

# SUFISTIC MEANINGS IN THE BRAI ART IN CIREBON

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## **Abstract**

Cirebon is well known for its commerce and name of the city of *Wali*, Commercially Cirebon is also famous called as the city of shrimp and geographically is labelled to as the center of the earth. Culturally Cirebon is recognized as an art city like other regions in Indonesia. This article investigated one of popular Cirebonese arts called *Brai Art* containing sufistic messages. Brai art is the heritage of Cirebon containing messages of education in managing the mind. The message highlighted in the Brai arts was more on exoteric religious worship. Arts expresses a sense of aesthetics with God by dancing and praising in five rituals. Every single *rak'ah* designates suluk to God. This Brai Art proves that Cirebon is recognized as the central area for the spread and development of Islam and Sufism because Cirebon has a strategic area both from the Pacific as well as the maritime area.

**Keywords:** *Cirebon, Islam, Sufism, Brai Arts*

## **Introduction**

West Java, especially the Cirebon region has a variety of interesting art forms to be studied. This is a form of cultural diversity which is indeed a characteristic of the Cirebon which also has the nickname as a shrimp city on the coast of the northern part

of West Java. One of interesting arts is Brai art, Brai art is an Islamic breathing art that grows around Cirebon and Indramayu areas. This art have the shape of solawatan which is widely found among Muslims in the nusantara.

According to Wahidin<sup>1</sup>, Brai was thought entered the archipelago around the 14th century, in the form of solawatan which is songs together by a group of people. This art itself is closely related to the spread of Islam because the lyrics of the song are full of praise for Allah SWT. The song was performed in tandem using Arabic and Cirebon. Poetry in the Brai arts itself is vocalized with accompaniment of tambourines, ketipung, or kendang. This art itself is carried out during the full moon light and is shown in the courtyard of the house

Through historical narratives method, it is interesting to be able to see the developments of Brai arts and their relationship with mystical values in their performances. As one of the arts that has Islamic values in it, this research is dedicated in an effort to see Brai art more deeply, as one of the ways of preachers in the past, to spread Islam in the nusantara.

### **Pioneers of Early Cirebon Traditional Art**

Art is believed not only as ceremonial things occurring in events or at parties, but also has its particular value and meaning. Art has a big contribution in refining minds and senses, even art can be as a medium of propaganda. History has proven that art is an important aspect of religious broadcasting. In its history, for instance, the entry and the spread of Islam into Indonesia were through the arts. In this sense, the art has a tight relationship with the spread of the entry of Islam in Indonesia and even in the history of spread and entry of Sufism in Cirebon which is inseparable from the genealogy of the introduction of Tasawuf to the archipelago. However, historians have various opinions about the entry of

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<sup>1</sup> Dede Wahidin, *Kompilasi Kesenian Tradisional Cirebon*, Cirebon : Disporbudpar Kota Cirebon, 2013. P. 32

Sufism into the archipelago, some stated that tasawuf arrived at the archipelago along with the entry of Islam. There were three versions, the first version of Islam entered the 7th century AD through the commercial relations of the Arabs with the East. The second Islam entered the 10th century, and the third, Islam in the 13th century came from Gujarat and Persia.

According to Azyumardi Azra, the debate about Islamization of the archipelago regarding the movement, process, time, origin and the actors continued due to studies and research were conducted.<sup>2</sup> Research conducted with different cases actually resulted the variety of conclusions providing an illustration of the complexity process of the Islamization. Therefore, unreliable conclusion will lead us not only ambiguous but also ahistorical. In addition, some issues have been a long debate about the origin of the first Islamic preacher to the archipelago. Scholars have proposed a variety of thesis stating Islam came directly from Arab land or Islam first went through several other parts of the world, especially Persia, India and China before reaching the archipelago.<sup>3</sup>

The most dominant issue regarding Islamization, particularly, on the island of Java, indicated that the ulama called *Walisongo* were believed to be the region's earliest preachers.<sup>4</sup> However, several recent studies seriously doubted this thesis and instead stated that there had been an Islamization movement before *Walisongo*. The *Wali* are believed to be those who are at the stage of consolidation from the stage of the arrival and introduction of the Islamization process carried out before by the early da'wah. These stages were relatively separate from one group to other figures such

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<sup>2</sup>Azyumardi Azra, *Middle East Ulama Network and Nusantara Islands XVII and XVIII Ages*, Bandung: Mizan, 2004, p. 24-36

<sup>3</sup>Azymardi Azra, *Islam in the Indonesian World: An Account of Institutional Formation*, Bandung: Mizan, 2006, p. 10-25.

<sup>4</sup>Abdurrahman Mas'ud, *From Haramain to Nusantara: Intellectual Traces of Islamic Boarding Schools*, Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2006, p. 53-55, in Didin Nurul Rosidin, Syekh Nurjati: *The Driving Figure of Islamization of Pra Wali Songo in 15th century Cirebon*, (Cirebon: Puslittan, 2014), p. 9.

as Fatimah bint Maimun, Sheikh Jamaludin Al-Kubra or Al-Kabir, Sheikh Hasanudin (Sheikh Quro), Sheikh Nurjati and others.<sup>5</sup>

Beyond these hot debates, Islam certainly entered the archipelago with the services of Sufis because Islam entered the archipelago through Sufism channels. Therefore, the widespread spread of Islam in the archipelago is largely due to the services of the Sufis.<sup>6</sup> According to Uka Tjandrasasmita Islam developed into the archipelago through six channels,<sup>7</sup> namely trade channels, marriage channels,<sup>8</sup> Sufism channels,<sup>9</sup> Islamization education channels,<sup>10</sup> political channels,<sup>11</sup> and art channels. The well-known

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<sup>5</sup>Didin Nurul Rosidin, Syekh Nurjati: A Driving Figure for Islamization of Pra Wali Songo in 15th-century Cirebon, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup>HA. Rivay Siregar, *Tasawuf Nusantara*. (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2000), p. 215.

