

HEALTHY THROUGH MAGIC: HEALTH SOLUTIONS IN *MANTRA KIDUNG JAWA*

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to uncover and provide critical arguments of magical meaning in *Mantra Kidung Jawa* (after this referred to as MKJ). The focus of the investigation is the author's form and motive to create the spell. Various text models are considered strategies for magical purposes. This qualitative method of hermeneutics and content analysis was used as a research guideline. The object of the study is a collection of MKJ texts in *Serat Kidungan's* book published by the publisher Maha-Dewa, Ngajogjakarta Hadiningrat, 1957. This research data is in the form of text that implicitly contains magical meanings. Research shows that the magical power of mantras is still believed to influence Javanese life in the past. There is a correlation of 'interaction' between literature and mantras. The content of MKJ text is nostalgic, which repeatedly conveys and reminds of mythological figures, which are often mysterious. MKJ has relationships with various religions, both Hindu and Islamic. This proves that there is always the possibility of creativity when traditions side by side with religion that lasts for a long period.

Keywords: Mantra Kidung Jawa, Magical, Mystic, Covid-19, Macapat Songs

A. INTRODUCTION

Since January 2020, the Covid-19 outbreak has been considered a global health crisis emergency (World Health Organization, 2020). The virus is mostly spread through human-to-human contact (Lim et al., 2020; Velavan & Meyer, 2020). In Indonesia, the government responds to crises through various regulations and policies. From January to March 2020, 15 regulations were issued related to the Covid-19 pandemic across government sectors (Djalante et al., 2020). The government is implementing regulations on the temporary closure of most public and private offices. In addition, citizens must comply with self-quarantine requirements at home until the pandemic is successfully resolved. The National Disaster Management Agency was appointed to lead the acceleration of the handling of Covid-19. Security officials and religious organizations are involved in the socialization, education, and mitigation of pandemics. This problem raises serious stimuli from various health scientists to find solutions to cure diseases and reduce deaths.

Various countries approve and imply testing methods that comply with the regulations of their respective health agencies based on situation and availability. Diagnostic methods based on (i) nucleic acids, (ii) proteins, (iii) chest scans, and (iv) autopsies have been established as an acceleration of healing (Contini et al., 2020). Chinese experimental research suggests using antiviral therapy based on anti-HIV drugs with lopinavir/ritonavir and inhaling interferon nebulization doses (Chu et al., 2004; Lim et al., 2020). Remdesivir (RDV), an experimental

compound with a wide spectrum of activity against RNA viruses, including SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, is also claimed to provide positive results in the US and encourage further clinical trials in countries affected by Covid-19 (Al-Tawfiq et al., 2020; Gordon et al., 2020). A drug for the treatment of malaria with immunomodulating activity has been shown to have clear efficacy and acceptable safety against pneumonia associated with Covid-19 in multicentric clinical trials conducted in China (Gao et al., 2020; Velavan & Meyer, 2020). However, the Covid-19 pandemic shows that a biomedical approach to disease control alone is not enough when considering the population's overall health during the infectious disease pandemic (Mathpati et al., 2020). Innovative research ideas are needed to defeat pandemics, not only in basic and biomedical research but also in many traditional paradigms (Laskar et al., 2020). For this reason, it is important to look at the traditional methods used by the ancestors to undergo health due to the outbreak.

In Java, many cultural heritages of the ancestors to pursue a healthy path due to the plague. One of the methods performed is in the form of spells. Mantra is one of the manifestations of Javanese culture, including other traditional cultures in Indonesia (Kang, 2003). As far as ancient Javanese documents and characters know, mantras have mingled with outside ideologies, ranging from Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam (Saddhono & Hartarta, 2013). Javanese ancestors used spells to overcome various purposes: magic, romance, wealth, safety, and health. They believe in spells because they are considered to have magical powers. The magical power in spell magic is occult, which tends to regulate things through strength, intelligence, and ability. This is a spiritual science derived from the supernatural spirit. Magic practitioners try to fight back and repel threatening dangers with subdued forces of nature (Mulyono, 1983, p. 30). For this reason, the mantra is believed to be a breakthrough to stop problems in life (Widodo, 2018), including solutions to the Covid-19 outbreak. Thus, this mantra research is expected to contribute to global health solutions due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

B. METHOD

This research seeks to uncover and provide critical arguments of the magical meaning of MKJ. The focus of the investigation is the author's form and motive to create the spell. Various text models are considered strategies for magical purposes. As a result, this research is an interdisciplinary study of oral literature, language, culture, theology, and philosophy. Therefore, qualitative methods of content and hermeneutic analysis were chosen because it is considered capable of providing a comprehensive explanation of the interpretation of the text (Creswell, 2007; Krippendorff, 2010; Ricoeur, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 2010).

