THE MYSTICAL ILLUSION OF THE JAVANESE KERAMAT PLACES: ON THE THRESHOLD OF SOCIO-CULTURAL "INTERFACES"

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Abstrak

Ketika menghadapi kesulitan banyak orang Jawa pergi berziarah ke tempat-tempat keramat untuk mendapatkan kelegaan. Tempat keramat bisa berkaitan dengan kehadiran yang ilahi di tempat itu, namun tempat keramat dapat juga terjadi karena dimaksudkan demikian oleh suatu masyarakat. Tempat keramat merupakan suatu rapresentasi dari kehendak masyarakat. Dalam masyarakat Jawa, tempat keramat dapat dikunjungi oleh orang dari pelbagai agama. Secara etnologis-sosial, hal ini tidak dapat dipandang sebagai sinkretisme, namun lebih merupakan kebersamaan sosial. Kunjungan ke tempat-tempat keramat merupakan sarana bagi orang Jawa untuk mengembalikan posisinya dalam kehidupan bersama.

Key words:

Javanese culture, pilgrimages, sacred places, symbolic representations, cognitive mapping, intentionality, syncretism, rituals

1. Introduction

That which is surprising for whoever arrives for the first time in Central Java is the "mobility" of the local population on a medium scale and at certain occasions. It is astonishing the more because Javanese culture of this region is still broadly rooted in rurality, or influenced by it, despite the fast social changes that occur today. And we could think indeed that there are strong ties between agrarian milieu, attachment to a soil and sedentary life. But it is not uncommon to see, in some occasions, people like torn up by the roots undertaking a trip – alone (*sendirian*) or in a group (*rombongan*) –, but never without an aim. It is usual in Java to visit a neighbor in the hospital, to visit a person who has just given birth to a child, or to pay a visit on a mourning family. Some go to historical or recreational places and there are also who visit religious sanctuaries.

One could follow the interpretation of the sociologist Edward T. Hall[1], based on ethological studies about "crowding", who demonstrates that when a population approaches its "density limit", the fact of reaching the break of its critical space can generate stress and aggressiveness among the population. That explanation could maybe account for why, in the over-crowded island of Java, people often feel the need to move as if it was necessary for them to widen their vital space.

But is it true to say that to move to enlarge one's space is what they seek for? It seems that much more important for them is that "aim" (such places or persons) they strain to reach. It is what implies German-born Prof. Magnis-Suseno[2], a sharp observer of the Javanese ethics and world-view, when a writes: "Faced with important events of life or in need, the Javanese will perform prayers, and possibly undertake a pilgrimage to a magically potent site." It seems indeed that whenever they are inwardly disorientated (*bingung*) or in search of something (answer, social position, inner strength, etc), the Javanese[3] are pushed and driven out of their familiar environment to some places called "*keramat*" in order to find what they seek, especially that which is difficult for them to get in their daily milieu. It is those visits to the Javanese *keramat* that this article intends to enter upon from a socio-ethnological point of view.

2. Investigation on the Notion of *Keramat*

The concept of *keramat*[4] has been for a long time indigenous to Java. It comes from an Arabic word which in turn is derived from the Semitic root *hrm* meaning "sacred" in a Durkheimian sense, that is set apart and forbidden[5]. This observation provoked a number of questions: Why should one go to these places in search of something that might occur there, and which may not happen if a Javanese man or woman remains in his or her ordinary environment? What is it that determines the choice of the *keramat*, given that sites of this kind abound in Java? In this given area, what is it that happens in an "effective" way such that visitors renew their visits and that the reputation of these places is in no way affected by repeated condemnations of such practices by some religious groups? Agreeing with American javanologist Ward Keeler that "physical orientation in space is very important to the Javanese generally", and that "they will focus feelings of awkwardness in a strange place in terms of disorientation as to the cardinal points"[6], I established as a result that there is a close link between feeling and spatial orientation, and I came to ask to myself if a change in physical orientation may not have an impact on inner moods and motivations.

Very few studies have been conducted on the *keramat*. It has hardly attracted the attention of the ethnologists, historians and sociologists of the

religion. French researchers Henri Chambert-Loir and Claude Guillot[7] have the credit for having written in 1995 a valuable research work about the cult of saints in Java. The tombs of Muslim saints (*wali*), who are said to have islamized Java in the 16th century, are some of the places of Java which are objects of pilgrimages (*ziarah*). While most of the aspects described by this article remain relevant for the *keramat* in general, their ethnography does not however satiate our desire to understand. What is so precisely described doesn't really provide the key to understand the underlying "mechanisms" and "logic" at work in these practices. These are the aspects that I want to highlight in the present investigation.