<sup>7</sup>Adhered to other than Islam. Uka Tjandrasasmita, "Arrival and Spread of Islam" in Taufik Abdullah (ed.), *Thematic Encyclopaedia of the Islamic World, Volume V* (Jakarta: New Efforts Van Hoeve, 2002), pp. 9-26

<sup>8</sup>The marriage channel, this marriage channel, benefits Islam because it occurs between Muslim merchants with noble children, a king's son, or a duke. Because of his existence it also accelerated the process of Islamization. This happened between Raden Rahmat (Sunan Ampel) with Nyai Manila, Sunan Gunung Jati with Princess Kawunganten, Brawijaya with Princess Campa, and others. *Ibid*, 9-26.

<sup>9</sup>The tasawuf channel, with tasawuf, the "form" of Islam taught to indigenous peoples has similarities with their minds that had previously embraced Hinduism, so that the new religion was easily understood and accepted. Among the Sufi scholars who taught the teachings of the Indonesian people (Nusantara) were Hamzah Fansuri in Aceh, Sheikh Abang and Sunan Panggung in Java, and others. *Ibid*, 9-26. The trade channel is the beginning of the Islamization process in the archipelago including Indonesia. Traffic of the 7th century to the 16th century AD which involved many Muslim traders from various countries who were very profitable. In trade between countries in the west, southeast and east Asia, of course the kings and nobles as owners of ships and stocks on a large scale. Quoting Tomé Pires' opinion regarding the channel of Islamization through the trade of Uka Tjandrasasmita, many Muslim traders settled on the coast of Java, which at that time still adhered to other than Islam. Uka Tjandrasasmita, "Arrival and Spread of Islam" in Taufik Abdullah (ed.), *Thematic Encyclopaedia of the Islamic World, Volume V* (Jakarta: New Efforts Van Hoeve, 2002), p. 9-26

<sup>10</sup>Education channel. Islamization was also carried out through education, both Islamic boarding schools and huts organized by religious teachers, clerics and scholars. In the pesantren or the cottage there are prospective scholars, religious teachers and clerics who receive Islamic education. After they left the pesantren and returned to their respective villages

channel of Islamization was through arts called *Wayang*. It is stated that, Sunan Kali Jaga is the most proficient figure in staging puppets. He never asked for a show fee, but he asked the audience to follow Him to say the sentence of creed. The most of the puppet stories are still picked from the Mahabarata and Ramayana stories, but in the story the teachings and names of Islamic heroes are inserted. Other arts are also used as means of Islamization, such as literatures (saga, chronicle and as Him), building art, and carving.<sup>12</sup>

The six channels of the development of Islam to the archipelago, Sufism is a channel that cannot be separated because the journey of Islam to the archipelago is related to the carriers Islam including the teachings of tasawuf. The Sufi developed Islam and Tasawuf started from Aceh such as Sufi Nusantara who had a great influence in developing the teachings of tasawuf to various regions of the archipelago to Cirebon are Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin al-Sumartani, Abdur Rauf al- Sinkili, Abdul Samad al-Palimangi, and others. Some of Nusantara Sufi with their various doctrines were from West Sumatra, especially from Aceh have been coloring and influencing the development of subsequent Sufism to various regions of the archipelago such as Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Java. The role and contribution of the Sufi Nusantara proved that they have served to play an important role in the process of spreading and developing Tasawuf and at the same time the development of Islam in the archipelago to Cirebon.

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they preached to certain places teaching Islam. For example, his pesantren was founded by Raden Rahmat in Ampel Denta Surabaya, and Sunan Giri was invited to Maluku to teach Islam. Ibid, p. 9-26

<sup>11</sup>The political channel, the King's political influence greatly helped spread Islam in this area. Incorporated, both in Sumatra and Java and in eastern Indonesia, for the sake of politics, Islamic kingdoms are combating non-Islamic kingdoms. The victory of the Islamic government politically attracts non-Muslim non-Muslims into Islam. Ibid, p. 9-26

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, p. 9-26

## The Spread of Sufism in Cirebon

Cirebon is one of the significant areas for the influence of the spread and development of Sufism from the Sufi Nusantara originating from Sumatra. Cirebon is seen by the region as the center of the spread and development of Islam and Sufism because Cirebon has a strategic area both geographic and as a maritime area. Therefore, Cirebon is considered the center of the earth for the spread and development of Islam and Sufism.<sup>13</sup> One of Sufi

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<sup>13</sup>Writing about the history of the development of Cirebon Islam has been done a lot as mentioned by Didin Nurul Rosidin with his assessment and view of books about Cirebon, including: Sharon Joy Siddique, *The Relics of the Past: A Sociological Study of the Sultanates of Cirebon, West Java*. This sociological study rests on the theory developed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, namely social interaction in the process of institutionalizing Islam in the Islamic Sultanate of Cirebon. This book does not mention the name of Sheikh Nurjati at all. Dadan Wildan, *Sunan Gunung Jati Between Fiction and Facts*. This book originated from his dissertation at the Department of Philology, UNPAD. The author reveals the identity of Sunan Gunung Jati, which has been identified with Fatahillah. The data used by Dadan Wildan comes from oral traditions and literacy traditions in Cirebon. This book does not cover much about the initial Islamization process, including the figure and role of Sheikh Nurjati. Nina Lubis et al., *History of Old Cities in West Java*. This book presents the chronology of the founding of cities in West Java, including Cirebon. The establishment of the Cirebon Sultanate was based on debated sources. He acknowledged the texts that exist as references in historical writing. In the context of the significance of Islamization in the formation of Cirebon as a city it is not the focus of this book. As a result, the figure of Sheikh Nurjati will be difficult to find.

Zaenal Masduqi, *Cirebon From Traditional Cities to Colonial Cities*. This book reviews much about the development of the city of Cirebon during the Gemeente administration. Although previously discussed briefly about changes in the status of Cirebon from the beginning of a respectable and sovereign region, it then became the arena for the struggle of the influence of three major powers in Java at that time, namely, Mataram, Banten and the VOC to become a self-governing city that governed their lives. from 1906-1942. Because of its focus on the transformation of political institutions in Cirebon, this book does not discuss much about the figure and role of Sheikh Nurjati in the Islamization of the Cirebon region. A. Sobana Harjasaputra and Tawaluddin Haris et al. *Cirebon In Five Times*. This open attempt seeks to uncover the development of Cirebon in five epochs which began in the seventeenth century-mid-XX century. This book reveals the history of politics, economics, socio-culture that occurred at that time. As a book with big ideas and for a long period of time, this book failed to comprehensively describe the dynamics that occurred in the early history of Cirebon

scholars who influence the spread of Islam and Sufism is first Sheikh Nurjati Cirebon. Didin Nurul Rosidin in a study of Sheikh Nurjati explained that Sheikh Nurjati is believed to be the founder of the first Islamic education institution of a kind of boarding school in Bukit Amparan Jati. One important argument of study regarding the figure of the preacher is his figure explaining the process of the initial Islamization of the archipelago. Comparing with other figures such as Haji Purwa and Pangeran Cakrabuana, Sheikh Nurjati represented a medieval Islamic cosmopolitanism movement dominantly in the context of the international trade economic movement. Sheikh Nurjati did not come from the West Java region alike the two figures but he came from Malacca before traveling to Mecca and Baghdad until they landed at the Port of Muara Jati. The study of Sheikh Nurjati contributed much in tracing the origins of Islam, the time of arrival, the carriers and characters of Islam particularly to the inhabitants of Cirebon and its surroundings.<sup>14</sup>

