

# THE JAVANESE QUEST OF ISLAMIC SPIRITUALITY IN *SULUK WUJIL*: A SEMIOTIC READING

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## ABSTRACT

*Javanese Islamic Literature was connected to Islamic mysticism and written in poem to express delicate and sophisticated doctrines. Poem is deemed to be able to go beyond literal meaning for it expresses notion through figurative languages. Suluk Wujil is a good example of such early Javanese Islamic literary work that features spiritual quest and teaching. Suluk Wujil tells about Wujil, a convert who wanted to reach the essence of the ultimate Truth. Wujil is symbolic figure carrying an important sufistic teaching as well as the revealing socio-religious discourse in the early development of Islam in Java. This article is aimed to reveal the content of Suluk Wujil using three steps of semiotic reading, i.e, narrative schema, primary sign discovery and syntagmatic as well as paradigmatic analysis. The paper shows, firstly, that narrative scheme of Suluk Wujils is proceeded by a complaint of Wujil who failed to get into The Ultimate Truth after ten years of spiritual learning in Bonang. Ratu Wahdat or Sunan Bonang taught him the way to get spiritual enlightenment along with endorsing spiritual enlightenment of Seh Malaya (Sunan Kalijaga). Secondly, the primary sign of the Suluk Wujil is the phrase "Arriving in Mecca", in the last part of the text. The phrase affirms the spiritual characteristic of Suluk Wujil, with concern to a spiritual journey to very truth of Islamic spirituality. Thirdly, the paradigmatic analysis shows that there are various signs parallel and oppositional in the same time. The combination of signs forms a synthesis which leads to a deeper understanding of the significance of the signs. The syntagmatic analysis leads to an understanding of oppositional, but complementary signs.*

**Keywords :** *Wujil; Sunan Bonan; Seh Malaya; Mecca; Suluk*

## INTRODUCTION

Acculturation of Islam and Javanese culture has given birth to the emergence of *suluk* works. *Suluk* is a kind of Islamic Javanese that widely grew from 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Sedyawati et.al., 2001: 299-300). *Suluk* marks specific Islamic Javanese literature that contains a spiritual quest. *Suluk* work reflects a religious thought that was prevalent and creates a genre of Javanese Islamic literature in the early Islamic history in Jawa. The study of *suluk* provides a vivid picture on an important phase of the Islamization in Java.

*Suluk* works are written in Javanese poem. In Java, poetry has become a standard instrument for expressing religious as well as educational teaching. Literary language in poem allows symbolic disclosure of mystical ideas and opens possibilities of using language beyond its textual boundary.

Literary language can convey profound and complicated messages, such as allegory and metaphors. Theological and philosophical debates are not infrequently represented in the form of metaphor and other figurative languages. Therefore, *suluk* literature poses a challenge to readers to go beyond literal meaning and to grasp deeper meaning instead.

According to traditional aesthetics, meaning may not be separated from beauty because it leads to deeper reflection and contemplation. The beauty is also used to expound the highest knowledge of divinity and the essence of life. The uniqueness of poetry lies in its ability to express the human mind and emotion. The aesthetic aspect of poem lies in the use of word, rhyme, and dictions. The beauty of words in conveying rich meaning in poetry is supported by the use of various figurative languages, enabling author's imagination to be inflated. They

may extend the meaning by adding attributes or modifiers so that they reveal sublime notion of humanity and divinity through indirect expression. In that case, poem is more able to reveal various meanings and significances and enables readers to get into author's thought through the principle of comparison and similarity between one word with another (Kosasih, 2014: 97, 104).

Metaphor plays an important role in the reading of literary works. Metaphor is regarded as the most important form because it intensively uses comparisons. Comparison utilizes two elements of human ability, namely: emotion and intellect. It can bridge imagination and social reality (Ratna, 2014: 181-182). The use of comparisons is to help embodying feelings that cannot be accommodated by words in a denotative way.

Pradopo (2013: 147-148) asserts that literary work is an indirect expression so that the continuity of expression becomes literary convention. Indirect excerpts of literary works could be constituted by means of substitution. Metaphor is generally regarded as a figurative language to compare or to substitute reference to meaning without using comparative tool. Metaphor comprises several kinds of comparison and substitution like personification and metonymy. According to Gluckberg (2001: 4-5), metaphor is form of conceptual representation or substitution. There are two kinds of metaphors: nominal and predicative which the former represents the substitution a noun for another and the latter a verb for another.

Understanding of poetry genre is important in studying the legacies of the classical Islamic literature in Indonesia. Various Islamic works in the archipelago use poetry as an instrument for expressing religious messages so that there is abundance of religious works coined as *serat* and *suluk* work. The works contain ethical and virtuous teachings, such as *Serat Wulangreh*, *Serat Sasanasunu*, *Serat Wedhatama*, and *Serat Cabolek*. The study of *serat* work has been done by several

scholars. *Serat Sasanasunu* has been studied by Sri Suhandjati Sukri (2004), *Serat Wedhatama* by Aditya Jatmiko (2005), and *Serat Cabolek* by Soebardi (2004). However, there are several Javanese Islamic works that remain untouched and or are being studied.

*Suluk* work represents a special genre of Javanese literature influenced by the teachings of Islam. It contains a spiritual teaching for attaining the universal truth of Islam. Although referring not only to the works of Sufism, but also to names of spiritual discussion on the nature of divinity and spiritual search. *Suluk* work has not been adequately studied and some are not found anymore (Sedyawati, et.al., 2001: 299-301).

There are several *suluk* that have been circulated and studied, but they are not always understood easily. Pigeaud notes several *suluk* works in Javanese, namely *Suluk Jebeng*, *Suluk - Malang Sumirang*, *Suluk Acih*, *Suluk Waleh*, *Suluk Daka*, *Suluk Purwa Daksina*, *Suluk Purwa Sari*, *Suluk Samsu Tabriz* or *Samsu Tabarik*, *Suluk Durun*, *Suluk Aspiya*, *Suluk Nala Kirda*, *Suluk Aspiya*, *Suluk Burung* or *Peksi*, *Suluk Johar Mungkin*, *Suluk Wujil*, *Suluk Jati Rasa* and *Suluk Abesi* (Pigeaud, 1976: 87). *Suluk Syekh Bari* (*Suluk Bonang*), *Suluk Wujil*, *Suluk Malang Sumirang*, and *Suluk Sujinah* are quite familiar among Javanese researchers. *Suluk Syekh Bari* has been reviewed by B.J.O Schrieke and G.W.J Drewes, and *Suluk Sujinah* by Darori Amin (2011). The problem of the works is the difficulty in grasping their meanings and messages because of complex and symbolic use of words and allegories.

Reading *suluk* requires careful and deep interaction with the story and concept that was developing during a period of text production. Moreover, *suluk* literatures consist of two branches, namely *suluk pesantren* (*suluk pesisiran*/coastal area of Java Island) and *suluk Islam-Kejawen* (*suluk kraton*/palace/hinterland area). The former grew in coastal area by Islamic scholar or *ulama*, while the latter did in

Palace or in the hinterland by official writers in Javanese courts of Kasunanan Surakarta, Mangkunegaran and Kasultanan Yogyakarta. Both kinds of *suluk* literatures have nuances: the first emphasizes the appreciation of the Transcendent, while the second focuses on the dimension of human union with the God (Sedyawati, 2001: 300-301).