Difficult as it is to carry out a systematic survey of all the sacred places regularly visited by the Javanese, I limited my choice of a field of research to the Special Province of Yogyakarta, the historical heart of the Javanese culture. In this area, I visited twenty-nine *keramat* between July and October 2007. By using the general term of "*keramat*", I adopt here a nominal approach of those places which share a certain number of common significant features notwithstanding the diversity of their physical arrangements. My fieldwork focused only on individual visits[8]. In general, the Javanese choose a *keramat* according to a "particular spiritual affinity" or a specific request. Their choice goes generally towards isolated *keramat*, or those areas that are far from their living place, so that they can experience a break with their usual environment. Anybody can go to those places when he or she feels the need[9].

The few hypotheses that I put forward hereafter are to be understood as an attempt to come to terms with this phenomenon. I am not trying here to construct a complete theory on the Javanese *keramat* – this would be pretentious for a thesis restricted by a lack of time to conduct an exhaustive study. The purpose of these hypotheses is to stimulate a reflection and renew our understanding of these places.

3. An Illusory Mystical Participation in a Cosmic Power

There is no reason to doubt what is felt and experienced by those who visit the *keramat*. On the other hand, an ethnologist cannot blindly accept the explanation given by participants about what they experience, before testing the coherence of that explanation. To step back from the indigenous explanation is indispensable if one is not to let oneself be subjected to an illusion[10]. For this reason, we begin with analysing and defining the nature of those places called "*keramat*" and indigenously considered as "sacred". We may wonder: Are these places sacred in themselves or with regard to the people who conceive it like that? In other words, is it the constitution of the place or man's presence and action which make it sacred?

In Java, "*keramat*" indicates a kind of cosmic fluid or impersonal force, concentrated in a physical place, and which can be instilled in oneself by visiting these places. Such manifestations owe nothing to man: the sacred thing (for example *kasektèn*, a kind of supernatural power) is available to all and the Javanese go to these places to get it (through *wahyu*[11] for example). This is well illustrated by Prof. Magnis-Suseno when he explains that political power is, for the Javanese, something substantial[12], "a supernatural reality that is self perpetuating"[13]. As a cosmic force which permeates the entire universe "power is subject to determination by nothing except itself"[14]. And the philosopher adds: "This concept implies that the total amount of power in the universe is always constant. It can neither increase nor decrease, since it is identical with the essence of the cosmos. Only its distribution within the cosmos can be altered. Concentration of power in one place, therefore, implies a diminution of power in other places."[15]. So, in order to account for why some places are less frequented by visitors who choose to go to other places, the Javanese often explain that the supernatural force has moved back from that *keramat* – the place is emptied of its power – to go elsewhere. It is as if a substance has migrated from a place to take root in another, more appropriate to receive it.

This indigenous explanation cannot satisfy our research because it is simply not possible to test its validity. The very subtle tautological form of this explanation prevents it from being subjected to criticism. The Javanese argumentation appears irrefutable and not falsifiable[16]. Hence, we stay under illusion, blind to the fact that the explanation misses the point and we finally forget to look and search in another direction. In order to verify that the so-called "*keramat*" is concentrated in a place as if it were a substance, we must cross-examine the possibility of its absence of that place, in other words, test the falsifiability of the indigenous explanation. But to account for the fact that "*keramat*" could be not available in such a place, the Javanese say that a supernatural substance has migrated from one place to another. So, they justify in a circular way, the substantiality of the thing [is "*keramat*" a quasi-physical thing?] by means of that substantiality ["*keramat*" has the ability to get out of place!] which we asked them to prove. Thus, to be able to understand what really happens in the *keramat*, we need to put aside the indigenous explanation and look for a new interpretation.

