

SHIFTING THE SENSE OF PILGRIMAGE: EXAMINING *PETILASAN* SUNAN KALIJAGA IN SUROWITI HILL, GRESIK

Taufiqurrohim

Center for Religious and Cross Cultural Studies
Graduate School Universitas Gadjah Mada

Email: taufiqurrohim@yahoo.co.id

ABSTRACT

The paper tries to examine the role of *Petilasan* Sunan Kalijaga in Surowiti hill, Gresik. Interestingly, this sacred space can host not only visitors seeking spiritual connection, but also function as historical centers or tourist attractions that act as multivalent symbols for competing narratives about history, identity, and religious practice. The various audiences and complexities of experience deduced in this site requires us to take a broad approach to consider both on the religious discourses, sacredness and secular interest. For broad explanation, the writer tries to look the site closely by defining the applied practice that had been existed in this *petilasan* due to the development of the pilgrimage or tourism perspective, modernization and identity. At the discussion remark, examining Robert Bellah's theory of religious evolution on which how both local inhabitant and tourists shifted the sense of the pilgrimage.

Keyword: *Petilasan*, history, religious practice, identity, religious evolution, shifted sense

INTRODUCTION

In religious tourism (*wisata religi*) of Surowiti hill Gresik, there would be find an area not only for religious site but also sacred site as well as the secular place to enjoy the view of the hill. It can be said as religious site causing there was find *petilasan* Saint Kalijaga which historically spread the Islamic precept. Javanese is quite familiar with the term *petilasan* which this word refers to stopping in. A place that was once on the go or occupied by influential people who has a great service and effect to life around the site. In this Javanese context, a person, who ever lived and went to a place, has an important role because these ruins once occupied by the important people in the development of the view that the site is obliged to be respected and safeguarded. The assumption the site has a mysticism power and the place where Sunan Kalijaga get his enlightenment. Based on Woodward, Sunan Kalijaga is the mythical Javanese Islamic saint who is believed widely regarded as the patron saint of Javanese mysticism (2010: 162). Moreover, Geertz also mentioned about his role of spreading of Islam traditionally and brought new phase of spiritual existence. Sunan Kalijaga also believe as "culture renewers" who brought from the shadow-play world "Indu times" to the light times "Islamic times" (1968: 25). Which the fact that Raden Tjahid, other names of Sunan Kalijaga, was born for the burgeon environment of Majapahit kingdom. He also fostered the Mataram kingdom with the Islamic

pattern and became the symbol of alternation symbol from Hindu-Buddha Majapahit to the Islamic Mataram. For Javanese, Kalijaga is well-known not only because of Islamic religiosity but also because of his redemption and spirituality, he was willing to leave worldly matter as a prince of Mataram and seeking spirituality from Demak, Djapara, Surabaya, Tuban and also Gresik (Geertz 1968:27-29). Therefore, here in Gresik, Raden Sjahid get an enlightenment and doing meditation in this *petilasan* because of Sunan Bonang¹, his teacher, command to keep a stick as one of parts of his spiritual journey.

The meditation that had been done by Sunan Kalijaga were in the Langsuh Cave. However, there are people who use it as a place to seek and asking something instantly, which in turn makes the shifting *petilasan* true meaning. This development cannot be separated from the influence of material culture is increasingly urgent human, so that in fact expecting something instantly. Indeed, *petilasan* is not meant for that, but it was a place to be remembered for that generation, that in places it never happened important event.

In Javanese mysticism, *petilasan* quite a lot of interpretation which is ever visited by important people contains positive energy for someone who can feel it. The most convenient way is to feel the atmosphere and the coolness of the heart when it is in ruins for a few minutes. Why is positive energy? Usually the important people who supernatural powers which according believed to still be in the ruins. In addition to the shades do, for people who like to do *tirakat* (particular hard preach such as fasting, praying or *dzikir* with the aims to purify body and soul). *petilasan* is a suitable location to pick up / absorb positive energy. The place became sacred and the sacred must be protected from things that are distanced from the real meaning.