Another figure introduced Islam to the Cirebon area not stated from Zaenal Masduki's research mentioned the younger brother of Sheikh Nurjati himself, namely Sheikh Bayanullah (also known as Sheikh Maulana Akbar) spreading Islam in the Kuningan area, south of Cirebon. According to Zaenal Masduki in this framework, it is certainly very possible to state that Sunan Gunung

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Zaenal Masduki et al. Islamization, Leadership Succession and the Beginning of the emergence of the Cirebon "Islamic Empire": Study and Writing of "History of the Cirebon Sultanate". The results of this study cover a lot about the process of Islamization in the Cirebon region. Although many mention of the figure and role of Sheikh Nurjati, this study did not focus on the figure but on the initial succession process in the political structure of the Cirebon Islamic kingdom.

Bambang Irianto and Siti Fatimah entitled, Sheikh Nurjati (Sheikh Datul Kahfi): Pioneer of Da'wah and Education. This book in detail explains various things related to the figure of Sheikh Nurjati. But this book does not do much elaboration seriously by placing Sheikh Nurjati in a broader context such as the Islamization of the archipelago. See Didin Nurul Rosidin, Syekh Nurjati: A Driving Figure for Islamization of Pra Wali Songo in 15th-century Cirebon, p. 16-19.

<sup>14</sup>Didin Nurul Rosidin, Syekh Nurjati: A Driving Figure for Islamization of Pra Wali Songo in 15th-century Cirebon, p. 14.

Jati played a significant role to the consolidation of Islamization movements. This occurred there before being carried out by his followers to become a massive movement as well as the founder of the first Islamic Kingdom in Cirebon to be independent from the Kingdom of Pajajaran held by his grandfather, Sri Baduga Maharaja Prabu Siliwangi.<sup>15</sup>

The next figure who developed Islam and taswuf in Cirebon was Sheikh Syarif Hidayatullah or Sunan Gunung Djati Cirebon. Sunan Gunung Djati was an Islamic propagandist in West Java (The Propagator of Islam in West Java). In his activities he undertook da'wah trips to residents of the western part of Java to embrace Islam starting from Cirebon and its surroundings as panatagama.<sup>16</sup> Syarif Hidayatullah was a Sufism figure and at the same time had an inheritance because he attained ma'rifah status. Therefore, other trustees in the land of Java confirmed and assumed that Syarif Hidayatullah or Sunan Gunung Djati were Guardians of Qutb (its Axis or the center of the Guardians)). One of the characteristics inherited by Sheikh Syarif Hidayatullah perfected it at the stage of his ma'rifah in order to attain his position as An-Nubuwwat al-Warisah (Prophetic Prophethood). Until Sheikh Syarif Hidayatullah or Sunan Gunung Jati recognized as the successor to Prince Cakrabuana held the title "Sinuhun Ingang Kanjeng Susuhunan Jati Purba Panetep Panatagama Aulia Allah Kutubizaman Kholifatur Rosulullah Shallallahu Alaihi Wassalam".

Syekh Syarif Hidayatullah in this case considered that it is important that in the midst of society still needed the role of the Guardian who had prophetic values and morals marked by the sincerity of obedience and devotion to Allah and His Messenger to spread Islamic preaching. The methods used by Sheikh Syarif

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<sup>15</sup>Zaenal Masduqi et al, Islamization, Leadership Succession, and the Beginning of the emergence of the "Islamic Empire" Cirebon: Study and Writing "History of the Sultanate of Cirebon", Research Report of Research and Development Center for Literature and Religious Studies of Balitbang and Diklat Kementrian Agama RI, Jakarta, 2012, p. 71-76.

<sup>16</sup>Dadan Wildan, Sunan Gunung Jati Between Fiction and Facts: Advice, Influence and Traces of the Guardian in Java, (Ciputat: Saliam, 2012), p. 242.

Hidayatullah in spreading the teachings of Islam and Sufism are not only through doctrines, but also towards friendly culture or tradition even alike Buddhism and Hinduism. Religious traditions through acculturation of the religion and culture of the Cirebon community are still preserved, such as Selamatan, Sedekah tomb, Memitu, etc. So marawis ufistik, etc.<sup>17</sup> These types of cultural arts resulted Cirebon culture were through originally preaching media, the condition of the art currently feared and eroded by global culture with the presence of pop arts from the West or from Indonesian pop. In this paper, the authors intend to revive the unique culture of Cirebon art focusing on Brai's art which has more shades of Sufism as well as an overview of its kejawen values. This indicates that Sufism is very familiar with tradition and local art.

The Islamization of culture occupied the central aspect of each art explained the process of its realization needs involving fundamental questions whether or not it is realized through the eviction of other cultures. This subject matter is clarified by the truth containing other existing cultures without considering such aspects of religious or cultural concretism. This result indicates a rough road if not deadlocked in describing a culture in tandem. The emphasis of this study are the adoption of other cultural elements and the emphasis of Islam the experience of reality with mysticism or mysticism carried out by guardians -Wali Cirebon as a spiritual need and strength of social orders.<sup>18</sup> Tradition is an instructive discourse that connects with the past and the future through the present. In addition, tradition is also a divine norm that safeguards the permanence (permanence) and continuity of certain people maintaining it. It connects with the whole life with certain

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<sup>17</sup>Readings on Cirebon worship, culture and tradition can be seen in the work of Muhaimin, A.G, "Islamic boarding schools and congregations in the Modern Era: An Account on the Transmission of Traditional Islam in Java" in *Studia Islamika* vol 4 no. 1, 1997. And *The Islamic Tradition of Cirebon: Worship and Custom among Javanese Muslims Monash: The Australian National University E-Press, 1995*, and *Islam in the Frame of Local Culture: Portraits from Cirebon, Jakarta: PT Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2001*.

