***MUNGEL*: A SACRED RITUAL IN KEDIRI, EAST JAVA**

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***Abstract:***

*Indonesia is famous for its various traditions, both sacred and mundane. One of the traditions is mungel. It is a sacred ritual popular in the western part of Kediri city as well as district. Presently, the tradition has been inherited to the seventh generation from the owner’s side (juru kunci) and the second generation but the seventh puppeteer (dhalang) as the ritual is mostly made existent in wayang or puppet performance, wayang Mbah Gandrung, and metri or selametan. It is an ethnographic study and has recorded six ritual performances.*

***Key words****: mungel, sacred ritual, Mbah Gandrung, metri*

**INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia is famous for its various traditions, both sacred and mundane. One of the traditions is *mungel*. It is a sacred ritual popular in the western part of Kediri city as well as Kediri district, East Java. This sacred ritual is manifested in relation to a certain *wayang* or puppet. It is from a small village called Pagung which belongs to *kecamatan* (sub-district) Semen. Around Pagung it also has been popular since it was ‘discovered’, as the informants I consulted refused it as human creation but given by God in a log revealed to Eyang Jimbun Ningrat around two centuries ago (Misbahul, 1995 and

2002). About the origin of this *wayang*, which Victoria M. Clara van Groenendael calls ‘legend’ (2000:38), I have found it differ. However, this finding remains generally the same as my previous one (Misbahul, 1995 and 2002).

With regard to academic records, according to Groenendael, the earliest reference to this *wayang* was first discovered and reported by P.J. Veth (Groenendael,

2000). Yet, she writes, Veth does not

elaborate his report further except its coming into the possession of Mbah Rayasana [this must be Mbah Proyosono I]. After this publication, however, no further information and research on this have ever been made. It was after 1995, I suppose, when I first conducted research on this *wayang* — sponsored by Oral Tradition Association Jakarta—that presently it has gained attention from wider society, both researchers and public, although only Groenendael (2000 and

2002) refers to my writings. Along with the development of the internet, we can access this *wayang* easil y at Youtube, the key words of which are “wayang Mbah Gandrung.”

When I started my first research in 1994, I had not found any formal information about this *wayang*. Therefore, it is ‘only’ a form of earl y documentation and description (Misbahul, 1995). Taufik Dermawan et al. (1995), in which I was one of the team members, also conducted research on this tradition and published their research report in the same year. This study has resulted in further research, both on myself and my colleagues 1996. Together with Taufik

Dermawan, I continued my previous research. This time, I widened my topic analyzing its text, texture and context. In addition, to disseminate this *wayang* I presented a paper in an international seminar (1996a) and also published an article (1998); another article was also published in the same year (Emalia Iragiliati and Taufik Dermawan, 1998). Suripan Sadi Hoetomo (1997) also writes this *wayang* in his article in less than one paragraph.

Groenendael (2000) has added an article published in India. She (2002) also writes another article right after mine (2002) in another book. It is in her first article where I found information about Veth’s report previously mentioned. Not to put down the internet plays its role, other publications were made in 2008 and 2010. In 2008, allow me to claim, was this *wayang*’s year, as not only did it receive a formal national honor that its puppeteer, *Mbah* Kandar, was inaugurated one of Indonesia’s Maestros of traditional arts but, from that year on, he has also deserved some amount of money as a form of appreciation as well as incentive transferred by Indonesian Government. Accompanying the inauguration, a luxurious but limited book was published in which one of the articles is about this puppeteer and, of course, the *wayang*.

Besides, Pudentia MPSS (2008), one of the editors of the book on the maestro, wrote an article published by *Kompas* in which she mentioned this maestro. R. Djoko Prakosa (2008) also published an article—which was republished in a booklet in 2010 by the Government of Kediri District (*Pemerintah Daerah Kabupaten Kediri*)—in a book on performance art of Javanese ethnic. The booklet, as far as I am concerned, is the last

publication about this *wayang.* This booklet is dedicated only to the tradition. Beside Djoko’s article, one and the only other article in this booklet is by Achmad Baihaqi (2010).

All the publications I have mentioned, only the one written by Suripan (1997) which does not mention anything in relation to ritual and only one article by Djoko (2008) which presents a special term referred to the ritual under discussion: *mungel*. Groenendael (2000), in her first article, literally uses

‘sacred’ and ‘ritual’ which, Javanese generally believes, refers to a special power beyond our physical lives. Thus, this *wayang* is never present without this image. When we are talking about this *wayang*, then, a set of sacred rituals is performed; and it is obviously seen from almost any aspect of this tradition, however, this article only presents *mungel.*

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research belongs to qualitative and took ethnographic approach as its method. It was based an idea that ritual belongs to a special cultural activities. According to David Silverman (2004), the number of informants does not guarantee the power of the information obtained. Instead, it was the

‘quality’ of the informant which determines its power.

For this reason, I have decided to take the crew of the *wayang*—including ones who are to take the *wayang* and the properties— those who have performed *mungel* ritual, and common people. For the information obtained from public, the limit is decided when the information does change from one to another. In other words, ‘snow-ball technique’ was used to collect the information.

This research has succeeded to record four *wayang* performances and two *metri*s. The four performances were two were performed in Pagung and the other two were performed out of Pagung; while the *metri*s were both carried out in Pagung. The persons conducting the ritual, hence, were the informants for this type. To complete and criticize the tradition as well as the information obtained, I took public to be my further informants, both from those who agreed to the tradition and those who opposed it.