This is important, because it saw the pace of the times today seem to distance themselves from the so-called "mindful". In Javanese word, it interpreted in *eling* word or remember to the self and others. "*Eling*", because with every human being mindful can find the identity. Namely the identity of a religiosity, sacredness and culture that has been overshadowed by a globalized and modernized culture struggle.

But sometimes the people, who comes to the *petilasan*, actually has different background and aims. Due to this place has the positive energy according to the people who has supernatural power but doing traditional economic ritual/*pesugihan*. The assumption that this *petilasan* specifically in Langsuh Cave has the tuyul kingdom spread around the visitors like advocate this suitable place to get-rich-quick through mysticism. one the site visitors said to writers that he can feel the supernatural power inside the cave. This fact strengthens with the presence of some incenses and flowers around the sacred space. Interestingly, the site not only provides the religious sense history but also competes the tourism identity as secular place for the beautiful view and sacred place for the teaching that had been spread by the influential people in religious discourses. Due to this sequel of the phenomenon, the shifted sense of the pilgrimage occupied in this kind of the place. Therefore, this paper tries to

¹ Sunan Bonang is one the *walisongo* member including Sunan Kalijaga. The term *Walisongo* initiated as the nine saint for the Islamic traditionalist of the Javanese who spread the Islam teaching to the Java island. Based on George Quinn, it was the created from the folk tradition of Javanese tells about the conversion of Java around 15th and 16th century.

examine those shifting sense through Robert Bellah's theory about the religious evolution in socially human practice, specifically in pilgrimage cases, containing four step of the culture of civilization: mimetic culture to the site, the historical or mythical narrative construction, ethical view to the space and modern synthesis to the civilized community.

Mimetic Recognition of the Pilgrimage

In the religious tourism Surowiti hill area, there would be find a specific location that had been sacralized by some visitors named Langsih cave. What make interesting in this cave is the presence of the sacralized stone and the spring water inside the place that is believed can bring *berkah* and accede the promise asked by the people who visit it and drinking a water.

If we examine about the definitions of the pilgrimage, it could be demonstrated the idea of the Turner about the term institutionalized "anti-structure" and "symbolic" from the tribal era that experience a puberty effect of the moment through a ritual (1973: 204). Moreover, Coleman also examine about the idea of *communitas* in pilgrimage discourses which it tends to the individual pilgrim's in avoiding from the "mundane culture" and social circumstances to the find uncommon feeling as the visitors of the place (Coleman 2002: 356). The cave usually provides the symbolic recognition of the culture which had been exist in the past. The axial utopia lived in the cave was not realm to play but it was considering, the coercion lived in cave is the starting point but next it will be chain the process of life for the cave inhabitant and he fell the freedom inside above the sunlight and would be back to find its freedom feeling after the play in upper world (Bellah 2011: 586).

Based on the interview with the visitors named Mohammad Nasir (31) from Cirebon in *petilasan* site that he has practiced seven days fasting before entering Langsih cave. This practice should be done to purify his mind from the worldly matter because in hungry condition, the people can be focused her mind in the transcendental affair and can be unified with the nature. Here I would take John Urry theory about the "tourist gaze" as the aim of the pilgrimage. with the other word, the pleasure comes from the gaze of the tourist. Gazing refers to the "discursive determinations" of socially constructed seeing or "scopic regimes" in depicting vision as natural or the product of atomised individuals naturalizes its social and historical nature, and the power relations of looking (Urry 2011: 2). In other word, the tourist gaze was socially constructed from the frame of the social class, gender, nationality, age, and also education background. The gaze was also constructed through the "difference" or "abnormal" means the situation that they get in their homeland or the place to work (2011: 3).

Moreover, Pilgrimage actually come from the individual emotion and spirituality even though the collective action around the sacred place which no more than the mainstream of the location and tradition of particular society. If they can they could use a private car, or could be accompanied by their own family or close friend. The difficulty to conduct this activity, as like financial reason and other social reason, was the motive to pilgrims collectively (Margry 2008: 22). Here, Natsir, the interviewed one, also mentions that he works as a teacher and writer. He said that he feels bored with the social condition around by doing meditation in a cave. He also has come to the some of the pilgrimage site in Java because it was like his hobby before he works and try do it again

after leaving this habit of meditation. This phenomenon proved that Turner anti-structure, *communitas* and also Urry's tourist gaze as the basic element of the pilgrimage motive, aims and definitions.