This new way consists in analysing the relationship between the persons who visit a *keramat* and the place in question, given that a same place can be considered by some as a *keramat* or seen by others as neutral. Instead of thinking about *keramat* in terms of belief – that defies scientific definition – in a supernatural power, through which it is possible to "participate" mystically using a magically potent site and a set of rituals, it may be better to think

about *keramat* in terms of "intentionality" in the Husserlian sense. As a matter of fact, any *keramat* is experienced as perspectively given[17]. Moreover, the notion of intentionality has the capability to transplant the reality of the *keramat* phenomenon from a physical perspective to its locus that is the human mind. This new perspective suggests that a *keramat* place is the projection of symbolic representations of a social group onto some places of space, so that members of the group can re-appropriate them.

This view is supported by direct observations. For example, in the district of Turi (department of Sleman), not far from the Merapi volcano, I noted that in order to reduce pollution and preserve the delicate equilibrium of the ecosystem of certain places like natural ponds or springs some Javanese have replaced the board "*Dilarang*" ("Forbidden"), aimed at preventing people polluting water with detergent, household waste or urine, by objects that are usually found in all sacred places. Thus, they surround the place in question with a low bamboo fence, arrange medium-sized stones, put a thick white cloth (*kain kafan*) usually used as a burial shroud, set a small basket made with weaved banana leaves (*takir*) usually used to receive offerings (*sesaji*), or put there a clay stove (*anglo*) to burn Javanese incense (*kemenyan*)… it turns out that such arrangements are much more efficacious than anything else. These objects, arranged in a proper way, will provoke in anyone who goes there, the feeling that a spirit (*roh alus*) lives there and the fear of profaning this place.

What is powerfully felt by the Javanese is that they believe a supernatural force is acting. This does not result directly from the *keramat*: to think thus would be inaccurate and a very simplistic cause-effect schema. The real cause has to be found not in the geographical structure of space, but in the cognitive "space" of the visitor, in his mental mapping. What is felt externally to oneself is in fact an emanation of oneself. And what is traditionally but ambiguously called "the Sacred" does not exist by itself as something immanent in nature[18]. It is rather the name given to explain something that is felt and which has its own effectiveness but cannot be explained.

It is not the alleged migration of a supernatural entity which is able to explain the successive religious transformations of a same place (and the substitution of one system of religious rituals for another), but only the different mental mappings of successive social groups who appropriate that place and determine it each time in a new way. It is not a natural or even supernatural phenomenon that has to be seen at work in the *keramat* places, but a cultural phenomenon which enlightens the true capability of the human mind[19].

One could reproach me for demystifying the *keramat* places by reducing them to the support of a cognitive process without considering their spiritual dimension. However, it is not the concern of an ethnographical study to allow

beliefs to intervene in the explanation of the mechanisms at work in the *keramat*. Admittedly belief plays its role but ethnography is not in a position to measure faith, but can only localize its range of intervention. What is certain is that the Javanese who visit the *keramat* 'believe' in their so-called sacredness. They go to those places because other people have mentioned to them that the *keramat* are filled with supernatural power, that something happened there, and they in turn 'believe' that these places are "sacred". The choice of the particular *keramat* that will be visited depends also on the intuitive knowledge and the individual history of a person. Such beliefs generate in the Javanese a powerful motivation which leads them to a *keramat* in order to find an answer to their quest or remedy for their disorientation[20].

4. From Participation to Identification: There is no Javanese Syncretism.

The same *keramat* are visited by people who belong to different formal religions, and who may sometimes take part together spontaneously in communal rituals. These places seem to have the "power" to gather individuals under a same emblem, especially those whose religious membership has the propensity to keep them apart. I already noticed that discontinuities of places are nothing else but differences of determination that is, mental constructions cast on geographical or social distinctive features and therefore considered as "sacred". I thus put forth the idea that these physical discontinuities are used also as a coherent classificatory system and have something to tell us about the differences between cultural groups. What is identified by the Javanese themselves as places of mystical power can be seen also as identity[21] markers. The disparities of places appear very suitable to signify cultural and religious differences, like the function of the totemic institution according to French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss[22].