*Suluk Wujil* is one of the earliest *suluk* works in Java. *Suluk Wujil* contains a spiritual journey of Wujil, a servant of the Majapahit's palace who converted to Islam and learned Islam in Bonang under the tutelage of Sunan Bonang, one of nine saints in Java. Wujil was not satisfied yet of the learning he got after 10 years-studies in Bonang. He asked Sunan Bonang to teach him the ultimate truth of Islam. Sunan Bonang taught him using the metaphor of mirror and sent him to Seh Malaya (Sunan Kalijaga), who then elaborated some obstacle to reach Mecca. Finally, Sunan Bonang and Seh Malaya altogether disclosed the ultimate spiritual teaching not by words, but by direct revealing of trance of both, expressed in "arriving in Mecca" as metaphorical depiction. Mecca here was not a physical place in the Land of Haram, but it was a situation when Seh Malaya and Sunan Bonang met their foreheads, toes and chests, while abandoning concepts and words, and embracing their belief instead. There is no further explanation in such work about what is meant by "Mecca" by the author.

This article is aimed to reveal the significance of Mecca in *Suluk Wujil*. Mecca is commonly understood as muslim praying direction, but here Mecca is a symbolic concept quest. To reveal the meaning of Mecca, this article employs semiotic steps as introduced by Subur Wardoyo (2005a: 10-11) who comprises three steps of semiotic readings, i.e narrative schema, primary signifier discovery, and syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis. Furthermore, the purpose of this paper is to uncover the content of *Suluk Wujil* through three semiotic readings: narrative scheme, primary signifier, and significance of the

work through paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The studies of *Suluk Wujil* have been conducted by several researchers. Some of studies are focused on it and some discuss it as a particular theme of the study. The focused studies have been done by Widyastuti (2001), Cohen (2012) and Wirman (2015). Sri Hartarti Widyastuti in her *Suluk Wujil, Suntingan Teks dan Tinjauan Semiotik* (2001) focuses on providing text edition, translation and elaborating several key words using semiotics. She highlights the analysis of key words using semiotic, especially the figurative languages. The same interest is also given by Metsra Wirman (2015). He focuses on the scrutiny of *Suluk Wujil* codex and text, and on revealing the character of sufistic teaching that the text contains. Therefore, his research is kind of philology and semantic one.

Cohen (2012: 13-34) takes a different point of view by emphasizing on the importance of *wayang kulit* (skin puppet performance) as vehicle to convey spiritual notions. Cohen is interested in the fact that *Suluk Wujil* integrates spiritual discourses into an artistic performance. He concludes that *Suluk Wujil* is not intended for all readers, rather for specific segment because it has hermeneutical complexities.

Several other researches put the discussion on *Suluk Wujil* as part of other topic studies. Jauharotul Alfadhilah (2018) focus on the study of the concept of God in the perspective of Maulana Makhdom Ibrahim, while G.W.J Drewes (1968) and Rohmah Ulfah (2013) discuss *Suluk Wujil* as part of their research on Sunan Bonang's mystical ideas. Drewes provides analytical reading on mystical concepts in the *Suluk Wujil*, as part of his broader topic, i.e. the study of poems attributed to Sunan Bonang. His expertise on the subject enables him to

reveal the deeper meaning of mystical concepts of *Suluk Wujil*.

This research seeks to reveal the significance (second meaning) of *Suluk Wujil*. This study, inevitably, intersects the previous researches because all of them deal with the content of *Suluk Wujil*. The research employs three steps of semiotic reading which more possibly reveal the wholeness of the idea which *Suluk Wujil* conveys.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is a literature review or textual study of *Suluk Wujil*. The *suluk* was originally written in Javanese letters and has been transliterated and translated by Poerbatjaraka, an outstanding figure in the studies of Javanese text. *Suluk Wujil* is a literary work consisting of 104 stanzas. Poerbatjaraka assumes that it was written not by a single writer; rather it was developed in progress by more than a writer.

The use of semiotics is based on the reason that poetry has a unique character. According to Riffatere (1984) there are three modes that make the poetical language distinctive. First, the language of poetry uses pattern of replacements in which the language signs shift from one meaning to another, as in metonyms and metaphors. Second, the distortion in poetry was occurred when poetry uses contradictory, ambiguous and nonsense expressions. Third, it creates textual space that provides an organizational basis so that language marks can be used for different understandings, which cannot be used in other contexts (Riffatere, 1984: 2)

For this reason, semiotics provides a vehicle for studying poetry appropriately. Poetry is composed linguistically; it can be viewed as a sign system or the network of signs. However, it cannot be broken down into fragments because the meaning of poetry exists in its totality and wholeness. Thus, reading poetry is reading the signs of language in its cohesive structure and the coherence between ideas it contains.

The semiotic study of poetry, according to Riffatere (1984: 4-5) works through two levels. The first level is the reading from beginning to end of a text, from top to bottom, and follows a syntagmatic exposure. This level is also called a heuristic reading, i.e. when the first interpretation occurs, that is, as long as the reading of meaning is understood. The second level is a retroactive reading or second interpretation which is also called a hermeneutical reading. When the reader conducts reading, he remembers what he has just read and modified his understanding according to what he is now capturing. The heuristic readings works at mimesis level, whereas retroactive readings work at semiotic level. At retroactive readings, meaning of poetry develops from the comprehension of the matrix (minimal and literal sentences) into long, complex, non-literal indirect expressions (Culler 2001: 90-91).

The retroactive readings as suggested by Riffatere are outlined in the semiotic reading steps proposed by Subur Wardoyo. Wardoyo proposes three steps of semiotic analysis, namely narrative schema analysis, primary sign discovery, and syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis (Wardoyo, 2005a: 10-11). The three steps considered by Wardoyo as reading tool, not only for poetry readings, but also for novels. The narrative schema analysis is the first step to understand poetry through rearranging poetic language into story schemes so that poetry can be transformed into a narration. The next step is to find primary sign, a sign acts as umbrella for other signs. If the primary sign in a poem is figurative and connotative language, the analysis of the language tool can be done through three processes, namely 1) inventing metaphors, by determining what ground represents its tenor; 2) determining connotative words and its meaning; and 3) analyzing the impact of metaphorical elements in the work (Wardoyo, 2005b: 158-160).

The third step of Wardoyo's semiotic reading is paradigmatic and syntagmatic

analysis. Paradigmatic analysis serves to categorize and to organize signs according to the primary sign in the vertical axis. Paradigmatic analysis is conducted by placing the signs according to their classification in an oppositional structure. Paradigmatic analysis enables readers to understand and grasp all signs in a binary opposition so that every sign constructs its meaning from its oppositional sign. Paradigmatic analysis differs from narrative scheme because it is to define and to subcategorize signs, not to arrange them based on time order (Wardoyo, 2005a: 5-6). Paradigmatic analysis is followed by a syntagmatic analysis, in which signs are analyzed according to horizontal relation of signs or by reading one sign attributed to another. A syntagmatic reading allows signs to be understood in relation to other signs.

Wardoyo's steps or semiotic reading is used here due to applicability and practicality reasons. Wardoyo provides a method of semiotic reading that enables readers to find out the significance of literary work more systematically.