***MUNGEL*: SACRED RIRUAL**

As I have mentioned, the ritual I discuss here is a sacred ritual. According to Turner (1967) in his *The Forest of Symbols* ritual is a

, ‘… prescribed formal behaviour for occasion not given over to technological routine, having refernce to beliefs in mystical beings or powers.’ (1967:19) As the ritual deals with belief in ‘mystical beings or powers’, this specific kind of human activity presents various symbols, which, Turner argues further, either belong to ‘dominant’ or

‘instrumental’ (1967:30-32). Of these two groups of symbols, ‘dominant symbol’ always presents as the center of the ritual. Geertz, in *The Religion of Java* (1960), has also insisted the importance of symbols in sacred rituals; and so has Hefner (1985). Malidoma Patrice Some, in his *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community* (1997), has claimed the same about the presence of symbols in African rituals.

In relation to Javanese sacred rituals, the use of symbols in their various forms does not differ from other communities in terms of the attaching the meanings behind their physical representation. It means that their

symbolic presences have changed their daily function. To enable their changes, borrowing Koster’s term (n.d.), requires a space and time, either real or not real, specially created for this purpose. By the intention of the ritual actors they have made, say, when they take water for bathing in the same place they usually take their daily bath, they have established a spiritual space and time. In this way, they can lawfully communicate with the spirit intended and further actions dealing with the ritual are made possible. The same is also true with *mungel*.

*Mungel* is a special term used by people around Pagung, a village in the District of Kediri, to refer to an action with regard to flat wooden puppet performance, which— according to experts on puppetry—belongs to *wayang klithik or wayang krucil* (Suripan,

1997; Groenendael, 2000; and Djoko, 2008), which is locally called *Mbah Gandrung*. The puppet as a unit—Javanese calls *wayang—*is called after the name of the main sacred *wayang* character Mbah (Grand Father) Gandrung. Although some researchers have been familiar with this *wayang,* it is Djoko (2008) who has taken the term *mungel* from the public and put it in his writing.

According to Djoko (2008), *mungel* addresses two meanings, one refers to the performance of *wayang Mbah Gandrung* and the other refers to the intention of the person sponsoring the performance in accordance with her/his vow. This tow meanings merge into one, i.e. performing *wayang Mbah Gandrung.* Since the second meaning deals with the intention of acting out the ritual, I argue, it should be considered as the basis upon which the *mungel* enables to act out. Thus, the *mungel* in this respect is the product of the intention, the purpose, or the

vow. If, then, the vow is not to perform there will be no performance. In my field research I have found a ritual in relation to Mbah Gandrung without *wayang* performance but it also resulted from an *ungel*.

To start with, *mungel* is a Javanese word. It is a verb deriving from a noun *ungel* meaning ‘say, utterance or promise, vow, or declaration’. The *ungel* is usually made resulting from certain wish or crisis in such a way that it changes into promise the person saying it has to keep. Moreover, not only does such an *ungel* deals with human beings but also with divine power. As a result, the power of the *ungel* is, indeed, strongly evident. Therefore, when the wish is answered or the crisis is solved, s/he must perform it; otherwise, s/he believes, something bad would come upon her/him or, if s/he is lucky, some mysterious and weird event may occur as a form of reminder —like coming across a deadly poisonous ringed snake just in the middle of the door step of one’s house.

Thus, if the word stem *ungel* is taken into consideration, not only does *mungel* ritual refer to *wayang* performance but also to the *ungel* one has declared*,* which, then, results in a different execution. Hence, if the *ungel* is different it will result in some other form, no *wayang* performance. as a result, it shows that the *ungel* or vow plays an important role in the ritual. *Metri* is another form of *Mungel.*

*Metri* is commonly known as *slametan.* As Geertz (1960) has stated, *slametan* plays a very important role in Javanese life. Hefner (1985) has added *kendurian* or *kenduren* for another name of *slametan.* In this respect, what is meant by *metri* is not different. However, this religious gathering is

specifically dedicated to Mbah Gandrung’s family as a completion of the *ungel* afore mentioned. In such a case, the *ungel* declared is not to perform *wayang Mbah Gandrung* but, rather, to grant an offering to Mbah Gandrung’s family as a form of gratitude and fulfillment of vow. In conclusion, acting out *metri* for this purpose is also *mungel* ritual. As a matter of fact, there is another from of *mungel—njumenengaken Simbah—*yet, it is these two I have found.

***MUNGEL* in *WAYANG* PERFORMANCE**

In general, Groenendael (2000) has presented the order of how this *wayang* goes which she has called structure. However, as she has also reported, she only explains the structure of the performance conducted in Pagung. In addition, it is also without other requirements prior to the performance. Still, her writing is very informative to those who even first discover this tradition because she has also included the complete transcript of *ujub* and her dialogue with the *dalang* or puppeteer, in which the *ungel* is clear. In her account, she has also presented her proposal before sponsoring the performance which, she has argued, works as the requirement of the performance in a form of simple and private ritual. In this regard, I have found different findings (Misbahul, 1995) which still work up until now.

Unlike Groenendael’s account, the informants I consulted, both the members of the *wayang* personels and public, told me that to state the purpose to perform the *wayang* directly before the resting place of Mbah Gandrung—as such that it makes a kind of pilgrimage—is not compulsory. Thus, the people stating their *ungel* may do it at home, even personally and secretly (Misbahul,

1995)*.* Djoko (2008) also has presented it in an almost the same way when he elaborates the idea of *mungel*. Djoko’s account is less elaborative in comparison with Groenendael’s but, to a certain degree, he has added, as I have stated before, some more information dealing with *mungel.* Unlike Groenendael and Djoko, Achmad Baihaqi (2010) has added photos of the offerings when the *selametan* is acted out, whereas the idea behind is not different. In addition, he has also added the radius of its action accompanied with a photo of the way how to take the *wayang*s and its properties since they are not allowed to take on any vehicle but on people’s shoulders. The furthest distance has been, according to Achmad, 25 kms.