But there are two ways to approach that homology: classification and identification; in other words: differences and similarities. In the classificatory type – the model selected by Lévi-Strauss to explain totemism – homology focuses only on differential relations between two series of terms: for example, in our context, to say that the group of those called *abangan*[23] is different from the group of those called *putihan* is analogous to the fact that a *keramat* is different from a mosque. Regarding the second type – the model of identification[24] –, homology focuses then on the terms themselves: the association of the *abangan* with a *keramat*, and the *putihan* with a mosque. This dual way of dealing with the concept of homology is very interesting because it brings to the fore questions of formal membership to a group and of the religious identity of the members of this group. The distinction between identity and membership provides an opportunity for a reappraisal of the

cultural groups and their relationships inside Javanese society in order to attempt a new sociological categorization. Notwithstanding its famous use, the division of Javanese society in three "Ideal Types" – that is *santri*, *abangan* and *priyayi* – established by American anthropologist Clifford Geertz seems today to be outdated[25]. But I concur with Geertz[26], that in their way of conceiving the world, the Javanese distinguish between two sides of reality which come together in man, the outer-side (*lair*) and the inner-side (*batin*)[27]. It would be interesting to consider this contrast (exteriority and interiority) to observe the *keramat* and their visitors from this point of view.

The words *agama*, "religion", and *ageman*, "dress/clothes", are very closely homophonic and Javanese speakers like playing with words. That's why the religious membership is frequently compared by the Javanese to an item of clothing (*ageman*) that is put on or taken off, according to circumstances. When they say that "all religions are the same" ("*semua agama sama*"), they wish to express that the means is less important than the goal they pursue. That's the reason why the island of Java has always been more hospitable to anything that is alien to its own culture. But the adoption and assimilation of elements, new ideas, cultural traits or social patterns from another culture (that is a process of acculturation) has only been possible on one condition: that the newness does not disrupt the social harmony (that would consequently disturb cosmic harmony) and the Javanese inner attitude[28]. That's why visiting *keramat* does not result in external changes (a kind of "metamorphosis"): the Javanese visitor does not change his or her religion. But each time they visit such places, there occurs a perspectival change (an "anamorphosis") in their way-of-looking-at-the-world.

How can a Javanese belong to a formal religion and at the same time regularly visit *keramat* without having his identity divided? Instead of considering personal and social identity as determined by religious membership, one should rather see membership as subsumed by the identity factor. The apparent dual belonging to the local "religion" of Java and a transnational/formal religion is in fact an inclusion of the second by the first. In practice, a double sociological membership is not possible. What occurs at a *keramat* is that people, without losing their own socio-religious identity, adopt the Javanese outlook, but in no way live in two "symbolic worlds" at the same time. But it is a fact that with those who "practice" the *keramat*, their ties to a formal religion become more and more loose, and may end up becoming just a nominal link. The invocation of "*Tuhan*", "*Gusti*" or "*Yang Maha Esa*", the impersonal name of the Absolute, during the rites and the prayers in the *keramat*, is very helpful to transcend the worldly differences. Moreover, people go to the *keramat* to search something that can fulfil their needs: their demands remain at a "material" level and not at a relational (faith) level with

the divinity. It is because "it works" and that there are chances that they will obtain the expected result that people continue to visit such places.

To look at the *keramat* from a classificatory perspective as I did, that is, to focus on differential relationships between places, is helpful to emphasize the differences of intentionalities at work in different religious groups. But is it right to try to understand the *keramat* institution only from a topical and political perspective: the modern endeavour of "deculturation[29]" which is the other name of the Arabization and Westernization processes occurring today in Indonesia? It is of course not the one and only perspective. There are no static institutions: all change in the long run and consequently receive new meanings/functions. But today, the Javanese *keramat* appears as a claim of an indigenous (*pribumi*) identity jeopardized by the invasion of exogenous cultural models which are incompatible with the Javanese world-view. But it seems to be also a remarkable apparatus which regenerate in the Javanese people, their Javanese habits and framework.

5. From a Conscious Liminal State to an Unconscious "Counter-liminal" Experience

The *keramat* places are like "interfaces" in a computational sense: they connect subjects together in a virtual "network"[30]. The word "virtual" has to be understood here in its literal meaning: linked by a "force" (from the Latin word *virtus*) which manifests itself in these spots. The *keramat* network constitutes a virtual community: not a social or physical community but a community of identity, whose members share a same world-view and a certain number of common representations. Their membership to this virtual network shapes new behaviours in them. The process of transmission and transformation from one state to another – in other words the process of passing – occurs in each *keramat*.