The Mythical Narrative to the Site

Based on the interview some informants that had been gotten from the site, the various historical narrative is explicated the story of *petilasan* Sunan Kalijaga. The narration is created from archeological remains that leaved in the place yet it has own history not only on the physical remainders but also the "oral version" of the space having the hidden learning that can be examined. One of the mythical sample comes from the archaic wood remains beside *petilasan* which it is initiated as the leaved wood for *bedug* of the Demak Mosque² that well known as the inheritance of the Mataram Islamic Kingdom³ but the other version comes from the door keeper of the site, he told that the wood is the leaved from one the *cagak* (pole in English) of the Raden Sahid Mosque, the old mosque around the site where it also has its own history that this pole cannot be remove although the mosque had been renovated many times, it known as the sacred "*cagak*" both for the management of the mosque and for the local inhabitant.⁴

The other version of the archeological remains comes from the lake in the below of the Surowiti hill. When most of the people assumes that the lake is the product of the Sunan Kalijaga meditation of keeping the stick, with the result that blocking the flowing water and it was proved with the existence of the tree beside the lake which is supposed as the grown stick, he has different version of the story which the lake is the place where Sunan Kalijaga purify his body by bathing inside it and the wood initiated as the archaic which Raden Syahid hanging his clothes.⁵

The last story comes from the main history of the *petilasan* which there were exist a tomb assumed as the Sunan Kalijaga's tomb whereas, as we know, the tomb of this Saint also exist in Demak. The door keeper said to the writer that "it was the Sunan's tombs which cannot be claimed whether it was "original" tomb or not but he mentioned that Sunan Kalijaga has a supernatural power who can do an activity in two different place because it was separated with the physic and his soul. So the tomb that we can see in the *petilasan* can be said as his tomb. There were also some caves around the site that his own history and meaning as like *lumbung* cave known as the place for saving agricultural product, *macan* cave as the place of the mystical lion of Saint Kalijaga, *pelok* cave for resting area and Langsuh cave as the area of *walisongo* meeting were organized.

From those stories from the informants, it points out the historical-narrative of the tourism place although there were some of the version of the site, it was same a same goal in promoting the "spoiled" history of the places. Underlines the case of *petilasan* Sunan Kalijaga is not merely about the market of the tourism but also about how to make a positive reputation in society as a friendly and religious places. This kind of condition created by both local

² Demak mosque located in Demak district around 15 kilometers from Semarang, the main city of the Central java and approximately 1 kilometer from the tomb of Sunan Kalijaga.

³ Based on the interview with the local inhabitant 28 March 2016

⁴ Interviewed with the door keeper Named Mun'in, 1 April 2016

⁵ *ibid*

inhabitant and the door keeper in pilgrimage site to illustrate the “believable” travel which also influences to the society also to demonstrate their culture and memory through the historical conditions and narrative control of the tourism although it would rise a “spoiled” or can be mean “exaggerating” religious and unique identity that have been created by the tourism itself.

It was like Rivera idea about Croatian identity by “Covering” terminologies, the “new identity of the Croatian” has been make to cover the “dark side of the tourism” because of the war in Balkan which emphasizes on discreditable rather discredited in the case of the dark memories (2008: 624-625). If we see the various story of the *petilasan*, it was like “covering” the dark side of the tourism place also. But the difference happened with the sense of the dark in the site where Croatian tries to cover the war memory, *petilasan* tend to close the idea of the *sesat* and *syirik* practice inside by promoting the good side of site narrative.

The Ethical Civilization

Ethical civilization is signed with prioritizing between wrong and right. The function of the *petilasan* actually for remembering the teaching of Sunan Kalijaga around the site. It can be seen from the interpretation of the word '*petilasan*' which in Indonesian language the basic word is *tilas* or *napak tilas* means memorizing the leaving archaic or the trace.