<sup>18</sup>IAN Ian Richard ., *Spiritual World of Sufis*. Translator: Machnun Husein. Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada: 202), p. 195

principles transcending the "standard of living" of humans. He repeats, remembers, recollects basic patterns or divine ideas.<sup>19</sup>

Regarding previous issues, it indirectly confirmed again on the historical aspects of its appearance. We might be able to assert easily, if what being discussed is about the epics of Walang Sungsang and Sunan Gunung Djati or other guardians concerning the Cirebon chronicle and the expansion area both politically and ethically meaning the expansion of Islam can be widely accepted. This is merely a small part from the deepest core to the essence of art accompanied with the success of the Cirebon Empire in the past developed their culture. In the fact, the indications of nicknames attached to the guardian as the nickname or the Old Javanese Hindu-Buddha opened up the simple assumption of assimilating but elaborately explained relationships, especially when it is presented through art whether it is in the form of stories through writing and stage scenes which essentially spoke. Therefore, the present in the practice of life became a real part of the historicity of the past. The symbolism was not changed but the presence of the guardian in Cirebon reaffirmed the actuality of the mind of how God revealing and pervading the consciousness. Thus, the present unity belongs to other religious traditions with different rites.

Arnold Toynbee in his book *A Study of History* assumes that a civilization is not a totality that is totally independent but a progression — an evolution — from a lower form to a higher form. Thus, for example, in his view, Islamic civilization is derived from lower Iranian and Arab cultures, which in turn are given birth by something he calls "Syriac society".<sup>20</sup> As the consequence, Islamic civilization does not need to have to die. In this case, Islamic culture in Cirebon and kejawen influenced by the Javanese Hindu-Buddhist tradition must be seen like this because it is well known to date that the fact that two other cultures coexist with Islam dominating the beliefs of the people of Cirebon to be witnessed.

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<sup>19</sup>Laleh Bahtiar, *Journey to God*, Penerj: Purwanto. Bandung: Nuansa, 2001), p. 51

<sup>20</sup> Dimont, J. Max., *Story of the Life of the Jews*. Masaseni, (2002) p. 8 (translator and publisher's address are not listed in the book)

If we look at Betty's research in the Osing area of East Java, conventionally, there are four stages of Sare'at (Osing dialect for sarengat) referring to obedience to Islamic law, Sharia. Congregation, the word which also means Sufi brotherhood, refers to the Way, namely the path of mysticism. Nature refers to the hidden reality, the Truth. Ma'ripat which means gnosis, "servant unity with God" (manunggaling kawula Gusti). However, in general, this term is not used in a strict sense but loosely referring to the scale of understanding or degree scheme so that Shari'a means rules and regulations of practical reality or just a way of doing things, and essence is significantly deeper truth. Therefore, the syari'at of slametan is a practical organization; essence is his inner meaning. We can call this the "indigenous model" of multivocality.<sup>21</sup>

These characteristics exist in Cirebon and can be seen from the original Cirebon art created by the trustees and his artwork gave birth to emotions in the psychological listeners. Possibly, as a psychiatrist from Canada said, Dr. RM. Bucke, called this phenomenon (mysticism) a "cosmic consciousness". According to Bucke: "the main characteristic of cosmic consciousness is the cosmic awareness of life and the laws of the universe. Along with cosmic awareness, intellectual enlightenment arises will place a person in a new space of existence which almost makes it part of a new species. In that species, moral glory, joy, and indescribable joy arose, and moral feelings were truly shocking and more important than the power of reason. This thing is something called immortality, an awareness of immortality of life. It is not the belief that this condition must be possessed but the awareness that he has it."<sup>22</sup>

In the case of traditional art, aesthetic experience is determined by the adjustment of new artworks to the aesthetic norms that have prevailed: surprising deviations should not be

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<sup>21</sup>Andre Andrew, *Variation of Religion on Java*. Penerj: Achmad Fedyani. Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2001), pp. 240-241.

<sup>22</sup>William. 2015. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Penerje: Lutfi Ansari. Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2015), pp. 380-381

allowed, the creators of art must maintain existing norms, must adhere to commonly accepted art criteria.<sup>23</sup> What happened in the flow of development of traditional Cirebon art is related to whether Cirebon and Cirebon puppets were earlier than the historical figures of Prince Cakra Buana, Sunan Gunung Djati and other guardians. These prominent figures in traditional Cirebon art bore new art preceded by Hindus first expanding its influence clearly the guardian in Cirebon adheres to the generally accepted criteria art or it is because the nature of the contingency of art played by the wali itself to take sympathy to the situation of the Cirebon people at that time. It is clearly a receptive cultural compromise. Thus, it is important to note that in traditional art, variations still exist and must exist; especially in oral literature (including puppets and others!) do not forget the role played by storytellers, puppets and others; although the content of the story may be the same, but the variation, individual execution is very important for audience ratings.<sup>24</sup>

The art of Cirebon and Cirebon puppets (which in a certain degree have similarities with Bali in particular and Java in general) are played by artists to be adorned with decorations of royal symbols such as kris, mountains, cone and offerings and other items, not an empty sight without an exotic side. However, 'for people who have religious experience (such as the Sufi) all nature is able to manifest itself as cosmic sacredness.<sup>25</sup> The cosmos in its wholeness can be a hierarchy. As Schelling wrote: 'Mythology in general and every piece of mythological literature in particular is not understood schematically and allegory, but symbolically. Because the demands of absolute artistic representation are: representations with intact similarity, so that the universal as a whole is particular, and the particular at the same time as a whole is

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<sup>23</sup> A. Teeuw, *Literature and Literature*. Jakarta: PT. Dunia Pustaka Jaya, 1988) page, 360

<sup>24</sup> A. Teeuw, *Literature and Literature.*, P. 361

<sup>25</sup> IAN Ian Richard ., *Spiritual World of Sufis*. Penerj: Machnun Husein, p. 247

universal, and does not only give meaning to mythology.<sup>26</sup> This is what happened why the Arts of Brai and Wayang were juxtaposed in the middle of the stage of the Selametan village traditional celebration.