However, Achmad, like Groenendael and Djoko, only elaborates the process of the performance which takes place in Pagung. Besides, Achmad and Djoko differ from Groenendael in respect to the performance they elaborate. In this regard, they describe the ritual process of *gebyak suran,* an annual performance specifically carried out by the owner of or the *juru kunci* of the *wayang* every month of Sura or Muharam; it is somewhat like *bersih desa* or *sedekah bumi* by the *juru kunci* (Misbahul, 1995). It is justified with the absence of *kupat luwar* to be drawn in the main ritual. Thus it does not belong to *mungel* ritual. This is very important because the *kupat luwar*, as a symbol, has been loose and the yellow rice inside spread out already, the bond between Mbah Gandrung and the person resulting from the vow is also loose or over. Javanese calls such a case as being *luwar* or free*.*

With regard to *mungel* in *wayang* performance in my field research, there is one thing a person must pay attention to prior

to the performance, which Groenendael (2000) as well as others does not present. On such a day, one or her/his representative who wants to sponsor *wayang Mbah Gandrung* performance for *mungel* pays a visit to the *juru kunci* or the *wayang* owner. This visit enables the *juru kunci* to decide the group members to be involved in the coming performance and, hence, let them know. This is very important particularly if the perfomance is far out of Pagung. If so, not only must the *juru kunci* inform the main group members, i.e. *dalang* and the musicians, but also the other ones in charge of going on foot taking the *wayang* and its properties. Beside confirming the performance—including informing things necessary for *sesajèn and slametan—*it is on the day of this visit that a cock, not a hen, is handed over by the one willing to act out her/his vow. The act of handing over the cock, which may also be represented by other person on her/his behalf, symbolyzes a begining of loosening the bond of the vow.

Above and beyond, all the *wayang* group members taking part in the performance are required to take a ritual bathing, *sesuci siram jamas*. This ritual bathing is accomplished by pouring fresh water all over their body from head to foot. As Koster (n.d.) has claimed, such a bath differs from usual bath in a sense that it is intended not to clean the body from material dirt but, in stead, to wash away all spiritual dirts or bad motives which might contaminate their heart which, in turn, may disturb their further job. Beside a preparatory form for doing something sacred, this action reminds the members that their job dealing with Mbah Gandrung is a holy service for the sake of others’ life in general.

With regards to *Mungel* in *wayang* Mbah Gandrung performance, the following will present four performances, two performances were out of Pagung and the other two were in Pagung. The ones out of Pagung were on March 11, 2013 and November 3, 2013; while the ones in Pagung were carried out on June 16, 2013 and October 15, 2013.

The **first** performace took place in Temboro, a sub village of Pojok, the Kediri City. It was sponsored by Pak Sukani. A day before the performance, a relative of Pak Sukani visited Mbah Jamin to confirm everything in relation to *Mungel* ritual and presented a cock to Mbah Jamin. On the day of performance at 06:29, Pak Wartono and his friends prepared to take Mbah Gandrung and all the properties to Pak Sukani’s home from Mbah Gandrung’s resting place, and they really leaft the place at 06:35. At 09:04 they arrived at Pak Sukani’s home.

There was a stage about seventy-five centi-meters high and nine meters square, covered with a piece of modern carpet. Still, the double-layered traditional crapet or *klasa rangkep*, which is taken everywhere Mbah Gandrung goes, was spread on the stage and the chest was placed on it. Stage preparation

for performance followed but it did not

loosely and vertically at the right and left sides, functioning as *simpingan*, another one was folded in quarters and hung horisontally on the same rod, whereas the last one was placed at the bottom in line with the *larapan* as such that it made a vacant space in the middle. The vacant space worked as the

‘stage’ where the *dalang* played his *wayang*s during the performance.

When the place was ready for having *slametan*, the meal was taken out to by the *wayang*s’ chest. Mbah Kandar the puppeteer and other *wayang* personels made sure if everything required was there. The *slametan* meal comprised *tumpeng jejeg, ingkung lawar, sega golong sanga, jenang sengkala,*

and other additional side dishes.1 Although it

was basically also a *metri*, they did not call this as *metri* but the general word *slametan*, instead.

However, when Mbah Kandar lead the *slametan*, he used the word *metri* not *slametan* as in the following *ujub2*.

Well, excuse me, to all young and old envited and siting around here, may God bless you save and sound. [Udience: Ye..s/Amen].

Here I am to represent ones called

Pak Sukani and his wife at once watched by their idols fom the

include arranging *wayang*s on each side of

the ‘stage’ or *simpingan* because there had to be a *slametan* before opening the chest and, of course, taking out the *wayang*s and arranging them on the *simpingan.*

Unlike *wayang kulit* stage which is like film screen, this *wayang*’s screen did not use a piece of basically white cloth with dark color at the bottom and top edges. Instead, it was made of four pieces of *batik* cloths: with a piece cotton rod, two pieces were hung

1 Explanation for these terms, find the first paragraph of *Mungel in Metri.*

2 *Ujub* is, basically, expression of the purpose and

the reason fro performing *selametan*. Unlike Geertz (1960) has stated, my research on this tradition has found out that it is usually represented by a cultural and/or religious elder and/or leader on behalf of the one who actually performs *selametan.* In this moment, it was Mbah Kandar who represented Pak Sukani.

beginning till the end, Adam the Prophet, …, to *metri* [and] the ones to be *metried* …3

Here the word *metri* or *petri* [Read footnote

10] had come out twice although the quote was onl y taken from the very first part of the *ujub* after the statement of asking for blessing from God. As usual, the *slametan* ended with having meal together, at 11:21. Still, before leading *slametan*, Mbah Kandar started burning incense and expressed some unheard prayers, visible only from his moving lips, near the chest of the *wayang,* at

11:15. To indicate the end of praying and the *slametan* was going to begin, Mbah Kandar gave a sign to Pak Surip to play his music. Pak Surip, then, played his music instrument by hiting the *kenong* and *kempul* twice in succession and ended with his *gong* three times, at 11:17. Upon the completion of the music Pak Surip played, Mbah Kandar turned back to the burned incense, helped by another musician, to return it to the furthest right end of the *larapan*, near a box of *sesajèn*.