In logical minds today, *petilasan* can be understood as a historical place that deserves to be maintained and preserved. Thus, there is an implied meaning of a *petilasan* to be a "tetenger" or markers (signs) that the current generation is not only physical but enjoy the atmosphere captures the historical significance of the place where the incident occurred. The door keeper said that the site indicates as the history when Sunan Kalijaga spread Islamic teaching in Surowiti hill area. Through acknowledging the cemetery of the saint's students and some archeological remain of the place, it could be remembering his service to the Islamic da'wa in Java.

“prioritizing between wrong and right” who question about the ritual that should be done in this site become issue of the pilgrimage activity existence. The idea of *sesat* and *syirik* perspective is surely influential issues which distinguishes whether the practice is religious or can be contradicted with the religious rule. As like the writer interviewed with one of the visitor who assume to the ritual in Langsuh Cave to asking the wealth and prosperity through the help of mysticism way (*tuyul, jin, ngepet*) or called *pesugihan*. He emphasizes with the story of the incense and the flowers existence in the cave as the deviant thing and some people who meditate in the cave consider as an ally to the God existence because the wealth had been depended by the transcendence one.⁶ The negative assumption to the place not only comes from the visitors but from the society around the site because this place well-known as a kingdom of the *tuyul* and place for doing *pesugihan* ritual. *Pesugihan* is one of the traditional economic belief and tradition which has been descended from the Javanese ancestor and categorized as a supernatural practice and belief in getting rich quick through mysticism and the people should do such a ritual in a sacred place with the particular rule that must be obey. Javanese have a “sensitive” word of *pesugihan* that why George Quinn in his research

⁶ Interview with the experienced visitor, who have ever visit the Langsuh cave, in Sunan Muria tombs in Kudus at 9 January 2016

has a difficult information about *tuyul* in society around the site of the ritual of money-spinning because of the folklore spreading of Javanese in owing *tuyul* as a damning moral judgment about the economic order that weighs so crushingly on the poor (2009: 39).

The variant of Javanese ritual, contrast in belief, and conflict among categories of religious society in Java has been conducted by Geertz who examined socio-structural consisted by its market, bureaucracy, and or the village which has extended sense (1960: 5). For the example how *abangan* representing the animistic ritual and aspect, but in other way the majority tries to strengthen the Islamic aspect into the peasant element so it will rise a conflict how the *abangan* and *santri* articulated their belief in the diverse society. The view of Islam, which has ethical prophecy in this way Muhammad as the prophet, is rejected much of symbol, simplified ritual, and proclaimed universality has been created the “true islam” negotiating in such kind of *slametan*, *wayang* and other syncretism ritual which has contradictive view of Islam in the name of “Javanese Arabs” (1960: 123). The term syncretism has been used by Beatty (1999: 3) as way of cultural reproduction rather than as a settled outcome which it represented combination of “systematic interrelation” of various elements of belief and ritual.

The history of the “Islamization” in reconciliation of Javanese belief have been point out by Rickleff (2006: 223) who explicated the mystical synthesis of Javanese and Islam as a one way to view how the Sufism played a central role in negotiating with an “illusion” and Java’s world. The “mystic synthesis” existed in the 18th-19th century slowly disappeared because of colonial rule, reformist Islam and modernization as a challenge to the existence of mysticism that historically has a big role in reconciliation before *abangan/putihan* and *abangan/santri* distinction were existed (2006: 233). Thus, I argue that the competing identity among “true islam” and “deviant islam” or *abangan* and *santri* categorization is about the religious identity making shifted pilgrimage that should be represented to the visitors of the site.

The Modern-Theoretical Synthesis

The modern religious culture can be seen on the way how the “social implication” practice the religious symbols on the direct relation between individual to the transcendental reality (Bellah 1964:369). So the implication to the modern reality of social issues rise the recognition to the analysis, prediction and also understanding cause-effect situation for the further implementation. Here, the tourism or pilgrimage representation, management and attraction can be seen as the logical modern religious phenomena. The “social action” with the religious symbolism system is practiced to meet the present need as an effort (1964: 373).