In sum, the study focuses on three aspects: arranging narrative scheme of the text in order to give readers brief description on its discourse, determining primary sign in order that readers can underpin their understanding of the wholeness of the work, and analyzing the relation of signs in the works paradigmatically and syntagmatically. All of these steps are integral since reading literary works should be done holistically. The study portrays and treats the *Suluk Wujil* as an independent entity and focuses on its intrinsic meaning.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Description of *Suluk Wujil*

*Suluk Wujil* is associated with Sunan Bonang or Benang, a Javanese saint who passed away in Bonang, an area in Tuban - East Java. Tuban is a coastal area and was a cosmopolit city due to its position as a port city. Tuban, along with Canggus, Sedayu and

Gresik, was a major port of the Majapahit Kingdom where goods from Java was exported to other cities and countries, especially China. Islamic traders came to Majapahit and did business there. With the decline of Majapahit power and the rise of Demak as a new dominating power, Tuban, Gresik and Sedayu were under control of Demak (Tjandrasasmita, 2009: 52-53). Tuban at that time still played a strategic position in Demak era where intellectual exchange took place, along with commercial exchange.

The Popular Muslim saints who spread Islam in the late period of Majapahit were operating mainly in the coastal areas. They actively supported the foundation of Demak Kingdom as the first Islamic kingdom in Java. They are well-known as Walisongo (Nine Saints). Tuban gets popularity today because one of the Nine Saints, Sunan Bonang, once lived in Tuban as his last resort. Sunan Bonang is the son of Raden Rahmat, an important Islamic figure and a master of Islam based in Surabaya, near the center of the Majapahit Palace. Raden Rahmat is a migrant from Campa. According to local history, Sunan Bonang and Raden Paku (Sunan Giri) travelled to Malacca as transit before they continued to Mecca, as final destination. In Malacca, they met Syekh Wali Lanang, the father of Sunan Giri. Wali Lanang suggested them not to go to Mecca, rather to deepen their Islamic knowledge in Malacca. Afterward, they came back to Java. Sunan Bonang acted as *imām* of Demak Mosque, before he moved to Bonang, a city of his mother, and the place where he passed away (Lombard, II, 2005: 42-43).

The setting of *Suluk Wujil* gives a brief picture of Tuban as a center of Islamic mission. It is not a coincidence that *Suluk Wujil* was attributed to Sunan Bonang, an important Muslim saint figure in Bonang. However, it is difficult to determine who the real author of *Suluk Wujil* was. Some writer attribute it to Sunan Bonang's work simply because it talks about Sunan Bonang, while

some other argue that *Suluk Wujil* appeared after the Walisongo era (al-Zastrouw, 2017: 7). Somehow, it is illogical to attribute it to Sunan Bonang. However, the trend to attribute the work to a popular figure is high so that Widyastuti, a researcher of *Suluk Wujil* attributes it to Sunan Bonang, despite her allegation that the work was written by Sultan Hamengkubuwono (Widyastuti, 2001: 4).

Such allegation is weak for three reasons. First, the title does not necessarily indicate its author. *Serat Cabolek* for instance was not written in Cabolek or written by Kiai Mutamakkin, the main figure of the work, rather by Yasadipura II. Second, according to Poerbatjaraka (1985: 11), *Suluk Wujil* was written in 1607, about half a century after Sunan Bonang life. Poerbatjaraka assumes that the text might have already existed in the time of Pangeran Seda Krapyak, the father of Sultan Agung (Poerbatjaraka and Hadidjaja, 1952: 107-108). Third, *Suluk Wujil* places Sunan Bonang as a protagonist figure. Sunan Bonang is viewed as a wise ascetic. In fact, it hardly finds a writer putting himself as an ideal character in his own writing, especially for those writers who get acquaintance with Sufism. Putting oneself high is contradictory to the basic value of Sufism which enforces humble and sincere attitude. Finally, it is difficult to determine clearly who the author of *Suluk Wujil* was, although one can assume that the text came from the close era of Walisongo.

*Suluk Wujil* is also known as *Suluk Dulil*. According to Drewes, the title of *Suluk Dulil* is more recent version (Drewes, 1968: 218). It contains 104 stanzas with the *Dandanggula* and *Mijil metrum* (poetic meter), as well as an Old Javanese *metrum Aswalita*. Peorbatjaraka alleges *Suluk Wujil*'s manuscript was written by three authors, based on his analysis on sentences styles and *metrum*. He values lines 1 to 37 as beautiful works, lines 38-48 as less clear structure, and line 49-54 implying

Sundanese character or author (Poerbatjaraka, 1985: 9-10). Purbatjaraka's allegation is quite reasonable when *Suluk Wujil* is read from its narrative scheme. There is a part of the story that seems to have a different tone and idea. The part where Seh Malaya teaches Wujil has different nuances and then the story shifted little to the story of the spiritual quest of Seh Malaya.

The manuscript collecting by Purbatjaraka shows that there are several manuscripts: i.e. Cirebon, Solo and Tan Khoen Swie Kediri. Tan Khoen Swie's text version puts 'Sendhi' or 'Sumendhi' as the name of main characters, while Schrieke's version recognizes Dulil as one of the main characters. Consequently, there are three variations of main character's name: Wujil, Dulil, and Sendhi or Sumendhi. The various names are not strange phenomenon on the study of philology due to some change or corruption in the process of copying text from one manuscript to another.

Sunan Bonang's name has also several substitutions. He was also called Ratu Wahdat, Sunan Wahdat, or The Ascetic. Although his name varies, most of it refers to Sufi's terms. The names highlight the significance of *Suluk Wujil* as a spiritual work. The term of *wahdat* is well-known in the sufistic tradition. *Wahdat* is one of the logical phases of al-Haqq or God's manifestations. Wahdat is known as the second degree of emanation of The One in Ibnu Arabi's conception. *Wahdat* literally means oneness, in which al-Haqq reveals himself in *Nur Muhammad* (Muhammad's light), a sketch of universal reality (Simuh, 1988: 310).

The idea is close to pantheism or monism which affects the spiritual thought in the Land of Malay and of Java. Hamzah Fansuri and Syamsudin As-Sumaterani are regarded as the proponents of the monistic idea in Malay world, while Siti Jenar as a proponent among Javanese people. The teaching is reflected in an old Javanese

literature, such as *Serat Centini* and *Wirid Hidayat Jati* (Simuh, 1988: 308). The teaching, however, was refused by a more orthodox figure, Nur al-Din al-Raniri, the influential *ulama* in Sumatera. Al-Raniri's refutation to monistic or pantheistic idea got support from political authority at that time. The same situation happened in Java where Siti Jenar was finally punished by religious authority because his idea was considered risky to lead common people astray. The polemic on monistic teaching can also be found in *Suluk Benang* or *The Admonition of Seh Bari*. Seh Bari opposed Abdul Wahid's teaching on monistic idea and deemed it as infidelity (Drewes, 1969: 8-9).

Although, Sunan Bonang is frequently named Ratu (King) Wahdat, but there is no trace of monistic ideas in *Suluk Wujil*. The idea of *Suluk Wujil* shows an orthodox notion on the belief in one God. The confession is reflected in the spiritual quest of Wujil to find enlightenment, by reaching the One.

### The Narrative Scheme

The Narrative scheme functions as plot, a sequential narration building a cohesive discourse. Narration, according to Culler (2001: 189, 192), is not a merely the sequence of events or actions, rather it is discourse or the narration of events. Discourse will focus on portraying important events and determining significance (second meaning).

