

# Spiritual Logic as Culture and Political Expression in *Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma's Ruling*

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**Abstract:** This study aims to describe the role of spiritual logic during the reign of *Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma* from the Javanese community mentality's viewpoint recorded in the book of *Babad Tanah Jawi* (BTJ). BTJ recounts the genealogy of Javanese kings until the reign of Pakubuwana II in Kartasura. BTJ in this episode expresses the steps of *Sultan Agung* to knit the continuity of the power of the Mataram dynasty in controlling Java and Madura. The political steps taken by *Sultan Agung* in legitimizing power were trusted by the people as an attitude that was directly inspired by God. The speech story recorded in the BTJ within the limits of this study contains three important motives, namely (1) spiritual motives, (2) political, and (3) power. Information in the BTJ should be seen as a Javanese perspective in interpreting its world and king's greatness, not as a historical turn.

**Keyword:** spiritual logic, Mataram dynasty, knowledge motive, political motive, power Motive

## Introduction

*Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma* ruled in Mataram from 1613-1645. *Sultan Agung* was recorded in the genealogy of the Mataram kings as the third generation ruler after *Panembahan Senapati* and *Susuhunan Krapyak*. The Mataram state reached a golden age under its rule. The Graaf's report on *Babad Tanah Jawi Meinsma* p. 117 and *Serat Kandha*, p. 673 that the increase of *Sultan Agung's* throne did not go smoothly. Previously, *Sultan Agung's* father, namely *Panembahan Krapyak*, appointed *Raden Martapura* as the successor to the throne (198 p.6: 27). *Babad Tanah Jawi Balai Pustaka*, here in after abbreviated as BTJ-BP, illustrates that the appointment of *Martapura* is only a symbol of fulfillment of *Panembahan Krapyak's* promise to *Martapura*. Subsequently, the throne was given to *Raden Mas Rangsang* who later held the title *Kanjeng Sultan Agung Senapati Ingalaga Ngabdurrahman* (1980, p.156).

A few reliable sources reviewing the character of *Sultan Agung* can mainly be found in Graaf's phenomenal research in his report entitled "De Regering van *Sultan Agung* , Vorst van Mataram, 1613-1645, and Die van Zijn Voorganger *Panembahan Seda Ing Krapyak*, 1601-1613" published in Leiden in 1958. In certain cases, among the sources by foreign researchers were of course more reliable about the objective images instead of the verbal sources due to mythic discourse residing in them. The Javanese tradition and perspective seems had never been in harmony with the Dutch perspective. This then fosters the reality of Javanese culture in interpreting many events. How are the Javanese mentality and the way the Javanese interpret the occurring phenomena around them, in this preliminary study will be revealed thoroughly based on the residing cultural motives.

A piece of notes that tells of some of the missions of the Dutch invasion to the island of Java in 1622, 1623 and 1624 made it possible to illustrate how powerful the *Sultan Agung* was in Java at that time. The first Dutch envoy whose name was *Van Surch* permitted to meet with *Sultan Agung* . However, the last envoy was named P. Franssen, at that time he was not allowed to face the king. It can be interpreted that only eleven years after *Sultan Agung* ascended the

throne, the existence of the Dutch in *Jayakarta* was still not considered a significant opposition force by the Mataram side. This situation will change immediately after the order. Information about the appearance and nature of *Sultan Agung* can be obtained from the Dutch who came to the Mataram palace. The researcher refers to the notes that Graaf has collected and reviewed in his book "*Puncak Kekuasaan Mataram: Politik Ekspansi Sultan Agung*," 1986 (translation of the Tim Proyek Penelitian dan Pengkajian Kebudayaan Nusantara). The Graaf reported as follows: "*The first impression that a European gained about Sultan Agung was that he could not be underestimated. His face is cruel. Emperor with the board counselors ruled out loud, as a big country. Similarly, Balthasar van Eyndhoven merchant testimony, which together with Van Surck go to Mataram in 1614 to congratulate him on his appointment as government stake holders. He suspects aged king at that time was 23 years, so the birth of the King can be expected in 1591 (Jonge, Opkomst, vol. I, p. 58 in Graaf, 1986: 102).*"

Having read from the report above, researchers can catch the message that in the early years of *Sultan Agung's* rule, the Mataram state government was run with an iron fist. The figure of the king who was so powerful at a very young age, was able to give a strong impression on Europeans. Europeans say that *Sultan Agung* should never be underestimated, his face cruel. The first impression was strongly supported by the Javanese people, but the second impression would be rejected with an expression of annoyance or anger by the Javanese, both the past generation and the current generation. Some of the Javanese people in this era, still adored and praised the virtues of kings and the pattern of life of the old nobles. Such an attitude of the people can provide evidence that some Javanese people still crave one of their personal ideals. In mythology, this means a form of imitation or mimesis.