Based on the interview with the door keeper, visitors and local people in the site, I argue that the *petilasan* representation had been developed and advanced by the time which the development can be seen not only the physical situation but also the visitors, situation and “sacredness” inside the space. The modification of the space is explicated on the place of the *petilasan* in physical development seen on the presence of the adding stairs, parking lot and such alternation of the area around the Sunan Kalijaga tomb.

Moreover, the commodification of the place effected to the visitors who come to the site. One of the visitor tell to the writer, approximately around

1990s, there were some visitors come to the site to doing meditation and ritual for many days. But the fact had been mentioned by the door keeper that some of the students come to the place not for spirituality aims as like meditation but more on the remembering Sunan Kalijaga history and *Nyadran*⁷ to his tomb. The local people, specifically the parking keeper, said that some visitors come to the site to enjoy the beautiful view of the Surowiti hill and also doing rock climbing. Indeed, in Surowiti hill, it also ever organized the climbing contest to promote the tourism side of the side. Furthermore, the labelled as the “wisata religi” or religious tourism in this *petilasan* is started around at 2000. The promotion the Surowiti village can be seen on the research about this sacred site which more likely tell about the tourism management entitled “*Advertisement Design Plan of the Surowiti Hill Tourism Promotion in Gresik District*” by Hesti Puspita Rinda Wiyana. Her thesis pointed out about the site promotion not only as the sacred or religious tourism but also as the place for climbing and enjoying beautiful view of the nature. The writing uses methodology of the SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) and USP (Unique Selling Proposition) to investigate the strategy that uses by the internal tourism management in promoting the site as religious and “secular” site. This promotion of the religious tourism points out the effort of the management can be said industrialize the site besides promoting the religious side because the industrialization is also the modern phenomena that includes socio-political context inside the issues.

Furthermore, Surowiti also has the annual ceremony named *Grebeg*⁸ *Surowiti* which started from two years ago. It was the various event to remember the deceased of Sunan Kalijaga by some ritual and ceremony as like *pasar malam* (night market), *istighotsah*⁹, *wayang*¹⁰ attraction, *khotmil quran*¹¹ and also *grebeg surowity* itself as main ceremony. This ritual is done in every 20 *Dzulhijjah* according to the Islamic Lunar calendar. The rite started with *iring-iringan* or bringing together one hundred *tumpeng/gunungan* of the food and cash crop from the *balai desa* or the village public hall to the *petilasan*. Based on the interview with the influential people of the village, he points out the ceremony initiated from the local government to cheer up the village with the traditional ritual then supported by regency government as one annual cultural ceremony in Gresik in conserving local culture and tradition. He added with the coming of the regent in the *grebeg surowiti* ritual last year. Remembering Sunan Kalijaga teaching also done in this ceremony because before the labelling of *Grebeg Surowiti* also exist the customary ritual in every

⁷ *Nyadran* is the term of the Javanese tradition in visiting the tombs of the descendants, influential people or their family to remember its service or get a blessing from his piety or prosperity

⁸ *Grebeg* or *gumrebeg* is Javanese word means the crowded, noisy and loud condition. Or can be said *gerbeg* is *gerak bersama* or move together by bringing *gunungan* or such of the food stack and cash crop.

⁹ The Islamic mass praying through reading some good chanting according to Muslim adherents

¹⁰ Traditional Javanese art through telling a story in shadow of the doll that can be made from the animal leather, wood or human.

¹¹ Reading holly al-quran at a whole in one moment.

year with the *Nyadran* to the tombs by telling a story and moral teaching from the *babat*¹² Surowiti that is leaved from Sunan Kalijaga and his students.

Grebeg Surowiti is like a spectacle that maintain by the local government to promote Islamic teaching that spread around the site rather than cultural attraction. It can be seen the agenda of the ceremony that was managed as like *istighotsah*, *khotmil quran* or *grebeg surowiti*. The Islamic nuance of rite can be feel from the date of celebration, place and session of the ceremony. “the strategy of the allurements” or “da’wa” in tourism spectacle can be examine here which mentioned by the Bremer (2000) in three stages: the strategies of promotion, market circulation and the role of authority in managing the tourism place.