Plato, the most radical critic of the high judgment on art in the history of philosophy, sometimes speaks, without distinction, about comedy and traged stage life. This difference is lost if someone knows how to see the meaning of the game revealed in front of someone. The pleasure offered to the audience is the same in both cases: namely pleasure towards knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

The genealogy according to the old standard described the origin of man originated from the initial character (pancer) Brahma as one of the figures of Trimurti (Trinity of Shiva-Brama-Wisnu). Brama who acted as the Creator God of Nature created himself and then created Aditi (ancestor of Aditya or God), Danu (ancestor of the danawa or giant) and Manu (ancestor of humans). However, the Wali Sanga style of wayang style in this genealogy is made into a pancer of the Prophet Adam created by Gusti Allah as the first human being created by Allah after creating Angels and Jinns. Adam and his partner Eve were subjected to the temptation of Ajajil Laknatullah (Iblis) to eat the fruit of the culd and were passed down from the family to the earth (Pengagem Ngelmu Cerbon : 131). Indirectly, the story became a rule of cultural transpormative basis carried out by the Cirebon guardians who, for a long time, gradually permeated the views of the people. "Myth is the last — not the first — standing in the development of a hero." However, this only confirms the conclusions reached by many researchers (Lectures and others): reminders of historical events or real figures living in popular memory for two or three centuries more. This is because popular memory finds difficulties in storing individual events and real figures. The structure with popular memory functions has different categories on events, archetypes as

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<sup>26</sup> Hans-Georg. Truth and Method. Penerj: Ahmad Sahidah. Yogyakarta: Student Library), p. 86

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 138

substitutes for historical figures. Historical figures are assimilated by mystical models (heroes, etc.) while the events are identified in the category of mystical actions (battles against monsters, enemy brothers, etc.). If certain epic poems maintain called "historical truth" which is almost never related to certain individuals and events but it is related to institutions, customs and landscapes.<sup>28</sup>

### **Sufistic Values in the Brai Arts Cirebon**

Brai's art began in 1420 AD, when a group of scholars who taught Islam from Baghdad came under the leadership of Sheikh Datul Kahfi or Sheikh Idafi or Datuk Kafi. Sheikh Datul Kafi was allowed to settle in the village of Pasambangan, near Muara Jati which later established a pesantren after Ki Jumajan Jati converted to Islam. One day, Ki Ageng Sumerang, a nobleman of the Pajajaran palace with his wife, Nyi Mas Madungsari came to the world of Segandu.<sup>29</sup> They left Pajajaran because their country was attacked by enemies and they wanted to find a new place to live. Nyi Mas Ratu Brai, both husband and wife were advised to settle in his cottage. Ki Ageng Sumerang and his wife were happy to accept Nyi Mas Ratu Brai's offer to live in Alas Bumi Segandu. A few years later Nyi Mas Madungsari gave birth to a beautiful princess named Sekar Lelangu. Coincided with the rising adult age of Nyi Mas Sekar Lelangu in Segandu Earth Nature, in the Mbah Kuwu Cerbon hamlet the arrival of Raden Wira Serabaya, the son of the king of Tanjung Saguruh, aimed at asking Mbah Kuwu's instructions, to defeat Prabu Banjarpati. Mbah Kuwu Cerbon is willing to give instructions as long as Raden Wira Serabaya wants to embrace Islam.

One day from the peak of Gunung Jati which was not far from him, he heard sounds accompanied by songs whose verses contained glorifying the Almighty God. Hearing a melodious voice

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<sup>28</sup>Eliade Mircea. *The Myth of the Immortal Movement*, Penerj: CukAnanta, (Yogyakarta: IKON.), Pp. 2002: 44-45

<sup>29</sup><http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0smpHvhqeyo> accessed on Thursday 20 October 2015 at 1:00 p.m. WIB

accompanied by sounds that touched the heart, Raden Wira Serabaya's son headed to Gunung Jati Peak. At the peak of Gunung Jati, the Son of the King of Tanjung Saguruh saw four people. They solemnly beat the *trebang* and chanted melodious verses and touched hearts. The four people were Sheikh Datul Kahfi, Ki Wadas Tameng, Nyi Kali Sepuh and Nyai Ratu Brai. After the four people completed and praised the greatness of God, the Son of the King of Tanjung Saguruh ventured to approach; he conveyed his intentions and objectives to get there. After that, Raden Wira Serabaya was accepted as a student of Shaykh Datul Kafi, even knowledge from others.

These fine art forms are all contrasted with rough art like *ludruk* and so on. At night *Syawalan* was sung in the middle of the *Danalaya* community, and by the *Bayalangu* community during the night of *Nadran Alms Earth*. *Paseban Soko* is a place commonly used for Brai Art performances. Hence *Paseban Soko* is also commonly called *Paseban Brai*. Aside from the *Nadran* and *Syawalan* traditions of the *Nadran Earth*, Brai also plays with the *Muludan* tradition. In this context, *slametan* is an affirmation and reinforcement of the general cultural order of his power to eliminate the disruptive forces. *Slametan* concentrates, organizes, and reinforces the general idea of *abangan* about their "pattern of life".

This less dramatic form expresses values animate traditional Javanese peasant culture; adjusting to each other a variety of interdependent wills, refraining from expressing feelings and carefully arranging outward behavior. *Slametan* tends to take place at such points that value reaches its peak, and when the subtle creatures and the inhumane chaos that they represent very threatening.<sup>30</sup>

Art Brai, seen from the ontology aspect of praise is nothing yet representing the imagination of the oneness of Nyai Brai. Teak emission is a cosmic macro, a space caused by emotion

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<sup>30</sup>Clifford Geertz. "Abangan, Santri, Priyayi", Penerj: Aswab Mahasin. Jakarta: PT Dunia Library of Indonesia.1989, p, 36.

that is generated by the experience of the essence of God which is a wide-spread beauty meeting the Amparan Teak seen in terms of the aesthetics of the place becomes beautiful. The name of art regarding the historical aspect of the creator of art itself is probably underlying the birth of opinion if you take from the meaning/meaning of the word passion (spirit). If someone is following Brai's ritual activities, then arousal (enthusiasm) to get closer to the Almighty will be undergoing a ritual full of speciality.