When it was considered enough to enjoy the meal, Mbah Kandar signaled to all the musicians to start preparing for arranging the *wayang*s on the *simpingan,* at 11:26*.* Pak Muslan, then, played the bamboo *gambang*

3 Here is some initial part of the original opening formula of the *ujub* recited by Mbah Kandar: *Nggih amit mawon sajuga madhèrèk kula anèm utawi sepuh sedaya ingkang sami katuran wonten mriki pun paringi wilujeng. / [Audience: Nggi…h]/ Kula tinandukaken tiyang ingkang*

followed by other musicians and this opening music ended with the sound of *gong.* After a short pause, a regular music composition for this *wayang* was played to accompany the beginning act of arranging the *wayang*s. Before arranging the *wayang*s Mbah Kandar returned to his place facing the chest, taking some fragrant vaseline and spread it over his palms, reciting some unheard prayer, by the end of which, he sofl y blew his palms before he smeared it on the edge of the chest lid and on the *larapan.* Then, he lifted the lid and put it under the *larapan* which was also under the vacant space of the screen.

The performance started at about 11:46 and ended at about 14:20, and it was directl y followed by the preparation for another ritual*.* The preparation started with making the stage clear from all *wayang*s; another person took the cloth covering the lower part of the stage starting from the *larapan* as the bottom of the *wayang* stage down until the

ground. Pak Muslan4 left his bamboo

*gambang* to help Mbah Kandar move the burned incense from the previous place under the four sacred *wayang*s at the farthest right end to the front of him, the *dalang,* at

14:25. After adding some more incense, Mbah Kandar started to recite some unheard prayer. This time Pak Muji took over the *gambang* and left his *kendang* silently unplayed, only once in a while it was played by Pak Muslan with his left hand as he was busy to help the *dalang* arrange the sacred *wayang*s after he took some fragrant vaseline and rubbed it on his palms.

*nami Pak Sukani tiyang sekaliang ingkang dipun*

*pirsani panutanipun wiwitan lan pungkasan Kanjeng Nabi Adam, …, metri ingkang dipun petri …*

4 The crew helping Mbak Kandar take the three sacred *wayang*s from their place might change to other crew members.

One by one, Mbah Kandar arranged them. Still in their covers, it started with Mbah Gandrung Kakung, standing at his right side, Mbah Gandrung Putri, standing at his left side facing Mbah Gandrung Kakung, and Mbah Jaka Luwar, symbolically siting on the ground at the back side below Mbah Gandrung Putri. As the three sacred *wayang*s had been at each place, Pak Muslan returned to his bamboo *gambang* and Pak Muji, too, returned to his *kendang.* A big bowel, *baskom* (Javanese), filled with another set of *sesajèn* was presented. This *sesajèn* was exactly the same as the one placed under the sacred *wayang*s at the right-end of the *larapan.* In addition, Pak Sukani also gave Mbah Kandar a dish of water with a piece of dry *borèh* to mix with the water.

Mbah Kandar took some fragrant vaseline, rubbed it on his palms, and started to uncover the three sacred *wayang*s at 14:33 when Pak Sukani, his wife and his daughter, Sri Handayani, upon whom his was made were present at the other side of the larapan; as such that they were face-to-face with Mbah Kandar, the *dalang*. Carefully and respectfully, Mbah Kandar uncovered the sacred *wayang*s one by one, put the garland of flowers over the shoulders of Mbah Gandrung Lanang and Mbah Gandrung Wedok, and rubbed them with *borèh* in the same order as he arranged them. When Mbah Kandar had finished setting the garland of flowers, the music started to speed up its rhythm and he ended scene with playing the

*‘badhak merak’5* above the three sacred

*wayang*s and closed it with *kepyèk* sound.

5 ‘a wooden requisite in the form of a demon’s head on a pole decked with a crown of peacock feathers’ (Groenendael, 2000:54)

Then, the dialogue between Mbah Kandar and Pak Sukani’s family began.

It was in this dialogue we learned the vow. To start the dialogue, Mbah Kandar asked Pak Sukani to state his vow. Pak Sukani said that his daughter, Sri Handayani, was seriously ill when she was still a baby. Due to her being sick, Pak Sukani stated that if she could get well and could keep on healthy until she was grown up and find her partner, Pak Sukani would invite Mbah Gandrung and all the other *wayang*s in the group to be performed at his home on her marriage.

Upon this statement, Mbah Kandar, as the representative of Mbah Gandrung, replied that he happily accepted the statement. Furthermore, Mbah Kandar asked the audience to bear witness, as Pak Sukani had indeed invited and performed *wayang Mbah Gandrung*, his vow or *ungel* was released or *luwar* already, and the audience agreed to the statement saying ‘*Nggi..h.’* or

‘Yes,’ In addition, from now on, Mbah Kandar also proposed that God would protect Pak Sukani and all his famil y members that they would live hapily and prosperously.

