

Abstract

This thesis investigates *Ruqyah Jaranan* with its *ndadi* practice as an effort to critically revisit the modern concept of world religions and to understand the struggles of indigenous religious communities in the contemporary era. There are contestations about the *ndadi* element in *Jaranan*, which are initiated by three parties. They are the Indonesian government, certain religious groups, and the *Jaranan* practitioners. The Indonesian government, particularly under the Soeharto's New Order (1966-1998), defines and selects fine art (*kesenian alus*) to represent the Indonesian national identity. The government excluded the *Jaranan*, unless it dismisses the *ndadi* element since it creates the image of primitive and animistic culture. During the rising of Islamic conservatism in the post-reformation Indonesia, the *ndadi* may also be considered as 'syirik' or sinful for practicing idolatry. The modern, rational and religious views have been shared by many parties. Many cultural festivals in several towns in Java provide stage for the *Jaranan* performance but forbid the *ndadi*. In response, this thesis provides an alternative interpretation as a response toward the existing representation of *Jaranan* which involving *ndadi* as problematic representation such as backward, primitive, un-modern, idolatry. The finding shows that the modern and religious conservative perspectives of the *ndadi* in *Jaranan* disregard those of the practitioners even though many *Jaranan* dancers consider *ndadi* as their religious expression to maintain close contacts with their ancestors. For practitioners, *Jaranan* is not only a cultural art but closer to religiosity. The resilience is possible through the worldview of Indigenous paradigm. Following the concept of Indigenous paradigm offered by Maarif, this thesis presents the forms of religiosity in *Jaranan*.

Keywords: *Ndadi*, engagement with ancestors, Representation, Religiosity, and *Ruqyah Jaranan*