The research object is a collection of MKJ texts in *Serat Kidungan* published by Maha-Dewa's publisher, Ngajogjakarta Hadiningrat, 1957 (Anonymous, 1957). This research data is in the form of text (words, phrases, and sentences) that implicitly contains magical meanings. The data is obtained from critical, thorough, and in-depth readings of MKJ. Element names are classified by category 1) timing and mantra reading methods; 2) belief in the magical power of mythological figures; and 3) belief in the mythical image of nature, mythological figures, and divine energy. Classification results tested for validity using relevant theories (Creswell, 2007; Sutopo, 2002). Once the encoding is confirmed valid, the mantra texts are interpreted based on two things: 1) the nature of the language in a magical perspective; 2) the meaning of mantra philosophy in Javanese cultural perspective. Efforts to interpret the meaning of MKJ are made very carefully by paying attention to the relationship between the text mark and the magical meaning in the Javanese cultural perspective. The results of the study were verified to formulate an interim conclusion. After a careful verification process, the last is the conclusion of the research.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

For clarity, this section is presented the order of spell groups by type. Each type has its characteristics and characters. Based on their type and ordinances, there are three categories of spells that have an impact on human health: 1) based on timing and mantra reading methods; 2) based on the belief in the magical power of mythological figures; 3) based on belief in the mythical image of nature, mythological figures, and divine energy.

1. Based on timing and mantra reading method

Traditional Javanese people are known to be very careful in carrying out various rituals. They are not rash in carrying out a series of activities, especially concerning mystical matters. In mantra reading practice, they determine a specific time to read it. In the study findings, health mantra readings were performed at night. This is directly described in the text (1) of the table. The details of the data and the reasons for the timing are described as follows.

Table 1. MKJ 1

No.	Mantra quotes	Translation
1	<i>Ana kidung rumekso ing wengi</i>	There is a song of praise that starts at night
2	<i>teguh hayu luputa ing lara</i>	sturdy good avoid getting sick
3	<i>luputa bilahi kabeh</i>	avoid all dangers
4	<i>jim setan datan purun</i>	jinn and demons do not want to
5	<i>paneluhan tan ana wani</i>	magic no one dares
6	<i>niwah panggawe ala</i>	including bad deeds
7	<i>gunaning wong luput</i>	magic by bad guys
8	<i>geni atemahan tirta</i>	fire becomes water
9	<i>maling adoh tan ana ngarah ing</i>	thieves stay away from threatening me
10	<i>mami guna duduk pan sirna</i>	the magic will perish

Meaning "*ana kidung rumeksa ing wengi*" is 'there are chants that keep up at night'. The song emphasizes choosing the right time to pray. The reason for the specificity of the supplication at night is possible because the night is a good time to pray. There is an influence of Islamic values in the song. In one view, there is a teaching in Islam that one of the good times to pray is at night. Prayers that are climbed at night are believed to be more potent. In another view, there is the word *jim*/jinn on the fourth line. It reinforces the notion that Islamic values have been inherent in the chanting of the mantra.

The choice of prayer at night is expected to avoid disease. In addition, prayer at night is also expected to avoid the disturbance of jinn, demons, and magic. The thief will stay away. When viewed from the selection of the text, the mantra is strongly influenced by facts in socio-cultural Javanese culture. As already known, traditional Javanese culture still has a peculiarity with the tradition of magic and disturbing supernatural beings. Similarly, the tradition of night theft also shows a characteristic of classical crime culture. All forms of evil are believed to fail due to praying at night. This belief seems logical because when man prays on, of course, he will not sleep. When a man does not sleep, he should overcome when there is danger coming.

The blessing of prayer at night can avoid supernatural evil and heal people from disease. In addition, people will be pitied by others. He will also be immune from weapons. The toxins in the body will be healed. The beast will be tame. Ghosts will become submissive. This is illustrated in the mantra song text in table 2 below.

