future, depicted with the playful and poetic arrangement, both reveals and hides its meaning. It allows the readers to interpret and arrange the fragments of the events for the sake of the future.

This manuscript uses an allegorical aesthetic strategy for some reasons. The structural analysis of the text has found the ways political events in the Javanese court are continuously in 'cycle', a mimesis to the fate of the next court. Uniquely, this mimesis is not delivered realistically, but allegorically. For example, the liberation of Majapahit is not described in a vulgar and brutal way, but only through the 'unseen' event of Brawijaya and his troops to the sky!

It is possible to argue that Yasadipura I had a special admiration for the glorious Majapahit. Still, it is also possible that this aesthetic strategy was used to disengage readers to interpret the fall of Majapahit in a figural, mysterious, unrevealable, and apocalyptic way. Using strategy, Yasadipura I succeeded in using—in Eric Aurbach's term in *Mimesis* [27]—an allegorical aesthetics, referring to an argument that history attempts to reveal everything in detail and lucid way need to be criticized and replaced with the history that also respects *the other*.

On *the other*, it might refer to the story of the fall of Majapahit in *Babad Tanah Jawi*. Instead of depicting the vivid events of the fall, this text brings the reader to a mysterious apocalyptic moment: Brawijaya suddenly *Mi'raj* without a trace, along with the Patih and his troops. Surely, hundreds of years after this incident, the 'fall' of Majapahit has indeed become a never-ending academic debate, whether this kingdom was under attack, surrender, or just moving to another area. The undecidability of this event demonstrates that this text is written based on a symbolic aesthetics.

The fact that this manuscript was written as not to have the similar fate as *Kalimasada*, as depicted at the beginning of the text, seemingly indicates that it is not just a hope, but an *allusion* also *illusion*. Yasadipura I, probably learning from the conflict between the royal brothers, Mangkubumi War, and the Giyanti



Agreement, expected that this manuscript is possible to serve as a remembrance and satire about the bloody events of the Kalimasada heritage struggle in the Brathayuda War. This text is a satire for the events of Giyanti and Mangkubumi and remembrance for the future descendants of Mataram. Still, the double function of this text are written in subtle ways, referring to the past events of a conflict between the Kauravas and the Pandavas.

The allegorical strategy of this text is more visible by focusing on the role of Islam. There is a 'dualism' of Islam in this manuscript. The structural testimony provides some indicators of this allegory. Tracing the genealogy of the Javanese kingdom, this text refers to Adam and mentions Nurcahya, a descendant of the Prophet Sis and Dewi Drajah (a demon). Unfortunately, this genealogical lineage is missing in Islamic prophetic stories (*qishash al-anbiya'*). From Nurcahya, the kings of Java were born. This genealogy asserts their status equal to the prophets in the Islamic tradition, who was born from the descendants of Prophet Sis and Dewi Mulat (human). This text, therefore, puts Islam into the cultural constellation between prophetic stories (*qishash al-anbiya'*) in the Islamic tradition and king stories (*babad* or *wayang*) in the Javanese tradition.

The delegation of Lord Vishnu as a counterweight to Islam in Java is mimesis for the delegation of Prophet Muhammad as a propagator of Islam in Mecca. In addition to secretly mocking the 'imitation' of central Islam in Arabia, this mimesis is also a prophecy for the emergence of Javanese courts, which will later be based on Islam, a prophecy of a new reign in Java, a counterbalance to the central power in Arab Peninsula.

The dialogues between Muslim saints (*wali*), who often used Hindu-Buddhist deities, when they are giving religious advice, or trying to convert other people to Islam, or talking to fellow saints, demonstrate not just an allegorical lawsuit (*pasemon*) against Islam in Arabia, but also a prophecy (*nubuat*) about the emergence of a new perspective on this religion. This 'new' religion was manifested in Java's old belief culture and practices.

The exile of Sheikh Wali Lanang from Blambangan, and the emergence of a natural disaster after it, is also prophecy for the future of Islam in Java. The new religious power brought by *Walis* would later have a significant influence on the internal political policies of the courts and natural events and apocalyptic disasters. It is possible to identify some cases. For example, during the liberation of Majapahit City (like as historical events of *Fathu Makkah*), earthquakes, floods, and thunderbolt suddenly appeared at that time.

Likewise, before Panembahan Senapati met with Ratu Kidul, a natural event like a tsunami appeared. These microcosmic events seemed to demonstrate that in every crucial event of the Javanese kings, especially Muslim rulers, there was always a change in the cosmic order.

The prophetic projection about the future of the Javanese courts is also possible to identify through a story of the arrival of Ratu Adil. Unsurprisingly, every time a prospective king is appointed as the real ruler, he will be followed by unusual microcosmic events, as if the universe is welcoming the descent of the *Messiah*, *Ratu Adil*, into the world. This event was also in line with prophetic predictions from holy people, guardians, or ascetics, as if they have given the religious and mystical blessing to the new ruler of Java. The imagination of the arrival of *Ratu Adil* is a characteristic of many holy books, as if it is a confirmation of *Babad Tanah Jawi* as heirloom for the Mataram kingdom.

The depiction of these apocalyptic events is in line with Yasadipura I's ability to use allegorical metaphors, for example, when he describes the upcoming fall of Pajang. As describing the upcoming fall of Majapahit, this text also praises Pajang to the highest degree through the testimony of Ki Juru Martani to Panembahan Senapati. Pajang is described as raindrops, sun, rocks, and durian, but all these parables are just allegory to mark the eternal mourning for Pajang. Ki Juru's advice to Senapati to respect Pajang also seemed to designate the last respect for the court, and surely enough, not long after that advice was given, Pajang also collapsed.

It is possible to argue that, to a certain extent, this chronicle is a prophecy, an apocalyptic statement of a *santri* poet behind the Surakarta court, dedicated to Susuhunan Pakubuwana IV about the future of the Javanese courts. Although written as an offering to Pakubuwana IV, this text attempts to convey the prophecy by exploring the past events, their destruction, their triumphs, their despairs, their glories, through certain visions and experiences to predict, or at least to give hope, for the future. In every description of these events, ranging from Majapahit to Mataram, Islam plays a political role of 'liminality', an in-between space, as if to emphasize that Islam is always possible to disclose any possible space of interpretation in the future. This aesthetic ability—in Nancy's term—'to write the past for inscribing the future' is undertaken through a stylistic model of holy books, playing with allegorical metaphors, to ensure that revelation and interpretation of the future is still possible to do.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It is reasonable that the representation of Islam in *Babad Tanah Jawi* is Islam in intermediary and liminal

space. Apart from being influenced by the author's political, intellectual, and religious background, it also gets influenced from the ways Yasadipura I use allegorical strategy to represent this religion. Islam is possibly contested with Javanese and Arabic culture more open. It is a religion that refuses to be identified as total Islam, emphasizing the possible reading to *the other*, to any transformation of events, characters, or definitions. It is due to fact that it is depicted in beautiful stanzas, describing prophecy (*nubuat*) as well as an illusion (*passemon*) on the relationship between Islam and the Javanese courts.

### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Achmad Fawaid, his concern on Indonesian literature and religious studies, carried out the analysis of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, participated in the sequent alignment and drafted this article.

Wening Udasmoro, his concern on critical discourse analysis, carried out the methodological issues regarding Rancière's concept on politics of aesthetics and Levi Strauss's concept on structures of myths, participated in the methodology design.

Sri Margana, his concern on babad and history, carried out the narrative issues regarding the episodes of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, participated in selecting specific characters and events relevant to the main theme of this study.

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