Those three stages of the tourism are also experienced by *petilasan* Sunan Kalijaga in Surowiti hill. *Grebeg Surowiti* can be said the strategy of the tourism management through the spectacle where the circulation of the market also existed in this place. It can be seen from the utility of the place is for rock climbing and beautiful panorama promotion through some brochure and also the internet page as like Instagram, facebook, and twitter that has been institutionalized by the management of the site. The role of the local government managing the bigger annual ceremony to promote the site in the larger community in the early two years is the engagement to control the religious tourism representation although the ceremony itself is leaded by the influentially religious people.

CONCLUSION

The writing pointed out the process of the religious evolution in human influenced the pilgrimage representation. The memetic culture is the starting point how the pilgrimage site is created through the tourist gaze and the aims of the visitors to come into the sacred spaces. The mythical-historical phase also one of the negotiation by the local inhabitant to represent what kind of the pilgrimage in a pack of the religious site or the secular one. The ethical response is the next stage of the pilgrim portrait to distinguish the good and wrong side of the that could be suitable in morality or not. The last is the industrialized and modernized pilgrimage as the last phenomenon that had been happen in the site, specifically *petilasan* Sunan Kalijaga in this writing how the evolution process of religion can also happen in the pilgrimage.

At the conclusion, I also mentioned that this theory religious evolution cannot be applicate in all of the pilgrimage places. It can be depending on the kind of the pilgrimage as like secular pilgrimage, religious tourism, secular tourism or religious pilgrimage indeed. Here, I would an example of the Jim Morrison’s cemetery as a musical legendary in which we analyze the mimetic human culture, ethical, history and modernized pilgrimage. Is there sequences evolution also can be happened in this site? The Foucault (1994) idea of “continuity” and “discontinuity” can be helpful here where it examines that every single phenomenon has its own reason that reflected from the flow of the history, “the things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterized and known from one era to the next”.

Bibliography

¹² *Babat* is a Javanese ancient text containing about teaching, prose, or history usually it is from the *lontar* leaf.

- Beatty, Andrew, (1999). "Varieties of Javanese Religion an Anthropological Account". Cambridge University Press, UK.
- Bellah, Robert N. (1964). "Religious Evolution". *American Sociological Review* 29, no. 3, pp. 358-374.
- Bellah, Robert N. (2011). "Religion in Human Evolution from the Paleolithic to the Axial Age". The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, London
- Bremer, Thomas S. "Tourist and Religion at Temple Square and Mission San Juan Capistrano" *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 113, No. 450, Holidays, Ritual, Festival, Celebration, and Public Display (Autumn, 2000), pp. 422-435
- Coleman, Simon. "Do you believe in pilgrimage? Communitas, contestation and beyond" *Simon Coleman Anthropological Theory* 2002 2: 355
- Foucault, Michel, (1994) "the order thing: An Archeologies of the Human sciences". Vintage Press
- Geertz, Clifford, (1976). "The religion of Java". University of Chicago Press, USA.
- Geertz, Clifford, (1968) "Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia". New Haven: Yale University Press, USA
- Margry, Peter Jan. (2008) "Secular Pilgrimage: A Contradiction in Terms? Shrines and Pilgrimage in the Modern World: Itineraries into the Sacred. Jan Peter Margry, ed". Amsterdam University Press, pgs. 13-48.
- Rivera, Lauren A. "Managing "Spoiled" National Identity: War, Tourism, and Memory in Croatia". *American sociological review* Vol. 3 No. 84 (Aug. 2008) pp.613-634
- Quinn, George. (2009). "an excursion to the Java get-rich-quick tree" Australian National University Press, Australia
- Turner, Victor. *The Center Out There: Pilgrim's Goal in History of Religions*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Feb., 1973), pp. 191-230
- Urry, John, Jonas Larsen (2011). "The Tourist Gaze 3.0: Theory, Culture & Society" SAGE Publications, London
- Wiyana, Hesti Puspita Rinda, (2015). "Advertisement Design Plan of the Surowiti Hill Tourism Promotion in Gresik District". *Surabaya State University Journal* Vol. 3 No.3 pp 104-110.
- Woodward, Mark R, (1989). *Islam in Java: normative piety and mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta*. No. 45. Assn for Asian Studies Incorporated.