The mythic behavior that is still imitated by modern Javanese from the narrative story of the radens and the saints is that if spiritual in the form of concerned behavior. Concerned behavior carried out by the modern Javanese community is believed to mimic what the radens and the trustees had done in ancient times. In mythology (Eliade, 2002, p. 47), imitating the behavior of sacred figures is believed to bring great luck, who are able to realize one's ideals. This belief is supported by the concept of blessing (in Javanese language: *ngalap berkah* ' ) that is still firmly rooted in the Javanese mentality. In other words, one doctrine negates another doctrine. However, the doctrines that emerged in the community began to experience development along with the strength of religious doctrines.

The description of *Sultan Agung* according to the Dutch people is of course much contrary to the image of *Sultan Agung* described by the Javanese. Researchers' observations on the phenomenon of Javanese art, especially in the art performance of *kethoprak*, show that *babad* stories and speeches about Mataram celebrities still occupy a favorite position. This means that Javanese people create another reality that is completely different from historical reality. Realities like this researchers see as cultural reality that plays the world of Javanese mentality. By the speech story (*kethoprak*), *Sultan Agung* is described as so special, both inward and inward quality. Whereas it is necessary to know that not all Javanese people have ever seen their king. This depiction is certainly not in line with the historical reality reported by the Dutch envoys who had directly faced the Javanese king. That is, researchers will be faced with Javanese political expression as well as cultural expression.

This study aims to describe the role of spiritual logic during the reign of *Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma* from the Javanese community mentality's life view recorded in the *Babad Tanah Jawi* book (BTJ). Spiritual logic is a way of understanding to understand God because it is spiritually related to God. By understanding God, humans are able to know the purpose of life. The purpose of Javanese spiritual logic can be seen in the Javanese philosophy of life

"*memayu hayuning buwana*" (beautifying the world). Spiritual logic narratives are widely found in Javanese literary works, one of which is the BTJ. *Babad Tanah Jawi* is a Javanese literary work that can be classified as a masterpiece of the history of the kings of Mataram. According to Saddhono (2014, pp. 1), the BTJ manuscript has several versions, both in the form of manuscripts and printed copies. This manuscript was written during the reign of Susuhunan Pakubuwana IV (1788-1820) and summarized by the Dutch (Company), then was published by Balai Pustaka. Another version is the Meinsma BTJ manuscript in the form of prose and the *Babad Tanah Jawi* prose as a result of literacy and the translation of Sudibjo Z. H, which was published by the Indonesian and Regional Literature Book Publishing Project, Ministry of Education and Culture, Jakarta 1980. Please note that the BTJ book is a work Yasadipura I which later appeared many versions.

## Method

This research takes the form of descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research is able to explore information on the object of study by describing all sign systems that can provide deep understanding (Sutopo, 2006, p. 35). This research is based on the text of the *Babad Tanah Jawi* text, Sudibjo Z.H's translation, which is delivered in the form of Indonesian-language prose. *Babad Tanah Jawi* Sudibjo, here in after abbreviated as BTJ-S.

Data analysis techniques used in this study are content analysis techniques. This technique is used to support the interpretation process of the text being studied to find meaning. The theory used to explore the meaning in more depth of each text studied, namely the semiology of Roland Barthes. Semiology or what is commonly said with the word semiotics is a discipline that studies the sign system (Barthes, 2012, p. 17). In its development, semiotics not only dwells on the discussion of phonemes but more than that. Semiotics has moved away by placing language in a larger narrative or discourse. Narratives or discourses have been around since human history began through articulate language, both through utterances or writing, gestures, silent or moving images (Barthes, 2010, p.79).