As literary work, *Suluk Wujil* narration can be understood according to a hierarchy of events. The narrative scheme arranges events in the works in order that readers can understand the whole of story and idea growing in the story. The narrative scheme emphasizes on more detail events, not only key verbs. The narrative scheme of *Suluk Wujil* is as follow:

#### 1. Wujil met Ratu Wahdat (line 1-8)

Wujil went to meet Ratu Wahdat and expressed his concern. He felt that he failed to get enlightenment after ten years learning under Sunan Bonang tutelage. Although having devoted all endeavors,

he did not get the perfection of behavior or the experience of the ultimate Truth.

#### 2. Ratu Wahdat taught Wujil (line 9-43)

Ratu Wahdat gave instruction to Wujil on a shore at Benang. He reminded Wujil not to regard himself as *Hyang Jati Tunggal* (The One), nor *Hyang Jati* (the Truth). Ratu Wahdat taught him the obliged prayers, the essence of remembrance (*zikr*), and the four elements (the soil, fire, wind, and water) one will attain while conducting *zikr*. Ratu Wahdat explained that the body is a cage and urged Wujil to find out who the bird inside was. Ratu Wahdat asked Wujil to implement all teachings he received.

#### 3. Wujil invited Satpada to meet Sunan Wahdat (line 44-49)

Sunan Wahdat once asked Wujil to call Satpada. A dialogue took place between Satpada and Wujil about the meaning of Wujil's name. Along with Wujil, Satpada came to Sunan Wahdat, who asked the news that Satpada brought from Jawana (Juwana). Satpada informed Sunan Wahdat about Seh Malaya's position in Pati, who performed mask dancing from one village to another. Sunan Wahdat sent Wujil to meet Seh Malaya and handed him lotus flower with earrings, commonly used by dance performers.

#### 4. Wujil met Seh Malaya (line 50-55)

Wujil met Seh Malaya and handed over the flowers with earrings. Seh Malaya understood the message in an ornamental decoration of the earrings. All deeds would end by death. Seh Malaya read the message of the earring from Sunan Wahdat and got touched. He knew that Sunan Bonang wanted to have met him by reminding him on the journey to Mecca.

#### 5. Seh Malaya Told His Journey to Mecca (line 56-63)

Seh Malaya invited Wujil to his cabin and told him about his journey to Mecca. He met Maulana Maghribi who suggested him to go back to Java. Maulana Maghribi

told Seh Malaya that his spiritual destination would not be found in Mecca because Mecca in Arabia was a fake one. No one knew where the real Mecca was, but one might reach it with the provision of courage and the ability to die in life, refinement, and away from worldly pleasures.

6. Sunan Bonang Revealed Who Seh Malaya was (line 64-68)

Returning to Benang, Wujil met Ratu Wahdat. Ratu Wahdat revealed who Syekh Malaya was. Coming back from Malaya, Seh Malaya conducted self-purification for five years in Kalijaga Cirebon. Seh Malaya then moved to Demak because of the call of King Awanggi. One day, his beloved son was missing. Due to sadness, Seh Malaya chose to become a mask dancer and traveled to find his son.

7. Sunan Bonang taught the Meaning of Unity (line 69 - 71)

Sunan Bonang taught Wujil to die in life. Ratu Wahdat explained that only by death one would return to his origin. If Wujil want to find the One, he should eliminate all lusts in order to be one with Him. But he should keep in mind that the union was a union of consciousness, not union in reality, so that His will became his will. One who still counted and divided reality was in a misleading way because he only knew the royal court, but not The King.

8. Wujil and Satpada Learned Mirror Metaphor (line 72-86)

Ratu Wahdat asked Wujil and Satpada to retrieve a mirror and hung it on a tree. Both are told to reflect themselves in front of the mirror. The mirror was able to reflect Wujil completely together with Satpada, although they were taller than the mirror, and it could reflect both of them without any difference whether they are men or women. Ratu Wahdat revealed the deep meaning of *lā ilāha* (denial/ *nāfī*)

and *illallāh* (confession / *isbāt*) through the mirror metaphor.

9. Seh Malaya Revealed His Journey to Mecca (line 87-94)

Wujil reported to Ratu Wahdat about puppet shadow (*wayang*) show in Penanggungan. The story was about Bharatayudha begun with the praise to King Jayabaya. The *wayang* show told about the descent of Narada, Janaka and Parasurama who followed Krishna as an ambassador of Pandavas to Hastina. When he met Ratu Wahdat, Seh Malaya recounted his journey to Mecca and passed three obstacles. The obstacles were waves in a salty sea with his boat, the waves in desert like volcanoes erupting, and the waves in a sea of fire like falling stars. Although Seh Malaya reached Mecca, he had difficulties to understand Meccan language and several symbolic views inside Masjid al-Haram

10. Ratu Wahdat Explained *Nāfī* and *Isbāt* Meaning (line 95-99)

Ratu Wahdat invited Seh Malaya together with Lawungsalawe, Wanakarta and Wujil to discuss *Kresna Duta* story and its relation to Islam. Ratu Wahdat explained that *wayang* arrangement had symbolic meanings. Those figures on the left hand were the symbols of the negation (Pandawa) and on the right hand were symbol of confession (Kurawa), and Krishna became a mirror. The struggle between Pandawas and Kurawa to win over Hasthina reflected a struggle to reach the Truth.

11. Arriving in Mecca (line 100-104)

Ratu Wahdat taught Seh Malaya and his disciples (Lawungsalawe, Wanakarta and Wujil) in order not to hold letters (linguistic signs), rather to go to the deeper experience of the One. Holding the letters (textual meaning of teachings) leads to misdirection because people would adore texts. Ratu Wahdat then guided Seh Malaya to directly experience

the One by abandoning concept. He had Sheikh Malaya embrace him so that both met their face, chest and legs without any doubt. After doing so, they finally arrived in Mecca.

The sequence of the *Suluk Wujil* is marked by markers of time, place or scene. Although *Suluk Wujil* is a poem, there is the scene like a story. The opening scene begins with the following stanza:

There is a story about someone called Wujil  
He comes and salutes to his Master  
Ratu Wahdat  
And kneeling him on the ground near the feet of the master  
who resides in the village of Benang  
(Poerbatjaraka, 1985: 15).

The model of introduction is quite known in Javanese among Malay stories. Story telling model was a common practice in classical literature, which usually begins with the words: "the story", "it is said", "one day", a story ", and the like.

The sign of sequence displacement in *Suluk Wujil* uses time phrase, such as: "It was almost noon, the sun rose on the eastern horizon into the light; After the sunset, Seh Malaya said to Wujil ....." and "the sun almost set, already at the top of the mountain" (Purbatjaraka, 1985: 24, 27 and 33). In addition to time markers, there are bookmarks in the form of notifications about the story section. In sum, the *Suluk Wujil* is a poem whose narrative is arranged as story. The model of story is common in classical Javanese literary work, some of which contain famous stories, such as *Bharatayudha*, *Panji* and *Centini*.

### **Arriving in Mecca as Primary Sign**

The previous narrative scheme provides a vivid picture of the logical structure of *Suluk Wujil*. It enables readers to determine primary sign underpinning all discourses and serves as the key to understand cohesive meaning of *Suluk Wujil*. The primary sign plays important role as destination of spiritual quest that Wujil undergoes.