To complete the ritual, Mbah Kandar asked Pak Sukani to take an end of the *kupat luwar* and Mbah Kandar took the other end; then, they drew them and the *kupat* was released, while grains of yellow rice spread out around. Afterward, Mbah Kandar asked Pak Sukani, Bu Sukani, and their daughter to do the same to another *kupat luwar.* Upon the completion of this ritual, many people came to ask some part of the garland of flowers and the rest of the *borèh*.

The drawing of the two *kupat luwar*s indicated that the performance had ended

and the rest was to return Mbah Gandrung and others into the chest. As every wayang was returned, they performed another *slametan* before going back home to Pagung. The meal for this closing *slametan* was the same as the opening *slametan,* and so was the *ujub.* The only difference in the *ujub* was the proposal posed in them. The first was asking safet y for the *luwaran ujar* or releasing the vow; while the second was expressing gratitude to God for the safe performance of *mungel,* asking protection for the future of the family, and during the way home to Pagung. As the closing *slametan* had ended and the meal was enough had, people worked together to help Pak Wartono and the others pack all *wayang* properties. This preparation took about fifteen minutes to complete. By 15:16 Pak Wartono and his colleagues were ready for leaving home.

The **second** performance conducted out of Pagung was in November 5, 2013 sponsored by Resi Tono Bimo Seno at Jl. Erlangga 22-26, Kediri City. This performance was the third performance Mbah Gandrung had done there. It was one of a series of performances to celebrate Javanese New-Year Eve. According to Resi Tono (interviewed on November 3, 2013), the main ceremony started at the mid night of the first day of month Sura and he wanted Mbah Gandrung to be present. Therefore, in the afternoon prior to the ceremony Mbah Gandrung had to have been there. It meant that it was a day before *wayang Mbah Gandrung* appeared to perform and, as result, during the night before the performance, the *wayang* had stayed there, too.

It was unusual, as Mbah Gandrung, according to the *juru kunci* and other people

close to it, refused to spend the night not at home unless it worked or performed (Misbahul, 1995). When I clarified this issue to Resi Tono on the same day of the interview he explained that—after the New Year Eve ceremony—Mbah Gandrung did not spend the night sleeping. He and the other sacred *wayang*s were awake accompanying every one there. Thus, it did not matter because it was not against the rules. Still, there was one thing I found interesting, i.e. opening the chest and arranging all the *wayang*s on the *simpingan* without having *slametan* and other rituals like that of the first performance. According to the crew members, it was because the chest was opened already; then, it was just the next step after being opened at the last mid-night by Resi Tono.

Only to add this unusual process of performing *wayang Mbah Gandrung*, by

08:30 Mbah Kandar started to open the chest as he usually did but without burning insence; nor was any *sesajèn* available at the fartherst right-end. When each *wayang* was arranged on its place and it was the time to prepare the carnival, five sacred *wayang*s— Mbah Gandrung Lanang, Mbah Gandrung Wedok, Mbah Jaka Luwar, Mbah Sedana Papa, and Mbah Semar—were taken off from their places. With a piece *sampur* each *wayang* was held on one’s chest, *digendhong* or *diemban.* Mbah Akad was with Mbah Gandrung Kakung, Pak Muji was with Mbah Gandrung Putri, Pak Surip held Mbah Sedana Papa, Mbah Kandar had Mbah Jaka Luwar, and Mbah Jamin took Mbah Semar. These five sacred *wayang*s joined the carnival. It started at 09:10 and ended at

10:31.

After having enough rest, Mbah Kandar

prepared for the performance by burning insence at 11:35. This time, not only was insence available but also *sesajèn* offered on a *tampah* situated on its place under the four sacred *wayang*s at the farthest-right end of the *simpingan.* The performance did start at

11:47 and ended at 13:38. Another ritual, then, followed.

Like the first performance, the procedure of this ritual was the same except the position of Resi Tono Bimo Seno. As the *kelir* was set on the wall, there was no space left for the one having a vow to sit, instead, Resi Tono was across the *wayang* chest. Listening to the dialogue between Mbah Kandar and Resi Tono, I learned that the intention to invite and perfomed *wayang Mbah Gandrung* was not because of a critical event, such as severe ill like that of Pak Sukani, but because Resi Tono wanted to use it as a medium of having *ruwatan* to signal a change of one’s life toward a better one along with the changing day of Javanese calendar. Therefore, when the ritual ended at 13:44, instead of taking Mbah Gandrung and the others off the *larapan* to return into the chest and prepared for leaving home, Mbah Kandar let them remain there untouched. Later, it was Resi Tono who used them to have *ruwatan* ritual. This *ruwatan* lasted from

14:07 until 14:56.

As soon as the *ruwatan* ritual ended, Mbah Kandar, helped by the others started to return all the *wayang*s into the chest. The ritual procedure of this closing *slametan* was the same as the first performance. Due to the far distance they had to take, when everything was packed, Pak Wartono and the others responsible to take them home on foot immidiately took them and started to walk home with a chest of *wayang*s and other

properties on their shoulders, without waiting for the closing *slametan.* This closing *slametan* was carried out some time after *wayang Mbah Gandrung* and its properties were not there anymore. Hence, this was another difference I found in this ritual performance. The *ujub* of this *slametan* was the same as the one stated in Pak Sukani’s home, including mentioning Islamic prophets, except the name Mbah Kandar represented, Pak Tono, as well as the day and the month relevant to the event.

Since I have presented two rituals of *wayang Mbah Gandrung* performed out of Pagung, the following will present *mungel* in *wayang* performance carried out in Pagung. There were two events and both were carried out at the same place, Mbah Jamin’s home. Unlike the first two rituals, the following two did not indicate any clear difference in terms of the process. Still, they were different to a certain degree. The **first** performance was under Bu Supiyah’s request. It was on Juni

16, 2013. She was from Kedak, the second village from Kediri city, whereas Pagung was the third. Thus, Bu Supiyah was from a village next to Pagung.