Table 2. MKJ 2

No.	Mantra quotes	Translation
1	<i>Sakehing lara pan samya bali</i>	All the pain heals
2	<i>sakeh ngama pan sami mirunda</i>	all pests are eradicated
3	<i>welas asih pandulune</i>	his views are compassionate
4	<i>sakehing braja luput</i>	all weapons do not concern
5	<i>kadi kapuk tibaning wesi</i>	like a foam falling on an iron
6	<i>sakehing wisa tawa</i>	everything can be bargained
7	<i>sato galak tutut</i>	wild animals become tame
8	<i>kayu aeng lemah sangar</i>	strange tree haunted land
9	<i>songing landhak guwaning wong lemah miring</i>	burrow hedgehog cave people from sloping ground
10	<i>myang pakiponing merak</i>	and peacock nests

MKJ text two above shows hope against all ugliness. The effects of the loss of horror will have an impact on human power. This can be seen in the sentence 'All weapons do not hit'. In addition, the text in the mantra also has a choice of words that are not clear meaning, for example, the phrase "burrows hedgehog cave people from sloping ground and peacock nests". Words that are not clear meaning is often part of the characteristic language of mantras that have magical value.

2. Based on the belief in the magical power of mythological figures

Mystical figures influence MKJ. In one of the spell texts, a mystical figure has a central role in human health and safety. The person is named Hartati. He is symbolized as a mysterious figure. It comes from a mysterious place as well, which the spell creator is called the canyon. He can be renamed three times. This is illustrated in the following three spells.

Table 3. MKJ 3

No.	Mantra quotes	Translation
1	<i>Ana kidung rekeke angartati</i>	There's a song called Hartati.
2	<i>sapa weruh reke araning wang</i>	who knew it was my name
3	<i>duk ingsun ana ing ngare</i>	when I was still living in the canyon
4	<i>miwah duk aneng gunung</i>	and when living on the mountain
5	<i>ki Samurta lan ki Samurti</i>	Ki Samurta and Ki Samurti
6	<i>ngalih aran ping tiga</i>	renamed three times
7	<i>arta daya engsun</i>	I'm <i>arta-daya</i>
8	<i>araning duk jejaka</i>	my name when I was a virgin
9	<i>ki Hartati mengko araningsun</i>	later my name changed Ki Hartati
10	<i>ngalih sapa wruh araning wang</i>	who knows my name

The figure of Hartati does not have a clear history in Javanese socio-historical tradition. When viewed from the meaning of the text, he may be a deliberately disguised figure. There are allegations, said "*samurta*" derived from the word *samur* which means 'cryptic'. *Samurta* in line (5) indicates the characteristic of the male name, while *Samurti* in line (5) indicates the characteristic of the female name. However, later he changed his name to Ki Hartati, on line (9). The word Ki is a male marker, while the word Hartati is a female marker. The two became a series of self-names, making it clearer that he is a character deliberately disguised by the author. This is similar to the creation of Semar figures as mysterious figures in Javanese puppetry. Semar is also unclear between men or women. However, Ki Hartati has a vital influence on human health and safety. This is illustrated in the following four spells.

Table 4. MKJ 4

No.	Mantra quotes	Translation
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1	<i>Yen kinarya atunggu wong</i>	If you become a guardian of the sick
2	<i>sakit</i>	jinn and demons, no one dares to come
3	<i>ejim setan datan wani</i>	because its angels guard it
4	<i>ngambah</i>	prophets and guardians surrounded him
5	<i>rineksa malaekate</i>	so that all diseases get out of the way
6	<i>nabi wali angepung</i>	who intends to slander
7	<i>sakeh lara padha sumingkir</i>	against me
8	<i>ing kang sedya mitenah</i>	will be corrupted by God
9	<i>marang awakingsun</i>	the cursed demon of the coming beast will die
10	<i>rinusak dening pangeran eblis lanat sato mara, mara matitumpes tapi sadaya</i>	that's all gone

The text in MKJ 4 above relates to the text in MKJ 3. The text in MKJ 4 explains the influence of Ki Hartati's character on human health and safety. It is explained on the line (1 & 2) that if [Ki Hartati] becomes a protector of the sick, then jinn and devil will not dare to come to him as has become a traditional Javanese belief that sick people can often come from the influence of subtle beings. Therefore, the Javanese used supernatural ways to overcome it. In addition, there is also the participation of the power of prophets, angels, and God who accompany the figure of Ki Hartati. Therefore, the Ki Hartati figure is believed to be a figure with Islamic energy that can cure diseases while expelling supernatural forces that are negative to human beings.