Interestingly, the primary sign can be found in closing statement, in last sentence of The *Suluk*

The enlightenment moment in *Suluk Wujil* can be found when Ratu Wahdat taught Seh Malaya through direct experience. Ratu Wahdat led Seh Malaya to abandon any concept and doubt and to embrace each other to get direct enlightenment, as shown by the phrase: "Immediately they arrived in Mecca" (*sekedhap tekeng Mekah*). The "arriving in Mecca" might not be understood literally, because Maulana Maghribi had told Seh Malaya previously that Mecca was not a place in Westward (Arabia), but a destination of spiritual quest.

'Arriving in Mecca' accordingly is the primary sign of *Suluk Wujil*. There are two reasons on why the phrase becomes underpinning notion of *Suluk Wujil*. Firstly, *Suluk Wujil* begins with an event, when Wujil meets Ratu Wahdat to complain his spiritual stuck. The rest story, consequently, is the answering of spiritual quest. 'Arriving in Mecca' is a metaphorical depiction of enlightenment reached by Seh Malaya, under the supervision of Sunan Bonang, and a goal that Wujil seeks to find.

Secondly, from the 58<sup>th</sup> line to the 62<sup>th</sup> line, Seh Malaya told Wujil the story of his journey to Mecca. He was told by Maulana Maghribi that his journey was useless because Mecca which he tried to find in the West was a fake Mecca. No one knew the real Mecca. When one came to Mecca, he would become a guardian. From the 91<sup>st</sup> line until the 94<sup>th</sup> line Sheikh Malaya continues recounting his experience to Mecca, where he had troubles in understanding Mecca's language. From the 97<sup>th</sup> line to the 101<sup>th</sup> line, Ratu Wahdat expounded on the *nāfi-īsbāt* notion and the liberation from dependance to letters, words or concepts. The last line, when Ratu Wahdat met his body to Seh Malaya's, he reminds him to abandon all conceptions and doubts, and suggests embracing his belief without referring to any physical and conceptual principles. In that case, spiritual quest ends up with a direct enlightenment.

To understand the meaning of 'Mecca', it is important to comprehend how Mecca is understood among Sufis. It can be assumed that terminologies applied in *Suluk Wujil* belong to technical meaning in Islamic Sufism, so that understanding inter-textually of *Suluk Wujil* to other texts will enable readers to grasp its very meanings.

The term Mecca basically refers to two meanings, literal and metaphorical ones. Mecca in literal meaning has also been used in sufistic works, such as poem by Hamzah Fansuri. Hamzah Fansuri is well-known for his one stanza reflecting his quest of enlightenment, as quoted by Abdul Hadi W.M:

Hamzah Fansuri in Mecca  
 Seeking God in the House of the Ka'bah  
 In Barus to Qudus too lousy  
 Finally found inside the house (Hadi, 1995: 30)

Here, the word 'Mecca' is employed in its denotative meaning, as a place in which Muslims gathers to perform pilgrimage (*hajj*). Ka'bah here also refers to physical building located inside mosque *al-haram* in Mecca. In that case, Mecca is not used as metaphor, rather as denotative meaning.

In the *Maṣnawī*, Rumi chooses to employ the metaphor of Ka'ba instead. Rumi's poem shows that whoever wants to sit with God, he must sit before saints. Otherwise, he will get lost because devils want to separate him from the saints. A solitary spiritual journey will lead to seductive persuasion, risky result, and false enlightenment. Therefore, Rumi suggests anyone who does spiritual journey to sit together in the congregation, to follow the journey of Prophet Muhammad's companions, and to have the same heartbeat and breathe with them. One who does pilgrim without any friend, he will not reach the Ka'bah (Chittick, 1983: 155-156). Mecca plays an important role since it is place where the Ka'bah exists and center of activities of *hajj*.

Another usage of Mecca to literal or physical place in the Land of Arabia can be found in Turkish Sufi, Yusuf Emre's remark, as quoted by Annemarie Schimmel. Schimmel quotes the phrase Emre, who writes: "When you seek God, seek Him in your heart - He is not in Jerusalem, Mecca, or *Hajj* (Schimmel 1975: 106). *Hajj* is the main destination of Sufis' journey to the deepest part of consciousness. *Hajj* can be interpreted both physically or spiritually, reflecting an twofold-process: getting to Mecca in Saudi Arabia and getting to the very center of spirituality. Such idea is shown by Ibn Farīd. Ibn Farīd states: "And that my establishment (in Arafat) is my standing before myself; in fact, my turning to the Ka'bah is my turning to myself. Truly, my essential return (to the Ka'bah) is the return to myself"(Stepaniants, 1994: 63-65).

On the other hand, Ka'bah is placed as a center of the spiritual quest in those quotes, even though it is interpreted differently. Abdul Hadi interprets the Ka'bah as a symbolic image of the center of consciousness, located in the heart of human (WM, 1995: 38). Here, Hadi uses the term Ka'bah in its metaphorical meaning, instead of its literal one.

Sufis, according to Schimmel (1975: 106), know that the Ka'bah made of stone and it is not the place of the Spirit of the Lord. The heart of the faithful servant is the true place of the spirit of God. Schimmel's statement, derived from Farīd l-Dīn al-'Aṭṭār, can also be found in the work of the Malay author Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī. Al-Rānirī in his *Asrār al-Insān fī Ma'rifah al-Rūḥ wa al-Raḥmān* quotes a tradition that hints the idea that God's place is in the human heart. Ibn Umar said, the Prophet was once asked by a friend: "Where is God? On the earth or in the sky?" The Prophet replies: "(He is) in the heart of his faithful servant" (Tudjimah, 1961: 226).

Al-Raniri also cites another narration which reinforces the idea that the heart is the center of the divinity, as follows:

The Prophet Muhammad said: "In the human body there is human being, which cannot be seen except by Allah."

Once the event came Prophet Moses into the presence of God and asked: "Where are You?" He answered: "I am in the heart of my faithful servant. I make the heart of the believer greater than anything. "Know, Moses, if a believer thinks in his heart of heaven, hell, 'arsh, chair, *laūh*, *kalām*, layers of sky, and sky with anything it contains, all of those may enter in the heart of the believer (Tudjimah, 1961: 226).

The quotation confirms Ka'bah as a metaphor of heart as spiritual part of human. Human heart contains divinity so that Ka'bah may not be understood as black stone inside Masjid al-Haram di Mecca. It is misleading to question whether God stays in human heart or not since divine reality, in Islamic teaching, should not be confused with the reality of His creature.

Abdul Hadi presents more distinctive meaning of Ka'bah and more careful diction. Ka'bah for him is part of *Bait al-Ma'mūrī* given Qur'an *surah* 52 verse 4, which is also mentioned by Hamzah Fansuri in his poem. *Bait al-Ma'mūrī* also means the place in the seven skies visited daily by 70,000 angels (Hadi, 1995: 30). *Bait al-Ma'mūrī* then is Ka'bah for the dwellers of the Seventh Sky and it locates above Ka'bah.

In the *Suluk Wujil*, Ka'bah is connected to the journey of Seh Malaya to Mecca. Seh Malaya told Wujil about his journey to Mecca. He found out that Mecca language is quite strange for him. He saw Ka'bah inside the mosque of Mecca, hanging without bond and sparkling like a peacock. The space is enough to pray for one person, two people, three people, or 10,000 people. Ka'bah can even accommodate the whole world (Purbtajaraka, 1985: 28).