The **second** *mungel* in *wayang* performance carried out in Pagung was offered by Bu Sulis, it was on October 16,

2013. She was from Putat. Putat was a village belonging to Kediri city but it was further than Pagung in terms of distance from the center of Kediri city and it was at the north- westward from the center as well as from Pagung. Nevertheless, if we compared one to the other, we would find that their social life was generarlly the same. Like other requested performances, representatives of these two families had visited Mbah Jamin some days before the day of performance to

arrange and settle everything in order that the agenda would go well and presenting cocks. Since they were performed at the same place, I would not present them separately one by one like the previous discussion, instead, I would discuss them together. I would only present indication of each performance when I found significantly different contexts which might result in confusion.

When these families came on the day of performances, *wayang*s and other relavant properties had been taken to Mbah Jamin’s home, at the right part of the house behind the small shop next to the living room. As far as I have been familiar with this tradition, since late Mbah Lamidi it had been the usual room to perform whenever *wayang Mbah Gandrung* was performed either requested to have *mungel* in Pagung by public or for the tradition of the *wayang* group in each Sura. Thus, because of being too close to the resting place, in such a performance, Mbah Wartono and others, who usually took the *wayang*s out to the resting place to the performance, were not involved. Among the others, it was only Pak Bibit, whose home was next to the main house of Mbah Gandrung’s hut, who sometimes took part in taking the *wayang* and its properties. To replace them, the musicians, including the *juru kunci,* took over the job.

In addition, the stage and other thing necessary for the *mungel* was also ready. Thus, almost everything was on its place except the *selamatan* meal. The meal would only be taken out from the kitchen to the place of the ritual performance when the person intending to have it available and ready to proceed it. Consequently, it was evident that the main preparation for the ritual were taken over by Mbah Jamin’s

family. Usually, Bu Jamin or Mbah Sri Natun was in charge of preparing the meal and other offerings. To make the program run in time, Bu Supiyah and Bu Sulis had sent the raw materials required for the ritual on the same day as they handed over the cock. Pak Yani, on behalf of his mother, Bu Supiyah, gave away the cock to Pak Jamin a day before the ritual; while Bu Sulis’s representative did it two days before. Therefore, in both *mungel* rituals, Bu Supiyah and Bu Sulis only had additional food and beverage to enjoy during *wayang* performance*.*

When every one was there and everything else was ready, the meal for the first *slametan* was taken to the performance place and there started the opening *slametan* before opening the chest of *wayang*s. The *slametan* was lead by Mbah Kandar, the *dalang* (puppeteer). The *ujub* formula Mbah Kandar recited was principally the same as the formula he performed in other performances. The procedure of both performances were the same as the other two conducted out of Pagung, i.e. opening *slametan*, *wayang* performance, declaration of releasing the vow (*luwaran ujar*), and closing *slametan*. In both performances, the closing *slametan* was carried after *wayang Mbah Gandrung* and the properties had been returned to the usual place. This event reminded me of the one taking place in Resi Tono Bimo Seno.

Both the performances lasted about the same length, approximately three hours. The diference was only on its *ujub* dealing with the name, the day, and the reason for having the *mungel*; while the reasons were the same as others, i.e. releasing ones’ vow. The *ungel* Bu Supiyah had made was that she would sponsor to perform *wayang Mbah Gandrung*

in Pagung whenever she achieved to take all her children obtain their success. This was somewhat different from that of Bu Lis. In her regards, Bu Lis made promise that ahe would performed *wayang Mbah Gandrung* in Pagung when her son, Agus, already achieved an established life: being married and earning his own life for his famil y. Hence, these were the reasons these families had for performing *wayang Mbah Gandrung* in Pagung.

***MUNGEL* in *METRI***

Unlike in *wayang* performance, *mungel* ritual in *metri* is very simple and straightforward. However, due to its simplisity, I suppose, researchers have over looked it. As I have presented earlier, *metri* is simply another word for *slametan*. It is a religious gethering around a set of meal called *tumpeng* or *tumpeng jejeg*. This meal consists of cone-formed rice erected in the middle of a *tampah—*or other kitchen appliances large enough to place the *tumpeng* on*—*at the bottom of which some kinds of cooked vegetables were spread around. Near it, on a plate, an *ingkung* or grilled chiken, nine balls or cylinders of rice, called *sega golong*, some plates of white and red porridge or *jenang sengkala*, and some eggs are also served to complete the *tumpeng.* Another point which makes this *metri* differs from *wayang* performance is that it is not required to give a cock as a symbol of untying the bond of a vow.

With regard to *mungel*, the diference is only on the form. The the reason for and the purpose of conducting *metri* is not different from performing *wayang Mbah Gandrung*, i.e. fulfilling one’s vow. Thus, the reason is to make one free from the bond of the *ungel* one has made; while the purpose is in order that

they will never encounter serious hindrance in the future. Instead, they will have happy and prosperous life. The reason and the purpose are also made possible because of some crisis prior to the vow. The examples of *metri* performed by two parties below will clarify this issue. Furthermore, the two examples to be elaborated involved different leaders. The first *metri* was lead by Mbah Lamijan alone; whereas the second was lead by both Mbah Akad and Mbah Lamijan. As a result, it brought about some different performances in the *metri* ritual.