In addition to Ki Hartati, other figures have a role to play in health and safety for traditional Javanese beliefs. The person in question is Adam Makdum. The name does not have a clear proposal in Javanese history. However, the text of MKJ is explained to have a very important role in human health. In addition to being able to cure physical pain, Adam Makdum can also cure supernatural diseases. The role of Adam Makdum is depicted in MKJ's five texts below.

Table 5. MKJ 5

No.	Mantra quotes	Translation
1	<i>Sakathahing upas tawa sami</i>	Everything can be bargained all
2	<i>lara raga waluya nirmala</i>	severe pain healed without scaring
3	<i>tulak tanggul kang manggawe</i>	repellents from which to make
4	<i>duduk samya kawangsul</i>	magic is all rejected
5	<i>akawuryan sagunging sikir</i>	fascinated by all magic
6	<i>ngadam makdum sadaya</i>	by Adam Makdum all
7	<i>datan paja ngrungu</i>	not at all heard
8	<i>pangucap lawan pangrasa</i>	pronunciation and feeling
9	<i>myang tumingal kang sedya tumekeng napi</i>	as well as the vision that was originally achieved
10	<i>pangreksaning malekat</i>	thanks to the guardians of angels

Adam Makdum is a mysterious figure who possesses supernatural powers. In carrying out his duties, it turns out that he is not alone. He commands the angels to guard against the people who are allied with him. This means that Adam Makdum is a higher figure than the angel. In the Islamic faith, the higher creature than the angel is the man. If only man had been called Adam Makdum. If so, then the energy of Prophet Adam is used by the Javanese in the healing of human diseases. It is often the case in the mantra text that the energy of prophets and angels is believed to have a high magical power over the power of the mantra text.

3. Based on the belief in natural mythical images, mythological figures, and divine energy

The imagination of natural energy has an important role in the human health of Java. The spell's text found the imagination of natural energy expected to be a magical fence of man. In the text, MKJ 6 is described that the imagined mountain can be a magical fence that can be a personal protector. In addition to being able to heal yourself from various diseases, the magical power of the mountain can also repel magic. The image of natural mysticism is described in table 6 below.

Table 6. MKJ 6

No.	Mantra quotes	Translation
1	<i>Gunung Sewu dadya pager</i>	A thousand mountains become my fence
2	<i>mami</i>	appears lit by those who see it
3	<i>katon murub kang samya</i>	all diseases vanish
4	<i>tumingal</i>	not exposed to any magic
5	<i>sakeh lara sirna kabeh</i>	<i>taragnyana</i> , magic, and <i>jaleng</i>
6	<i>luput ing tuju teluh</i>	disbanded crushed
7	<i>taragnyana tenung jalengki</i>	Sri Sadana becomes a close friend
8	<i>bubar ambyar suminggah</i>	that's God's mercy
9	<i>sri sedana lulut</i>	true grace that becomes the representative
	<i>punika sih rahmatollah</i>	of the body
10	<i>rahmat jati jumeneng wali</i>	is the noble teak (God)
	<i>jasmani</i>	
	<i>iya sang jati mulya</i>	

In addition to the image of nature, the text of the song matra six also gives rise to the mythological figure Sri Sadana. The alliance with the figure is expected to be the savior of man. In addition, there is a major power that becomes the culmination of all magical energy. The source of the kinship is God (see number 8). In this case, there are syncretization values of Hinduism and Islam. On the one hand, the belief in the mountain and Sri Sadana is a form of Hindu culture. In Hinduism, mountains are an element of nature that is considered sacred. Similarly, Sri Sadana is a mythological figure who is highly exalted in the mystical life of Java. On the other hand, Allah is the Lord who is exalted in the teachings of Islam. Thus, the syncretism values of the two religions are inherent in the Javanese MKJ text. Similarly, the same is also illustrated in the mantra text in table 7 below.