Brai's art form was expressed in terms of the ruling which each rakaat had movement and praise as a reflection of longing for God, under five rak'ahs in barai art by using Java lagam:

### **First Raka'at**

By reading prayers with the Javanese Cirebon dialect:

YA NABI SALAM ALAIKA YARASUL SALAM  
ALAIKAIKABIBI SALAM ALAIKA SOLAWATULAH ILAIKA  
6x.

In the Great Dhikr delivered are: greetings, basmalah, istigfar, salasilah, syahadatain (thoyibah sentence), and prayer. Basically, Brai follows the teachings of Sufism inviting people to always remember Allah Almighty, anytime, anywhere and at any time (mong). The aspect of Sufism lies in the attribute of the dzikir which is presumably impossible to explain one by one, but the abstracization and experience of reality attributed to the name of the dzikr through ritual including the process of physical emptying, concentration directed towards it. Salam (selamet) prophets and prophets are thus understood as substance, intermediaries for artists to project themselves with Allah.

## **Second Raka'at:**

.... the field took the ILALA fire, the lungangansu did not end up in the water, went for 2 months, but did not pray for the death of ILALA, so do not forget to live ILALA, to be dead again if you are ILALA and so alone let's face the death of a sinner, praying can be praying for you and your whole life. 6x (kelayon)

.. I do not know why the prophets, the gods are lost, the blessings and the prayers, the prayers and the prayers, calling ALAA ALA ALA ALA ILA HA ILALA HUALA ALAILA..6x

Hu., - it is usually in the mystical tradition - symbolizes 'breathing' the deepest feeling of essence, perhaps inheriting, respected mediator as a genealogy of living history, the formulation of the essence of the relationship with the ancestral history of this ancestor is explained by the expression of the nature of the question of god where, go madya and madinah just ride solat.subhanallah explaining the virtue that in the phrase Hu, Allah represents the breath. The result of Allah is life itself ... the smallest slope of the slopes, the waterpark, the hot spots, the less sunny, the sunshine, the sunshine for a night, the sunshine.<sup>31</sup>

## **Third Raka'at :**

Nur ya mentor syeikh, prophet, wali-wali, ala muhammad ala nuryangalanur, I'm sad (father) yani body ingsun, ala yamuhammad can not the nation of faith nur ya tawar. 6x. If you are from the faith, from the faith to the children of the faith of the reincarnation, the grace of the throne of the world, the love of the world, the remnant of the world of faith, therefore the doves do not die for the

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<sup>31</sup>Clifford Geertz. "Abangan, Santri, Priyayi", Penerj: Aswab Mahasin, p. 492

virginity of the virgin, the spirit of the virginity of the nation's virginity. 6x. (the poem was born to you)

It tells how God is reality, the pre-creation of the body, yet the body here is affirmed as a servant of God (master), the soul above the affirmation to experience Allah or Allah in the mind and heart is called sukma. which takes the kaula, but the kaula and because karma is no other experience with God, the affirmation of the state's copy is because both the king and the king lost their power in the hands of God, that is what is meant by the state, which actually rationalizes obedience to the norms that must be carried out by society.<sup>32</sup>

Then in art, you can read compliments with the Cirebon dialect:

*YUTE YULAILA YUTE LAILALA YUTE MUKAMADUNYUTE  
ROSULILA MADUN MUKA ANA KAKANG MAJALALA...6x.*

In Brai art, a sentence of *weteng suci kangge naburbismila asale dingin*, it is mandatory that *tempele sewiji2* be read 6x (*lung gadung*). The meaning of the sentence shows the problem of the attitude of asceticism in physical terms so that it is clear the desire for things outside of one self, of course meant by temple is a wiji is God. A universal knowledge achieved by means of immanence is seen through looking into oneself, God existence in terms of the sensory world.

#### **Fourth Raka'at :**

Ado katon neng negesan ajo lali, ala wetan pawangenang pareke ora ketilang, in gulati parek bae, anae neng sadatselawe, ,

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<sup>32</sup>Rachmat Subagja. Original Indonesian Religion. Jakarta: Sinar Harapan and Cipta Loka Caraka Foundation, 1981), p. 261

*ALAILA LAILA ILAHAILA LA ALA ALAILA LAILAHA ILA ILALA.*  
6x. Then read wasalim soli ala sayidinamuhakamadin wa ala ali mukamad, hu ala YAMBISMILA nirokman nirokim soli wasalimala sayidina mucamadin wa ala ali mukamad, read up to 6x. The praise explains the deep message about God existence which can let oneness with God meaning that the essence of Allah can be confirmed exactly where it is, not in the east and far or near which is invisible, and seen close to the shahada 25.

**Fifth Raka'at :**

*SUBAKANALAHI ALA YAHU YAHU IMAN ALA SUBAKANALAHI IMAN IMAN PRASTULILLAH ALA TAKGONJAN GANJEN 6 x(rakat ke 5) ... rubana ya rubana dolam enaan pusana wa ila tagpirhana watarkamna lana kunana minak kosirin. sources of time do not sleep, there is a fire in the world of sin is not old enough to burn, there is fire in the world, in which case the death of the body of the deceased, the body of the body, which is old, miserable, mutawadisi kiyamuhu binapsihi 6x (syair wahdatullah sifating ilmu).*

*ALA ALA ALAILA ILAHAILALA HU ALA ALAILA , ALA UMBUL UMBUL GUNUNG JATIDEGUNG BANTEN RAJA KENE ,ALA ALUN ALUN KESEPUAN LEMAH DUWUR PANGAJARAN SUARANEHELAP SEWU ,(gelap sewu) yen isun lanang sejati, ALA ALA ALAILA ILAHA ILALA HU ALAALAILA...6x*

The Brai's praise above is similar to Poetry for the poet, (kawi his name) a kind of yoga. Kawi, a yogin is a person who practices yoga or certain spiritual practices. In the Hindu-Javanese religion yoga is a human effort to achieve unity with the Deity, and through religious unity humans finally reach moksa, the release of final deliverance from the chain of existence. For some people, yoga is usually a spiritual effort (devotion to the God through tapa,

brata, fasting, study, meditation, offerings, reading religious texts and others). Through a variety of activities, people must try to bring down the God to the earth so that humans can unite with that god. In the poetry of Old Javanese vision for poets or kawi poetry is a means to achieve the ultimate goal: poetry is his religion. The God who wants to get incarnate as the God of Beauty, and Beauty (Kalangwan in Old Javanese) becomes tarekat, a way to achieve this.<sup>33</sup>

Without discussing about the history of Cirebon art emerged from where his birth was, it is very difficult to validate, the traditional art that exists is not suddenly present by itself without the background of the underlying myth. Regarding what exist in arts; people living in the middle of the modern age are not easy because the beauty of the art is wrapped in foreign symbolism.<sup>34</sup> As the only cultural events made, traditional art survive until now. The authenticity of his artistic value must also be taken into account in the midst of widespread Javanese culture and other heterogenic cultural complexities, in which Islam as a migrant culture is adapted to the surrounding cultural context.