Without a prior notice, on Friday, August 13, 2013 Bu Birah, her son, Padmono, her daughter-in-law or Padmono’s wife, and her baby grand daughter came to Pak Jamin’s house. They told Pak Jamin that they wanted to pay a visit to Mbah Gandrung to have a *slametan* offering. It was meant to fulfill her son’s vow because the couple was not granted anychild, whom they had been waiting, after being married for some time. The vow meant that Pak Patmono made promise to God saying, according to Bu Birah,

Oo, God, [by way of Mbah Gandrung] I ask your favor to grant me *keturunan* (offspring) whom we—I, my wife, and my mother—could rely on when we are old and continue our family history as I have married to my wife for so long and we have no child yet. [And if you answer our proposal] I promise that I would take the kid to see Mbah Gandrung in Pagung and present offerings to him and all his

family. Amen.6

It was around noon that the *metri* was performed. Mbah Lamijan, a local elder or *brejangga,7* asked Bu Birah the same question Mbah Jamin had asked and was

replied with same answer. Afterward, he started to burn the incense and lead the *slametan*. Considering it burned enough, he

started to express the *ujub8* formula on Pak

Padmono’s behalf, which begins with

‘*Solalohissalaam, sollallohissalaam … wa as hadu alla wa as hadu allaa ilaaha ilollaah.*

*…*’

After the opening formula, Mbah Lamijan continued with statements of the reason for as well as the purpose of conducting the *slamten* or *metri*, beginning with “I am Lamijan your grandson, living in a sub-village Pagung Donorojo. I am requested by both Bu Birah and Padmono.

6 Original expression was in Javanese *krama* as follows: *Dhuh Gusti, [kanthi lantaran Mbah Gandrung] kula nyuwun [pitulungan supados kula] Panjenengan paringi keturunan kanggé sèndhènan kula, semah kula, kalih ibu kula ‘njing nèk ‘mpun sepuh kalih nerusné sejarahé keluarga mergi kula émah-émah kalih bojo kula ‘pun dangu boten gadhah yoga. Benjing [nèk Panjenengan ngabulaken penyuwun kula niki] kula janji yoga kula ajeng kula ‘jak [sowan] ‘teng nggèné Mbahé Pagung ngrika kalih ngaturi pasegahan dhateng Mbahé Pagung Mbah Gandrung sak sedayanipun. Aamien*

7 *Brejangga* is a local term used to refer to an

elder considered to know how to lead a sacred ritual and recite the mantra as well as *ujub* in Javanese tradition*.* The term might be from *pujangga*, which, to some extent, is synonymous.

8 In this moment, Pak Lamijan represented Pak

Padmono and/or Bu Birah to expressed the *ujub*.

…’ Having acted out the *metri*, Mbah Lamijan expressed further, Pak Patmono’s bond with his vow or *ujar* or *ungel* was released or *luwar* and, therefore, on behalf of Pak Patmono, Mbah Lamijan proposed that the family, particulary the child, in question, would be happ y, save and sound, as well as productive from the day on because of being protected by Mbah Gandrung and all his family members. After asking forgiveness if there were something inconvenient, finally, he closed his formula, as I said previously, almost in the same way as he opened it,

‘*Solalohissalaam, sollallohissalaam … wa as hadu allaa ilaaha illolaah*’ [but the formula was followed with a Javanese declaration,] ‘*lan ingsun neksèni satuhuné nora nana Pengéran nanging Alloh lan ingsun neksèni Kanjeng Nabi Muhammad iku dadi utusané Alloh* [and I bear witness that there in God but Alloh and I bear witness that Prophet Muhammad is Alloh’s messenger.]*. Laaa ilaaha la illalloh muhammadur rosuululloh. Solalohissalaam, sollallohissalaam.’*

These opening and closing formula seemed particularly used when Mbah Lamijan dedicated this in fornt of Mbah Gandrung’s resting place, because, as the ritual still continued, he did not use it when he lead the *slametan*. This time, Mbah Lamijan joined us sitting around the ritual meal making a circle. Hence, he continued the ritual directly stating, ‘Here I want to express an intention of which the intention owner is Pak Patmono and Bu Birah …’ Unlike the formula having special opening

and closing forms stated in front of Mbah Gandrung’s resting place, this formula was not only for this particular *metri* but also for other *metri* or *slametan*, because Mbah Lamijan also used this formula in in leading Mbah Jamin *metri* every thirt y-five-day circle to celebrate Mbah Gandrung’s Javanese birthday, or *tiron* or *weton*. After expressing all the formulas requested, Mbah Lamijan asked me to close the *metri* with Islamic prayers and I did it. The *metri* did really ended with enjoying the meal together.

The meal offerings for the *metri* were the same as the *slametan* prior to opening the chest before performing *wayang Mbah Gandrung* and after returning all the *wayang*s back into the chest after being performed. They were *tumpeng jejeg, ingkung lawar, sega golong sanga, jenang sengkala,* and other additional side dishes. Besides, the one performing the *metri* must also have some diferent kinds of flowers and incense to burn; s/he must also prepare some amount of money*,* locally called *binat,* to be given to the *brejangga* and/or the *juru kunci,* and Bu Birah did it.

To complete all the preparation for the *metri,* Bu Birah, on Pak Padmono’s behalf, requested Bu Jamin to do. Bu Birah and Pak Padmono only had raw materials, such as an alive cock, rice, vegetables, and flowers, etc. This was totally different from the next example. This second example of *metri* performed by Pak Pan Nurdianto who wanted to prepare them at his mother’s home. According to Mbah Jamin (interviewed on October 8, 2013),

It does not matter who prepares all the needs for the offerings [flowers, perfume, and incense] as well as the meal for the *metri*.

What matters is whether or not they are complete and meet the requirements. Otherwise, something wrong might occur. And usually, it is the *juru kunci* who is blamed. Therefore, I have to see if everything is allright.