Wujil's notion resembles to that of ar Raniry's perspective. Al-Raniry considers

Ka'bah to be able to contains all thing in the world. One may digests the close relation between *Suluk Wujil*'s metaphor of Ka'bah and al-Raniry's. The Ka'bah is symbol for heart as God's throne. The Ka'bah's is depicted as vast as the worshipers who worship in it which. In that case, Ka'bah in this context should not be understood literally as the stone house of the Grand Mosque, rather it is symbol of spiritual dimension of human.

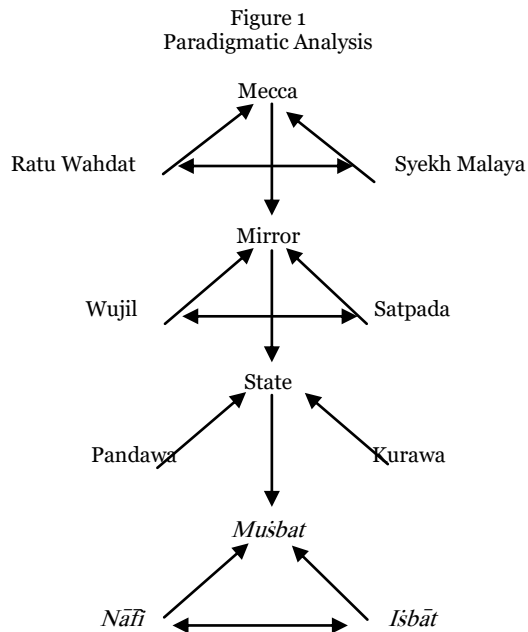
However, the *Suluk Wujil* does not make Ka'bah as primary sign in its entire narrative, instead it puts Mecca as primary sign. Interestingly, Mecca is not the center of spirituality, as having been described in previous passage. The Sufis affirm that God is not in Jerusalem, Mecca, or Quds. Then why, 'arriving to Mecca' becomes main idea of all narration of *Suluk Wujil*. The question leads to next step on semiotic analysis: paradigmatic and syntagmatic one.

### **Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic Analysis**

To understand the meaning of Mecca, it is necessary to look back at the relationship among the important signs in *Suluk Wujil*. The analysis of sign relations can be done through paradigmatic analysis that is a classification based on the principle of equation and contradiction. The classification of equations is done to find the parallel signs, while contradiction analysis is to see how the signs are put in opposition. Meanwhile, syntagmatic analysis is an attempt to find a combination of sign interaction that make up the overall meaning (Wardoyo, 2005a: 5-6).

In *Suluk Wujil*, the paradigmatic analysis is built up of triadic related signs. The oppositional signs arranged so as to provide an insight of dialectical process, between thesis and antithesis blocks. There are third signs of every opposed signs. The third signs play as umbrella sign in which both blocks of oppositional signs are merged into a cohesive meaning. The triadic

relationship between those signs in paradigmatic block or scheme can be seen below:



The scheme shows triadic relationship of signs. The signs on the left hand block are opposed to signs on the right hand block, both of which meet in central block signs. The relationship between the oppositional signs and signs in middle axis make up the comprehensive meaning. The oppositional signs of Ratu Wahdat and Sheikh Malaya come up with Mecca as the third sign. The oppositional signs of Wujil and Satpada come up with unity in mirror, as well as men and women in bed. The oppositional relationship between Pandawas and Kurawas come up with Hastina as unity factor containing them all. The dynamics between *nāfi* (negation) and *isbāt* (affirmation) comes up with *mušbat* (the final synthesis of ultimate truth). The third signs represent significance of the other oppositional linguistic signs. Mecca, mirror, bed, state, and *mušbat* represent universal truth that *Suluk Wujil* conveys.

Syntagmatic readings can be used to understand how the relationship between the left and right blocks of signs. The sign of mirror, for instance, is capable of loading the figure of Wujil and Satpada, even though

Wujil is standing and Satpada is sitting. The mirror depicts two shadows reflected together in one mirror, as a bed that can unite man and woman. After asking Wujil and Satpada to stand in front of and behind the mirror, Ratu Wahdat explains that there are two inseparable creeds. *Lā ilāha* contains denial (*nāfi*) of many gods resulting in the comprehending of The One (*illallāh*). In turn, the denial will come to affirmation (*isbāt*) of the existence of The Truth (Poerbatjaraka, 1985: 32).

Drewes (1968: 216) regards *la lāha* as both *nāfi al-jins* (the denial of genus) and *nāfi al-nakirah* (the denial of indefinite reference). He suggests that *nāfi al-jins* is denoting the negative particle only, which is in analogy with name, while *nāfi al-nakirah* denotes the lack of indefiniteness. *Nāfi nakirah* does not mean only the denial, but it also implies the *isbāt* or affirmation.

The same message can be inferred from Pandawa and Kurawa story. In *wayang*, Pandawa is placed on the left, symbolizing *nāfi*, while Kurawa is on the right, symbolizing *isbat*. Both are fighting over a country (Hastinapura) that symbolizes *mušbat* (the Truth). Krishna is like a mirror that determines 'win and lose'. Pandawa and Kurawa are different and contradictory, but they have same will, that is to get into Hastinapura. Therefore, the *Suluk Wujil* narrative ended with the unity of Ratu Wahdat with Seh Malaya. Both unite the chest, face, and both ends of the foot when they reached Mecca. Mecca is found from the union of Ratu Wahdat with Sheikh Malaya. Previously, Ratu Wahdat invited Sheikh Malaya to just look at herself, close her eyes, and do not hesitate (Poerbatjaraka, 1985: 32).

The use of Pandawa, Kurawa and Krishna as pre-Islamic figures in *Suluk Wujil* is interesting. Pigeaud has hinted that Javanese Islamic spirituality takes pre-Islamic concept to translate Islamic spiritual concept (Pigeaud, 1976: 83-85). The *Suluk Wujil* employs the *Bhratayudha* episode,

one of wayang's fragments in an open war between Pandawa and Kurawa, and explains abstract Islamic spiritual concepts. Poerbatjaraka wonders why the Bharatayudha episode, the taboo episode to be performed in Kasunanan (Solo) and Kasultanan (Yogyakarta), is used in *Suluk Wujil*. The episode is regarded risky because it will be followed by disaster if performed inappropriately (Poerbatjaraka, 1985: 50).

Here, Baratayuda episode serves as vehicle for conveying a specific notion. *Suluk Wujil* shifts the meaning of Bharatayudha from power struggle story to be spiritual struggle story. The main characters of Bharatayuda mark binary opposition of signs, *nāfi* (negation) and *itsbat* (confirmation) as a dialectical notion to come to unification to the Truth, as a very fundamental aspect of spiritual quest.

The theme of unification becomes the main idea of *Suluk Wujil*, which appears in Wujil's quote: *tunggale gusti kawula* (the unity between servant and his Master). However, to conclude that *Suluk Wujil* contains element of pantheism, as proposed by Poerbatjaraka, is too hasty and excessive. Poerbatjaraka regards there is difference audiences between those of *Suluk Bonang* and of *Suluk Wujil*, in which the latter is not intended for public (Poerbatjaraka, 1985: 76 and 51). However, the allegation is unreliable for *Suluk Bonang* contains spiritual-rational dispute of Seh Bari to the notion of 'Abdul Wahīd al-Makkī. *Suluk Bonang* refers to standard source for higher learning of Islamic teaching, namely *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* by Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī and *al-Tamhīd* by Abū Zarūq al-Burnūsī (Drewes, 1969: 8-9). Both sources are not references for beginners, rather for advanced pupils who enter to sufistic way.