Table 7. MKJ 7

No.	Mantra quotes	Translation
1	<i>Ingaranan Rara Subaningsih</i>	Named Rara Subaningsih
2	<i>kang tuminggal samya sih</i>	who saw loved him all
3	<i>sadaya</i>	enchanting all his behavior
4	<i>kedhep sapari-polahe</i>	all diseases are destroyed
5	<i>keh lara sirna larut</i>	can't hit me
6	<i>tan tumama ing awak mami</i>	the haunted place becomes natural
7	<i>kang sangar dadi tawar</i>	who hates being love and close
8	<i>kang gething sih lulut</i>	it's all because of the command of the
9	<i>saking dhawuh sipat rohman</i>	merciful.
10	<i>iya rahmat rahayu</i>	and the mercy of salvation that guards it
	<i>pangreksaneki</i>	with white fasting
	<i>sarana ngangge methak</i>	

In MKJ 7 above, human health is also influenced by the magical power of mythological figures. He is Rara Subaningsih. This character is famous in Javanese mythology as the Goddess of Affection. It is expected that the magical power of Rara Subaningsih's affections will destroy all human diseases. In addition to physical illness, Rara Subaningsih's energy is also believed to cure metaphysical diseases. In addition to nourishing the magical power of Rara Subaningsih is also believed to give an effect of affection for those who chant the mantra. As with the text of mantra 6, mantra seven also describes the influence of God's power in success. However, in the spell, it is explained that the success of the mantra is influenced by ritual practice, namely by white fasting. The ritual is a spiritual behavior usually carried out by traditional Javanese people to achieve their wishes. Thus, the combination of mythological figures, spiritual practice, and sacred silence is an important aspect that affects human health.

MKJ is a powerful *macapat* song text with magical values. MKJ text displays the main meanings of health, safety, and magic functions. Safety is the most prominent aspect. Congratulations are the essence that includes healthy and power. People succeed in magic if he survives the terrible events that befall him. Similarly, the man is called healthy; then, he will also survive his death. For Javanese, health is not always physical but also metaphysical. The cause of human pain causes it in Javanese culture not always from germs, bacteria, or viruses, but also because of magic and subtle human disorders.

Safety, health, and magic in MKJ will not be realized when there is no confidence from the reader. To do so, the mantra reader needs to base his ritual with steady conviction. After all, faith is the most important part of all prayers (Kang, 2003; Widodo, 2018). It has been used by the majority of spiritual experts (Sambas & Sukayat, 2007; Shiah et al., 2013). Moreover, the languages displayed in the mantra text use many irrational terms, including imagining the power of nature, the power of mythological figures, and even using words that have no clarity of meaning. Indeed, it has been a hallmark of most mantra texts that its language is often out of semantic boundaries (Kang, 2003; Widodo, 2018). However, it does not affect the success of a spell due to the full service by the speaker.

Beyond all that, in the case of Java, the more mantras are cast, the more paradoxical it feels with the ideology of *ngelmu* that is believed by almost all Javanese mystics in a concept, "*sastrajendra hayuningat pangruwating diyu*". In this concept, scripture is a *wet* book, pure language in man (Soemodihardjo, 2010; Sunyoto, 2012). The sacredness of the mantra is the tone that remains left to the singing of the heavens. That is why the mantra in Javanese tradition, basically always taboo to write. The singing of the heavens was so closely guarded. Mantras are transformed in oral tradition through elaborate rituals. Spells must not leak, let alone be written. In this kind of ideology, it may be correct to recall the statement of Gorgias—the ancient Greek mystical philosopher (Segal, 1962). He is known as a controversial philosopher. In a treatise, he states, (1) there is nothing; (2) if there were, it would not be known; (3) if it could be known, it would have been understated; (4) even if it were to be declared, it could not be understood." If the sacred stones of the heavens could be expressed, he could never be understood. Never before, the real mantra is total silence, a total pure state that is impossible to say.

D. CONCLUSION

This study is quite illustrative of how the magical power of mantra is still believed to influence the lives of Javanese people in the past. After all, mantras are spiritual and mental ideas that remain today. There is a correlation of interaction between literature and mantras. Literature uses mantras as its object, while mantras use literature as its medium. MKJ is both a *macapat* song and a magical text. The content of MKJ text is nostalgic, which repeatedly conveys and reminds of mythological figures, which are often mysterious. In essence, it encompasses an

infinite understanding of history and beliefs. Universally, MKJ is a magical text used by individuals to pray.

To a certain extent, some MKJs have relationships with various religions, both Hindu and Islamic. This proves that there is always the possibility of creativity when traditions side by side with religion that lasts for a long period. This fact is a signal to justify two important things: first, the Javanese mystic seeks solutions to the world's problems through the singing of the heavens; second, the power of the mantra text lies in the belief in magical energy derived from the magical image of nature, mythological figures, and God. The important implication of this research is that MKJ can contribute to transdisciplinary studies in the health areas behind mystical texts. The legacy of Javanese ancestors through mantras is expected to solve life's problems, including the global health crisis caused by Covid-19.

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