In this respect, I suppose, it was due to the different intimacy to the tradition and the distance to the place between Pak Patmono and Pak Pan Nurdiyanto which has brought about different involvement. With regard to these issues, Pak Nurdiyanto was much closer than Pak Padmono. Pak Padmono was from Campurejo, about six kilometers from Pagung; whereas Pak Nurdiyanto was originally from Pagung, although presently he lives in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, as a chemistry teacher at a Public Senior-High School. Pak Padmono or Bu Birah might be familiar also with the tradition and quite aware of all the ruqirements. However, six kilometers was not a close distance to take all the things with them. With motor cycle and public trasport, it only made things more difficult.

Early in the morning, Pak Nurdiyanto told us (interviewed on October 9, 2013), they prepared everything necessary for the *metri* at the home of Pak Nurdi yanto’s mother, about five-hundred meters westward from Mbah Jamin’s house. Then, around

09.00 o’clock in the morning of October 9,

2013, Pak Pan left for the ritual, including the offerings, from his mother’s home to Mbah Gandrung’s resting place. Arriving there, the pavilion was open already. The vice-*juru kunci* Mbah Jamin, the *juru kunci* Mbah Akad, Mbah Lamijan, and some other people had been there siting around on some pieces of carpet, as if they were waiting for

respected guests, even the curtain covering Mbah Gandrung’s resting place had been drawn, too. As the people siting around let the space in front of the resting place vacant, it made the old chest in which Mbah Gandrung and other *wayang*s were kept center of attention. After a short greeting among them and Pak Nurdiyanto had stated his intention of performing *metri* Mbah Akad started the ritual.

Unlike in the first *metri*, in this occasion two persons expressed Pak Nurdiyanto’s intention of holding the *metri*. First, right in front of Mbah Gandrung resting place Mbah Akad, as the *juru kunci*, on behalf of Pak Nurdiyanto, started to burn incense. Afterward, he communicated the reason and the intention of gethering at Mbah Gandrung’s home. As the word composition of the formula was different from, while the content were the same as, Mbah Lamijan’s afore mentioned, the opening formula was quite different. Mbah Akad started his formula saying ‘*Kutug-kutug kukusku adi kumala/ Tekenku senjata wulung,/ Pedhomanku madhep manteb ning awakku*,’ followed by burning incense, then,

‘*Salamulikum salam*. …’ and Mbah Akad did not repeat the opening as Mbah Lamijan did when he closed his formula.

Having completed his duty, Mbah Akad had Mbah Lamijan, as the *brejangga* appointed, continue the ritual to complete it saying, ‘Please, Pak Jan, express the intention. …’ Mbah Lamijan and some others seemed surprised of Mbah Akad’s request because what he was going to do had been taken over by Mbah Akad. Almost together they said, ‘*Lha uwis kabèh, ‘no.’* (‘You’ve stated all [the formula].) Responding to this Mbah Akad stated ‘

Come on, please.’ As an elder or *brejangga* around the place Mbah Lamijan had to complete the ritual. Since Mbah Akad had represented Pak Nurdiyanto express his reason for and intention of having the *metri* directly in front of Mbah Gandrung accompanied by burning the incense, Mbah Lamijan did not do it as he did when he lead the *metri* for Pak Patmono. Instead, he remained seated at the same place he had sit and recited his formula.

This time he played the second role he played when he lead Pak Padmono’s *metri,* expressing the intention or *nandukaké.* Therefore, on behalf of Pak Pan, he directl y expressed his dedication statements to Mbah Gandrung and other holy and/or respected spirits, dealing with the puppets, the village of Pagung, and the place where Pak Pan had lived. It was the same formula he recited when he lead Pak Patmono’s *metri,* with relevant changes, such as the name of the person, the day, the where one lived, etc. This was in accordance with the request Mbah Akad had stated. Completing his turn, Mbah Lamijan also asked me to close the *metri* with Islamic prayer and I did. Thus, the *metri* ended with having the meal together.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In conclusion, this research had found out that perfoming *mungel* ritual was only relevant for public. It did not include the performance on each Sura. Although people in general, including the *wayang* crew members, only indicated *mungel* to refer to the performance, this research had found out that *mungel* ritual also referred to ritual without *wayang* performance. Hence, there were two forms of *mungel* ritual: with *wayang* performance and without *wayang*

performance. *Mungel* ritual without *wayang* performance is called *metri*; whereas the one with performance did not have another name. *Metri* ritual was carried out in of Mbah Gandrung’s resting place.

*Mungel* ritual with perfoming *wayang* comprised to kinds: out of Pagung and in Pagung. When it dealt with *mungel* ritual conducted outside Pagung village, it usually required the crew members specially in charge of taking the *wayang* and its properties to the place of performance. It was due to the principle requirements apllied to the persons doing the job. The involvement of this crew was required in the second kind for the *juru kunci* and the musicians would take over their job.

The time to take the three sacred *wayang*s out had changed in that it was not necessarily to be at noon as it used to be when late Mbah Darimin was the *juru kunci.* This event depended on the relevant performance, such as distance, climate, and request, rather than on time only.

Wether or not was *mungel* ritual with *wayang* performance depended on the *ungel* or vow expressed by ones who stated it. The *ungel* might be expressed both openly and secretly, in front of Mbah Gandrung’s resting place or at ones’ home.

To end, I would like to state that, by the end of my field research, Mbah Jamin mentioned, there was another *ungel* which was called *njumenengaken Simbah* or taking out and place the three sacred *wayang*s to stand on the *larapan* without *wayang* performance. However, I had not found it during my field research.

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