The discussion of universal truth will always touch the discussion of 'The One', as the central aspect of Islamic spirituality. The spiritual quest of Islam is a process of finding, experiencing, and realizing The One, as The True Being, true aim of human life,

and true origin of human existence. However, the realization of The One does not always imply the notion of pantheism or monism.

There is consistency in Ratu Wahdat's teachings about self-discovery through death (*fanā*). *Suluk Wujil* teaches *mati sajroning urip* (dead while being alive). The teaching affirms that in order to reach God and to unite with Him, one need to die, not in physical meaning. The union idea in *Suluk Wujil* is not *waḥdah al-wujūd*, but *waḥdah al-syuhūd*, as shown in the following quotation:

69. Death is the most appropriate service  
No more calculated on self, o, Wujil  
Because people return to their origin  
If you are still calculating something,  
you will not find what you expect  
If you want to find Him  
Then you must destroy your lusts  
Then your will will cope with His will  
(Poerbatjaraka, 1985: 29)

Death in the passage cannot be given literal meaning, an end of one's life. Death in the text means being close to *fanā*, a sufistic term which means annihilation of all existence, including oneself, except Him.

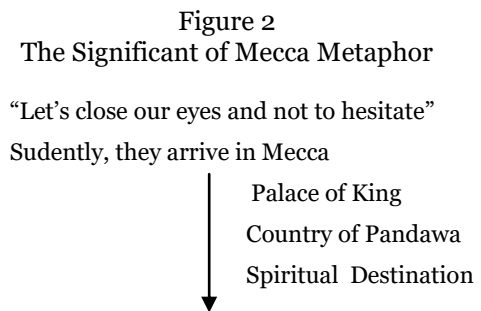
In the passage, Poerbatjaraka translates the word '*sirnakena raganira*' by 'destroying your desires', in which *raga* (body) is symbol of lust. There is actually another interpretation of *raga* (body) and death. *Raga* is indeed the source of worldly passions, but the body is also the symbol of "me." Death is the process of removing "me" so that "I" is dead. The doctrine of the denial of self-existence or self-annihilation is known as *fanā*, as mentioned above. *Fanā* is widely known in Islamic Sufism, as part of the spiritual station. Al-Qusyairī defines *fanā* as the loss of oneself's conscience as well as the loss of perceiving unfolded world.

Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz (d. 279 or 286 H/ 890 or 899 SD) defines *fanā* as *maqām* (spiritual station) after *tawhīd* which is the annihilation of the memory of all things in the heart (al-Samarrai, 1968: 225), on the contrary Farid al-Din al-Aththar includes

*fana* as a spiritual stage after *tawhīd* (Stepaniants, 1994: 76, 80). *Fanā'*, according to Schimmel (1975), is different from the concept of nirvana because annihilation is not a liberation from the circle of karma, rather begins with the struggle of the *sa>lik* (a traveler) to be attributed of God's attribute, i.e., the annihilation of the world because his vision is filled with the divine light, and the annihilation of annihilation (*fanā' al-fanā'*), namely when *sālik* is immersed in God's existence (Schimmel, 1975: 142). *Fanā'* is the peak of *tawhīd* because all of existence come back to their origin (Oneness). *Fanā'* is usually associated with the *baqā'* (existing), which is one's annihilation of ego will be followed by conscience of God's presence.

It is, of course, a mistake when the idea of *fanā'* is confused with *wujūdiyyah* (monism) because *fanā'* does not necessarily associate with an awareness that creature's substance is identical to that of God. *Suluk Wujil* does not suggest that the union of human with the truth is a monistic idea, but rather it is a spiritual insight reached when *sālik* get to universal truth. *Suluk Wujil* criticizes many people who still argue or debate about the truth and divide everything according to categorization, while it is trying to cope with the true existence of 'The One'. In do so, one will mislead in his prayers because he does not understand his destination yet (Poerbatjaraka 1985: 30).

Therefore, the primary sign used by the *Suluk Wujil* at the end of the narrative is up to Mecca, not the Ka'bah. Mecca is parallel to the description of *Suluk Wujil* about the palace, the place of the Ratu Wahdat. Mecca, not Ka'bah, is chosen as the end of the spiritual guidance given by Ratu Wahdat to Wujil. To understand what Mecca signify, paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis of *Suluk Wujil's* primary sign will reveal following readings:



The chart shows that the end of Wujil's narrative is getting to the destination. However, the destination is not the Essence of God, rather the place where a traveler (*sālik*) can meet Him. It can be understood that the main narration of *Suluk Wujil* is spiritual journey of Wujil in searching the truth.

The spiritual journey topic may be inferred from name and genre of the manuscript. Wujil's name contains a special meaning, which can be seen from the expression in the work itself. In verse 46-47, there is a conversation between Wujil and Satpada, where the second asks Wujil about the meaning of his name. Wujil's answer that the meaning of his name is very symbolic: namely between names and things make no difference. "I do not stop halfway because I have six kinds of truth" (Poerbatjaraka, 1985: 25). The Wujil's answer to Satpada's question indicates two things: 1) Wujil's name represents reality and 2) Wujil does not stop halfway. The answer is interesting because at that time Wujil was looking for the essence of the truth. Then what is the connection of Wujil's name to the spiritual journey itself? What is Wujil's relationship with Mecca?

According to *Baoesastra Javanese Dictionary* by Poerwadarminta and *Ancient Javanese* by Zoetmoelder and Robson, Wujil means dwarf (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 667; Zoetmoelder and Robson, 2011: 1466). It is a mystery why Wujil was chosen as name for a figure who gets into spiritual journey. Poerbatjaraka gives different meaning of Wujil: '*bujel*' (dull). He argued that in the past disabled people were accommodated by

King in his palace. Wujil also once lived in the palace and became the king's comedian in Majapahit (Poerbatjaraka, 1985: 37). Poerbatjaraka hints that Wujil is one possessing spiritual potential, but like a pencil, the potential should be sharpened.

The spiritual journey in Javanese literature is a genre called *suluk*. Some experts think that *suluk* stems from Arabic word *silkun* or *sulūkun*. *Silkun* means wandering trip or monastery, while *sulūkun* means travel or taking the road. In terminology, *suluk* is a spiritual journey to God, under the guidance of spiritual masters (Sedyawati et al., 2001: 298). Pigeaud, however, rejected the idea that the word “*suluk*” stems from Arabic because in Javanese texts, *suluk* is rarely found and it is never related to singing. *Suluk* in Javanese mystic refers to short song in *macapat*, containing mystic concept or sufistic terms, in the form of question and answer between teacher and his pupils or father and his sons (Pigeaud, 1976: 85). The word of *suluk* is used in two meanings. Firstly, it is a literary work that contains the teachings of Sufism. Secondly, *suluk* also refers to the song that *dalang* (performer of *wayang*/puppet show) sings in the middle of his performance. *Suluk* in the first meaning contains teaching about the spiritual journey, while in the second meaning it refers to part of *wayang* performance.