Signs always reflect multiple meanings. That is, the discourse conveyed through the text is the sequences and the fabric or system of structure that composes language. Through language can be known the message that the author wants to convey through a sign because the BTJ-S text is multi perspective. BTJ-S text is a discourse that has a language sign system. To understand the content, then read the signs to know their meaning.

## Results and Discussion

### A. Sultan Agung and Spiritual Logic.

Spiritual logic as a spiritual level way of thinking. Speaking of spiritual logic, truth has its own reality depending on the perspective used. Keep in mind that a logic has its logic. This way of thinking is of course a consequence, namely resistance or rejection. Rejection occurs because it is considered illogical according to general logic.

Keep in mind that every logic can be achieved with awareness. If general logic uses brain awareness or rationality while spiritual logic uses inner awareness or irrationality so the boundaries are clear. Clearly, common logic relies on reason while spiritual logic combines creativity and human taste. Inner awareness does not require analytical methods while brain awareness is demanded by a methodology. Spiritual logic requires arguments that sometimes make no sense. For example as in QS. Al Kahfi (p.62-80), where a prophet kills a small child. If

this event is seen as using brain awareness, then the incident is considered a sin because it is not logical. Though brain awareness demands a proof. Then, the prophet *Khidr* made the excuse that his behavior was based on inner awareness, where later if the child lived he would bring his parents into error. Even if understood further, the prophet *Khidr* told about a future that had not yet happened. Something that cannot be proven. In the end, spiritual logic or inner consciousness is no different from belief, trust or disbelief, so that the spiritual logic departs from religion or belief. In short, spiritual logic offers a future that cannot be investigated while brain awareness offers a future but is based on predictions of logical analyzes.

Sultan Agung's attempt to strengthen his position as king of Mataram was largely inspired by God. This depiction is inseparable from the belief of the Javanese people who consider the king as God's representative in the world. Therefore, a king has advantages in addition to the results of the spiritual process undertaken. Like Panembahan Senopati story that was able to meet with the ruler of the South Coast of Java (in Javanese language: *Kanjeng ratu Kidul*) before ascending the throne to become king of Mataram. This is also what the great Sultan had when he ruled in Mataram. *Sultan Agung* is known as a wise person who is able to see far into the future.

*Sultan Agung's* efforts could be seen when he was failed attacking Batavia in 1633 as a result of his great ambitions of controlling Java. The news of *Sultan Agung's* failure was heard in *Kajoran (Bayat)* which is known as the center of resistance against Sultan Agung . On his spiritual instructions, *Sultan Agung* went to the tomb of the *Sunan Bayat* (the tomb of *Ki Ageng Pandan Arang*) to make a pilgrimage. Graaf (1986, pp. 207-208) notes that the journey of *Sultan Agung* to Bayat has an important meaning for the sovereignty of Mataram. Considering that Mataram descent rarely visits Bayat's grave because *Kiai Ageng Pandan Arang* is not favored by the Mataram kingdom. Then, on the courtesy of Sultan Agung , he saw that the spiritual power in Bayat needed to be reconciled with his coming as a king's descendant through approaches, namely by making a pilgrimage to the tomb of Sunan Bayat. Although, self-esteem as a king is at stake given that Bayat's tomb is known as a place to ask for help and improve fate in trading ventures (in Javanese language : *ngalap berkah*).

If viewed from a military perspective, the arrival of *Sultan Agung* to the Bayat sacred tomb is certainly very beneficial for the *Kajoran* rebels. They will easily attack *Sultan Agung* and kill him. Remembering *Sultan Agung* can be attacked at any time and suddenly. What was the reason *Sultan Agung* made a pilgrimage to Bayat's tomb? Is it just a pilgrimage? Not only that. There is a purpose behind it. The arrival of *Sultan Agung* to *Bayat* to show the people of Bayat that *Sultan Agung* as the king in Mataram still respected Sunan Bayat. With strong conviction, *Sultan Agung's* efforts were able to reduce the resistance of the people of Bayat so as not to rebel against Mataram because of the failure of *Sultan Agung* to attack Batavia.