Actually the existing traditional art is a palace idea about morality. Then the art developed in the Village Bayalangu Cirebon Regency and its surroundings. This can be characterized by the transformative nature of Syeh Datul Kahfi and Sunan Geseng representing spiritual figures and Pangeran Cakra Buana as the king of worship proposed a Babad in Gegesik Village. In Bungko Kapetakan Village Duke of Danaruda, son of Sunan Panjunan whose charisma influenced the emergence of Bungko angklung art and puppet art represented by Suta Jaya and Serabaya. Those who indirectly in the palace of Cirebon can be considered a stage of artistic creation that accommodates outsiders to become *dalem people* by means of marital relations. For instance, Serabaya is a

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<sup>33</sup>A poet, Literature and Literary Studies. Jakarta: PT. World Ward, 1988), pp, 355

<sup>34</sup>Beatty Andrew, Variation of Religion on Java. Penerj: Achmad Fedyani. Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada .: 2001), p. 4

descendant of Sunan Kalijaga who married Sekar Lelangu daughter Ki Ageng Sumerang from Pajajaran which became Kuwu Gegecik at the time and gave permission for the children of Sunan Geseng to bloom in the village on the advice of Sunan Gunung Djati.

Therefore, without taking into account as stated by Stewart that concretism is a concept that directs our attention to "the issue of accommodation, contest, feasibility, indigmentation and a place for dynamic intercultural processes" it will obscure the substantial subject of traditional art which has remained as a part which has been claimed to be the original tradition of Cirebon, it is relatively easy to talk about traditional Cirebon art from material that is seen to be celebrated by existing traditions, but without seeing historical issues and philosophical thinking that underlie them, can lead one to fatal simplification and careless claims about the authenticity of tradition if you do not consider the evidence you are trying to question it as fairly as possible in explaining the artistic content inspiring Cirebon people for long time. That art is used only at the level of fixing the problem of destruction of mentality\* yet not to change the culture or traditions and ritualistic of other religions to the prearrangement that has preceded inter-government warfare in which the present-day abusers may be overwhelmed by the ruin and injustice of the ruler.

Cirebon art tends to be associated with the spirit of Islamization. This thesis seems to complicate the art's authenticity from its original function, even though the literature also explains the issue of rebellion occurring among the empires. Therefore, I discuss the functions of traditional arts. First: religious function. Second; transmission of the inner world from within the rite. Third; the symbolism that covers the heritage of the courtiers, besides being sacred, also describes the beauty and structure of cosmology.

The language used in Brai shows that the attributes of the existence of the mind (soul) with God, as well as the wayang. The stage scenes from the characters trigger emotions that bring feelings not only mastermind, but also the audience as well. Thereby explaining their differences with rough art is a palace practice that

spread widely when the expansion of village chronicles was promoted which contained an affirmation as in the Balinese kingdom of its time. the overall dynamics of the Balinese hierarchy involved efforts to approach, by imitating, higher levels, and away, with no imitate, lower levels.<sup>35</sup>

The attempts to avoid low things (such as instincts in worship) and to imitate high levels can be seen. In fact, the explorations dating from the palace of the massacre in disseminating ethical issues with the aesthetic assistance that their efforts with the discipline of the body which initially practiced Cirebon's palace. Even if we draw the general conclusions, the mentioned attitude occupying Greertz's views, art-Javanese-like the etiquette, is seen as one that gives the physical form to the essentially inner content of an outside embrace of the inner sense.<sup>36</sup>

Alike mystics, religious humans in general, according to Mircea (2002) primitive humans live in a continuous present. (And in this sense that religious man can be said to be a "primitive" human; he repeats cues from other people (ancestors), through this repetition, his life is always in the present. Hindu-Buddhism does not exist in the developing regions of traditional art but its ritualism mingles with Islamic elements.<sup>37</sup> Traditional rites and rituals remain in the midst of society. Even if one of these cults is said to be able to survive for certain reasons when the religious unit which shelves them is extinct, then its ability to survive is only in the form of fractions. This is what happens in most agrarian worship that lives in folklore. In certain cases, the only thing that survives is not worship, but only a certain ceremony or rite.<sup>38</sup>

"Spiritual thing" is defined as a minimum definition for religion. "Spiritual thing" must be understood as a conscious

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<sup>35</sup>Clifford Geertz. "Abangan, Santri, Priyayi", Penerj: Aswab Mahasin, p. 360

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 443

<sup>37</sup>Eliade, Mircea. 2002. *The Myth of the Eternal Back Movement*, Penerj: CukAnanta, Yogyakarta: IKON.

<sup>38</sup>Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of The Religious Life*. Penerj: Inyak Ridwan Muzir. Jakarta: IRCiSoD, 2001), p. 73

subject who has the ability to exceed ordinary human abilities. Therefore, what is known as the spirits of the dead, jinn, and demons and gods can enter into this definition. What needs to be considered is the particular idea of religion covered by this definition. The only thing that can connect us with something spiritual is only what humans have attached to it. Spiritual is conscious thing that we can influence on it. As we influence consciousness in general by using psychological means, by trying to convince and by raising it with words (mantras and prayers) or with offerings and sacrifices.