*Suluk* genre grows into two different traditions; some are born in coastal areas of Java. The coastal tradition tends to be more orthodox (according to standard teaching of Islam), it is because coastal *Suluk* comes from *pesantren* (an Islamic education institution). The *suluk* works of *pesantren*'s emphasize on the transcendence of God. On other hand, *suluk* that grows from the Javanese palaces (hinterland) contains element of heterodoxy and emphasizes the immanence of God. Here, one can find strong influence of pantheism or monism (Sedyawati e.al, 2001: 298).

Pigeaud suggests that Javanese early works usually contain mystical teaching or legalistic orthodox teaching, both of which existed side by side. The coming Islam from India by traders in 1500 AD made mystical teaching prevalent. Javanese Islamic works are blended with mystical teaching with several pre-Islamic words taken for explanating mystical word. In 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, mystical doctrine with heterodox style became the main current Islamic thought. The topic of dispute between heterodox and orthodox mystics has shaped an intellectual as well as a religious debate, in which the orthodox tenets prevail in coastal area of Java Island (Pigeaud, 1976: 78).

The emphasize of pantheistic notion is prevalent in hinterland so that work of *suluk* may be influenced by religious philosophy growing in Javanese court with mystical elements of Hinduism or Buddhism. Ranggawarsita in his *Wirid Hidayat Jati* tries to reconcile Islamic mysticism with *Serat Dewaruci*, Pre-Islamic Text wich is popular in Java. *Serat Dewaruci*, according to Poerbatjaraka (1952: 74-75), is one of two works using middle Javanese language that developed in the era of Majapahit. While Yasadipura II in *Serat Cabolek* tried to come up with *win-win solution* in the polemic between Kiai Mutamakkin, who used *Serat Dewaruci* for supporting religious understanding, and his opponents, Islamic priest from Coastal Java. Ranggawarsita went further in elaborating *Dewaruci*'s concept in line with *martabat tujuh* (seven degrees of God' manifestation) teaching. In sum, this syncretism nature of spiritual works can be found in Javanese courts writers, especially Ranggawarsita. He elaborates *martabat tujuh* teaching using *Dewaruci*'s storry of Arya Sena or Bima when he got into the body of Dewaruci through his ear (Simuh, 1988: 353, 357).

*Suluk Wujil*, however, still emphasizes the idea of God's transcendence because the unity of dualistic elements: men-women, pandawa-kurawa, Wujil-Satpada, Ratu

Wahdat-Syekh Malaya do not lead to The Truth directly, rather to the Palace of King or closeness to The One. It does not imply an existential unity, but the unity of conscience. The unity in *Suluk Wujil* emphasizes the loss of duality in *sālik's* experience. His consciousness goes higher beyond duality or division so that all hesitations disappear, through the negation of self and mundane reality. In that case, one consciousness will be covered by the shadow of the truth. The entire narrative of *Suluk Wujil* is a description of spiritual journey through sequences of symbols that *Wujil* should decode, from symbols that Seh Malaya's tells to the symbolic teaching of Sunan Bonang.

The journey of the Seh Malaya develops an example for the *Wujil* to find his spiritual destination. The story of Seh Malaya who had traveled to Mecca gives an insight on obstacles to get to the destination. Although having passed the three obstacles: oceans of water, ocean of sand and ocean of fire and finally having come to Mecca, Seh Malaya still got difficulties to really comprehend Mecca, a symbol of destination. The obstacles should not be understood literally, because *Suluk Wujil* emphasizes symbolic elaboration to spiritual journey. Mystical literatures frequently employ metaphor or other figurative languages to carry on specific meaning that literal words fail to express.

The end of *Wujil's* spiritual journey is the exposition of the nature of unity, which represents monotheism, achieved through self-annihilation to live with the essential existence. However, the achievement of unity is not described as a unity of existence because the unity referred to in *Suluk Wujil* is the spiritual experience of the one, not philosophical speculation of The One. That is why the primary sign of *Suluk Wujil* is Mecca, not the Ka'bah. Ka'bah is a symbol representing the truth and indicating the place of the divine essential unity, which is in human heart. *Mati sajroning urip* (dead in life) represents *ma'rifah* (knowing God

directly), as ultimate goal of sufistic way. Mecca is chosen in *Suluk Wujil* because it represents closeness to The One without indicating pantheism or the unity of existence. Therefore, it is safe to say that *Suluk Wujil* is spiritual work guiding to *tawhīd* (unity), but not unity of existence rather the unity of spiritual viewing of The Truth.

## CONCLUSION

*Suluk Wujil* as one of the earliest Islamic works found in Java reflects the nature of Islamic understanding prevalent at 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The concepts used in the work denote Islamic Sufism, as a path to reach spiritual enlightenment by viewing universal truth or the One. One should not misunderstand Sufism as the rejection of Islamic law or *fiqh*. Even, Ranggawarista, the most notorious Javanese Islam mystic, remarked: "*ing kadis ugi kasebut kak tanpa sarengat batal, sarak tanpa kak tan dadi*" (according to prophet tradition, mysticism without *syariat* is in vain, and *syariat* without mysticism will not work). It shows that *suluk* work emphasizing on spiritual journey should not be considered neglecting Islamic law, rather it guides the different way of realizing God's existence.

The article shows several findings, either in its primary sign, and reveals the significance of the Mecca term in the work. *Suluk Wujil* narrative is a Javanese poem, but it contains a cohesive story of *Wujil*, a main character that becomes the title of the work. *Wujil* was a servant of the Majapahit court who later converted to Islam and studied with Sunan Bonang. Ten years of studying in Bonang, he failed to get to the core of the Truth. Responding to *Wujil's* complain, Sunan Bonang or Ratu Wahdat gave instruction to *Wujil* directly or asked him to learn from Seh Malaya (Sunan Kalijaga). At the end of the story, Both Sunan Bonang and Seh Malaya offered a direct and live teaching in which both reached Mecca by

meeting their faces, chests and toes and by abandoning all concepts and doubts.

The primary sign of *Suluk Wujil* text is the phrase "arriving to Mecca" which is at the very end of the text. The phrase affirms that *Suluk Wujil* is a spiritual journey whose destination is to the very core of spiritual achievement, knowing and experiencing The One. The choice of Mecca, instead of the Ka'bah, implies that *Suluk Wujil* does not intend to explain union with God nor to elaborate the idea of monism (*wujūdiyyah*), but it shows deep understanding in process of gaining insight toward ultimate Truth, by understanding the meaning of *nafī* (negation) and *itsbat* (affirmation) in *illallāh* creed."

The relation between *nāfī* and *isbāt* is carried on by conducting paradigmatic and syntagmatic analyses. Paradigmatic analysis shows that there are various parallel signs forming conformity of meaning, namely Ratu Wahdat, Wujil, Women, Pandawa, and nafi on the one hand. On the other hand, there are parallel signs opposing the other hand. The collection of opposed signs are Sheikh Malaya, Satpada, women, Kurawa, and *isbāt*. The combination of these oppositional signs forms the whole meaning of *Suluk Wujil*, namely Mecca, Mirror, State, and *musbat*. The discovery of Mecca, mirrors, states, and *musbat* illustrates the discovery of the destination. That is the essence of the whole story in *Suluk Wujil*, understanding duality as vehicle to go beyond it. The one is beyond any duality and can be grasped by abandoning the duality.

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