The departure of Sultan Agung to Bayat was not written in detail in BTJ-S. However, the defeat of Sultan Agung in Batavia is told in BTJ-S (1980, p. 176): "The king said to the prince Mandurareja, "I ordered you to invade Jayakarta; now it was occupied by the Dutch. His Regent has lost his war. Seize the city of Jayakarta. Drive the Dutch from there. ". The departure of Sultan Agung to Bayat was strengthened by Ricklefs (2016, pp. 110) that in the 1930s, precisely in the northeast of Tembayat, the *Kajoran* area was the center of resistance to Sultan Agung , and in 1933 Sultan Agung held a pilgrimage to the tomb Sunan Bayat. However, Ricklefs did not clearly explain the purpose and purpose of Sultan Agung's visit to Bayat. However, in general it can be said that the efforts made by Sultan Agung were nothing but to preserve his power in Mataram. Although after his reign the Mataram kingdom collapsed under King Amangkurat I.

It seems that the ambition of *Sultan Agung* to control Java is very large. After being able to control Surabaya, *Sultan Agung* wanted to control the Giri region. Graaf (1986, pp. 215) wrote that after Surabaya could be controlled by Mataram, economically Giri still had a certain meaning. Giri remains a spiritual figure besides having a strong military organization. Based on this consideration *Sultan Agung* wanted to attack Giri. But he was disappointed to attack Giri even though at that time, the government of *Sultan Agung* was known to have a feared war fleet in the entire region of Java.

*Sultan Agung's* lack of courage in attacking Giri was based on the consideration that the Sunan Giri were children descended from the *Sunan Prapen* who had been saved. *Sultan Agung* did not want to risk being exposed to the magical power that made life miserable for attacking a guardian (in Javanese language: *kuwalat*, *kena walat*) for his actions. Based on these considerations, *Sultan Agung* sought another way, namely by appointing Prince Pekik from Surabaya as the duke of Mataram and marrying him to Ratu Pandansari, *Sultan Agung's* younger brother. Then, Prince Pekik was ordered to attack Giri's palace. Prince Pekik was the grandson of the descendants of Sunan Maulana Malik Ibrahim's cleric. Sunan Maulana Malik Ibrahim is a teacher from the Sunan Giri. Therefore, the spiritual level and the higher descendants of *Prince Pekik* than the *Giri sunan* can easily be defeated by Giri. *Sultan Agung's* order to Prince Pekik was conveyed through his wife, Ratu Pandansari. This is found in BTJ-S (1986, p. 174): *"It hurts my place in the heart. Adiajeng, my heart is very sick, that there is a Pandita (guardian), not submitting to me. He lived in the Giri hermitage. Except for him, all the people of Java have submitted to me. Say to your husband, for Giri I charge him, so that he is subject to me. What is better to subdue Giri is only your husband, because both are descendants of Pandita (guardian)."*

Giri is a small area like a village. At that time, the strength of the *Sultan Agung* war fleet was quite feared on Java because it had a formidable war fleet. If only to attack Giri, it should be done easily. Given that at that time, several regions in Java, including: Surabaya, Tuban, Pati, Batavia could be controlled by *Sultan Agung*. If examined further, the conquest of a region in military science has nothing to do with sacred matters or the like. This is based on the efforts of the Dutch who succeeded in controlling Java by defeating other sacred figures

## Conclusion

Spiritual logic is a way of thinking that is closely related to the life of *Sultan Agung*. Spiritual logic is believed to be able to offer a future at God's direction. That is, the purpose of life is to go to God. The basis of spiritual logic departs from religion or belief in God so that the spiritual logic can be used to reduce conflict as what *Sultan Agung* did to reduce the opposition of the Bayat people. Therefore, this research is important because it is able to reveal the Javanese mindset in interpreting the life contained in Javanese literary works, such as BTJ.

BTJ is known as a written record of history (Java: *babad*) the emergence of kingdoms in Java. Although the BTJ manuscript is regarded as a Javanese literary work which is full of fiction, the emergence of the BTJ serves to legitimize the power of the Mataram kingdom. This hegemony arises along with the strong belief in Javanese society about the names and places that are told in the BTJ, for example the name of the region Bayat, the name of the Giri region, the name Sunan Bayat (Sunan Pandanaran). The existence of these names further enriched Mataram's hegemony against Javanese cultural history.



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