Therefore, Brai's art is known as a medium of Islamic da'wah, as it is commonly known as a dakwah, which is related to bad problems. Then, the reaffirmation of experiencing God known to Javanese people with the term feeling through someone through choir is an aspect of Islam. J Gonda explains the two meanings of feeling - "the highest meaning" or the most important hidden value "and" sensory sensation ", taste (tongue)" or "inner feeling" - which is actually taken from the Sanskrit different yet as it is also stated, in modern Java. "The last word is true has been mixed up with the first one.

Gamelan tones and praise verses consisting of Arabic combinations namely; the Qur'an and Javanese praise reflect on the issue of divine experience. It departs from an empirical basis when the sound of music touches the senses, which then the mind and heart are centered on God which becomes a matter of taste. The above combination is clearly visible, only when we recall the story of the arrival of Sheikh Dzatul Kahf from Baghdad to Mount Dati which eventually assimilated to aspects of Javanese aesthetics as in the case of music and praise of Brai whose material was combative between Arabic and Javanese poetry.<sup>39</sup>

For most Javanese, the Qur'an is also not very meaningful, because they do not understand Arabic because many learn to read it without understanding. In this case, of course there is no needs to tell the "reader" to give meaning. The interpretation

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 56-57

is irrelevant and inappropriate for Javanese. On the other hand, finding meaning by "reading their own newspaper" is through introspection. The messages contained in it are stated to be "written without a place": a concept covering both symbolistics and the mystery of Cungkung culture. The interpretation is not considered as subjective action, a fantasy projection but illumination coming from inner reality that produces material forms.<sup>40</sup>

Nyai Brai in this respect is a material requirement that must exist for the reality of God as a mode of being. you could say Nyai Brai the embrace of the Prophet Muhammad on the Qur'an. The sound of gamelan (music) bringing feelings closer to God is of course commensurate with revelation, as well as the Yyai Braia itself is aligned with the Prophet Muhammad. Andrew Beatty in his work on the Variation of Religion on Java stated that Wali means "God's messenger" which is analogous to "polah" which means "do", so that its meaning becomes "teaching by example". The pastor (from the ancient Javanese word "pandita") described as "education-kang-real", means "direct and concrete education, similar to the epigraphy I listed above:" There is no idea except in action".<sup>41</sup> Music as a means of approaching the guardian in educating the people of Cirebon at that time was very effective transforming into the vision of Islam because it was difficult to understand the verses of the Koran, then by cooperative action or practice itself by means of introspection.

Music is used as a medium of da'wah such as used by other special groups who play an important role in the tombs throughout India musicians. They are hierarchically subordinate to the khuddam group; social status is very low because they come from a Hindu caste consisting of pariah musicians. The music played is a good sign of music which increases the passion of the ceremony. These so-called qawwal (singers) as heirs of a vast repertoire of sacred music which is able to express and give rise to

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<sup>40</sup> Clifford Geertz. "Abangan, Santri, Priyayi", Penerj: Aswab Mahasin, p. 360

<sup>41</sup>Beatty Andrew, *Variasi Agama Di Jawa*. Penerj: Achmad Fedyani.hlm, 152-153

mystical conditions and conditions (things) for pilgrims who want to achieve ecstasy.<sup>42</sup> Under the influence of the mystical music scene (qawwali), the followers of the ceremony experience the trance and are united for a moment with God. In the case of the issue, the brai arts are so diverse. The explanation above occupies the category of the first opinion which says that art is taken from the meaning of the word bra which means (bera) neglected from Javanese. Meaning that if someone is participating in Brai ritual activities, she/he will forget the work or other activities so that the activities or other jobs will become neglected (fallow). By carrying out Brai ritual activities, it will provide another work. Because they are so fervent, the only the Almighty that they remember and forget the others.<sup>43</sup>

The birth, (such as music, dance, and drama) is a part covering the mind, so only those who were born with patience and order can choose and get a "feeling" that is subtly covered through it.<sup>44</sup> Music is offered to the ancestors but the emotional arousing tones affirm the feeling of God in consciousness. Ancestors thus describe the only spirit substances correlated with the body in the Javanese tradition of ancestors called great-grandparents. The great-grandfather is "pure" and cannot be used to harm others or to obtain selfish personal gain. His strength and creatures are trained to be "good", even though their manifestations are sometimes frightening.<sup>45</sup>

The *Wali* have created the da'wah method for the importance for spreading the Islamic Religion in Java through artwork. It was done by Sunan Kalijaga with gamelan sekaten or Syahadatain (two sentences of key Islamic testimonies). In addition, Sunan Kalijaga also composed puppet performances in

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<sup>42</sup> Henri Chambert-Loir and Claude Guillot. Pilgrimage and Guardian. Jakarta: PT. Serambi Ilmu Universe), pp. 251

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Among Thursday, November 26, 2015 At 2:00 a.m. at the house, in the Village of Bayalangu.

<sup>44</sup> Clifford Geertz. "Abangan, Santri, Priyayi", Penerj: Aswab Mahasin, p. 377

<sup>45</sup> Beatty Andrew, Variation of Religion on Java. Penerj: Achmad Fedyani. P. 109

places of worship with two sentences of creed. This was done by Sunan Kalijaga that occurred directly as his mastermind.

## **Conclusion**

The influence of tasawuf in form of field of art had influenced art and music. The form and pattern in art and tasawuf was developed based on the theoretical spiritual values. The inner meanings in the art of tasawuf have a variety of meanings and meanings all propped up to the divine values and as the center of the imagination and inspiration of the arts in Islam.

Art in Sufism is a part of Islamic culture that should be proud of. The pride in the sense of art and Sufism spread across the Islamic world to Cirebon has taken an important role in the development of Islam and culture. This high quality is recognized as an extraordinary media of civilization. The art of Sufism is not merely an art value or a called "art for art" (art for art) but also art in Sufism has intuitive meanings or in the terminology of Sufism called *batiniyah* symbolized in forms of full meaning and imagination. Spiritual values in Sufism-style art are usually synergistic with their aesthetic values. A good collaboration between outward beauty and inner values contain in art thus making Sufism-style art one of the best media in Islamic transmission in the archipelago, especially in Java.

Brai art as one of the Cirebon arts that has a sense of Sufism is still developing today. Brai Arts began as entertainment in the Palace and at the same time as a media of propaganda as well as social binders from various elements of society. Brai art has full of meaning illustrating the love of God with full hydration and devotion. Brai as a form of expression of beauty in feeling God's presence is inherent and deep in the mind.

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