A reflection on the concept of "liminality", its use in studies on the rites of passage, may be instructive here to understand what happens in the space of a *keramat*. According to ethnologist and folklorist Arnold Van Gennep[31], the rites of passage generally proceed in three stages/phases: separation, liminality (*limen* in Latin means "threshold"), and aggregation. Victor Turner[32] focused particularly on the intermediate stage during which the status of the individual is ambiguous and poorly defined. He gave to liminality the name of *communitas*. If society is a definite arrangement of social positions and status, *communitas* is opposed to norms and institutionalization (an "anti-structure" or "against-structure"). The period of geographical and social separation is a kind of *tabula rasa*, an opportunity to start over again without having social differences.

However, this view is questioned by the specificities of the Javanese field. First, it is a disorientation (*bingung*, "confused"), in other words, the awareness of a "liminal" state in their daily life, that pushes Javanese people out of their daily milieu to a *keramat*. For Turner, the in-between or "liminality" is ambiguous and the collapse of usual references, the breakdown of social structures, leads to a new restructuring of the society. Instead of seeing "liminality", like Turner, as a period to question an established order and to transform the daily structure, we must instead consider the "liminal" space that is a Javanese *keramat* as a place where the social structure, in tune with the cosmic structure according to the Javanese, manifests itself – not necessarily in a conscious and institutionally way – to those who visit it. Magnis-Suseno writes, "The entire wisdom of Javanese culture can be summed up in the meta-demand to always occupy the right place. The universe is an ordered whole in which every element has its proper place. As long as these elements remain in their proper places, peace and security prevail. It is, therefore, in the overall interests of everyone that each member of society plays his appropriate role within the whole."[33] While Turner notes that during the phase of reincorporation in society the person receives a new role and discovers oneself provided with a new power, in Java, the passage through the threshold that is a *keramat* does not give the visitor a new status, but confirms him in the socio-cosmic position that is his own and that he has to assume in the social group[34].

To frequent a *keramat* is to do a counter-liminal experience: instead of freeing individuals from social norms in order to gain a new social status, it helps disoriented Javanese to rediscover their own place inside the social structure. The visit of such places, out of the everyday environment, is paradoxically the means by which individuals can firmly be rooted again in their daily milieu.

6. Effective Manipulation of Cognitive Representations through Physical Places

It can be useful here to have a look at Donald Winnicott's concepts of "transitional objects and phenomena"[35]. For the British paediatrician and psychoanalyst, children experience, in their early childhood, a "transitional" state which is a gradual passage from the non-awareness of the limits of their body and also of others, to the recognition that there is an outside-world ("the not-me"). Access to this outside-world happens through physical objects – like a teddy bear, a blanket, etc. – qualified by Winnicott as "transitional", and not felt by the child as an external object. This is the "transitional object", that the child believes being part of his body, which will lead him to disillusion.

A similar process occurs among the Javanese by means of these physical places that are the *keramat*. The encounter with this kind of "transitional" or liminal places can allow the passage from a subjective state of confusion (inner disorder) to the perception of the proper place and the appropriate role the individual in question has to play within the "socio-cosmic" whole. Paradoxically, disillusion – that is the fact of coming back to the usual and tangible world – is possible only through illusion: the belief that something happened in a certain *keramat* and the desire to go there and participate mystically to that event has the power to transform deeply the visitor. How can it happen? The kind of objects found in the *keramat*, their arrangements and the rituals performed there awake some symbolic representations which, in turn, stimulate *habitus*. This behavioural 'grammar' is not innate but is rather the result of internalized practices. Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead[36] pointed out that the social personality of the infant – its social *ethos* – was the result of an early training based on a non-verbal communication process with the mother, and thus, by extension that any social group imposes to its members a series of obligatory emotional attitudes, a kind of common language of the feeling which regulates the daily life and shapes their social personality.

7. Conclusion

"Faced with important events of life or in need", the Javanese will spontaneously visit a *keramat* because they believe that they can find what they seek for in such powerful and mystical places. On the spot, they perceive unconsciously like a "background noise", a "silent language"[37] which remind them their Javanese identity and reconfigure their cognition in order to act and face situations in accordance with their Javanese principles. They are then able to leave *keramat* and return to their usual environment, previously disconcerting, and, if necessary, to visit it again. To visit a *keramat* is like refreshing their frame of reference which deaden naturally through time and events, in order to feel, to think and act again no longer on the basis of external landmarks but on the basis of an internalized Javanese worldview.

At the end of this article arises a new question: do the Catholic pilgrimage places of Central Java, which are mostly Marial pilgrimages, enter the category of *keramat* as previously described from a functional point of view? I do not intend here to answer that question but just to state two facts which can be used as materials for getting through this question. Firstly, the Catholic pilgrimages places did not start from nothing but were built up on ancient natural sites (grots, big trees, rocs, and springs) called *angker* because it is said that tutelary genius (*dhanyang*) were dwelling on those places. The spiritual entities were fed through offerings (*sesajèn*). The re-appropriation of these sites

by the Catholics was not done through destruction/retrenchment of elements of the past, but through addition of new things (statue, altar, etc.) and through setting the old elements in a new order in such a way that the new disposition of the space become the frame of a new system of symbolic representations. A new meaning was given to the history of the place. Secondly, it is interesting to notice that, in Java, there is almost no church without its own "Lourdes' grotto" and the pilgrimage sites are all located in nature. The Javanese feel more comfortable to pray outside a building. It makes them feeling deeply absorbed in humble devotion and prayer (*khusyuk*). The titles/names given to the Virgin Mary are "*Dèwi* Maria" in Javanese language, which means "the *Godess* Mary" (from the Sanskrit root *DIV*, "to shine/lighten"), and "*Bunda* Maria" in Indonesian language, which means "the *Mother* Mary". Except the fact that it is easier for the Javanese – from a kinship view – to pass through the mother (to whom is attached affectionate authority and power) to address to the father (to whom is shown respect mixed with aloofness), to pray in the neighbourhood of a grot, even artificial, seems to put them in place again in an ordered whole which combines human, cosmic and divine dimensions.

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Endnotes:

1 Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, chapter 3.

2 Franz Magnis-Susena, *Javanese Ethics and World-view*, 140.

3 What I term "the Javanese" in this article refers less to speakers of the Javanese language than to those among the inhabitants of the

4 In a study on magic and the Melanesian notion of *mana* – a supernatural force or power, believed to dwell in objects or persons – French ethnologist Marcel Mauss identifies *mana* with *keramat*: "*There are things, places, moments, animals, spirits, men, wizards, which are* keramat*, which have got* keramat*; and it is those* keramat *forces that act*." ([1902] 2006: 105).

5 For the founder of sociology Emile Durkheim, "*sacred things are those things protected and isolated by prohibitions; profane things are those things to which such prohibitions apply, and which must keep their distance from what is sacred*" ([1912] 2001: 40). Although the universality – claimed by Durkheim – of the sacred-profane dichotomy is now being questioned, in Java however, this Durkheimian bipartition of space remains nevertheless relevant and appears heuristically fruitful.

6 Ward Keeler, *Javanese: A cultural Approach*, 17.

7 Henri Chambert-Loir and Claude Guillot, "Indonesia", 333-360.

8 Collective visits (like the rites of purification – *bersih desa*), not studied here, are done annually to a *keramat* often located at the periphery of the village, and dedicated to the ancestral founder (*cikal bakal*) of the village or to the ruling spirit of the place (*danhyang*). My analyze does not consider persons wishing to practice asceticism and who do not hesitate to walk long distances to visit a remote site in order to meditate and fast for several days, or to travel a circuit moving from place to place during several weeks.

9 But some days are more suitable/conducive for that: in the province of Yogyakarta, it's usually *Jumat-Kliwon*, coming from the combination of both Islamic and Javanese calendars. The site is very often visited on the eve of the auspicious day. It is said that the most favourable time is between midnight and three o'clock in the morning (see Fox 1991: 20).

10 See P. Bourdieu, "Socieologues de la croyance et croyance de sociologues".

11 This is a divine revelation of a wordless form, often in the form of a bluish light streaking across the heavens, which descends on the chosen one (*ndaru*, *pulung*). (Magnis-Suseno 1997: 105)

12 It is, for example, the case of the *keramat* named "Kembang Lampir", located near the city of Panggang in the Gunung Kidul area, much visited particularly by officials (*pejabat*) or whoever is seeking to be promoted (*naik pangkat*). According to Tomo Wiharjo, the 82 years-old *keramat*-keeper (*kuncen*) of that place, political personalities like presidents Soeharto, Megawati Soekarnoputri, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, etc. went to Kembang Lampir, or delegated representatives (*utusan*). This *keramat* is well known for having being the place where, in the second half of the 16th century, Ki Ageng Pemanahan received the manifestation (see previous footnote about "*wahyu*") that he will become the founder of the new Javanese kingdom of Mataram, a Muslim kingdom which has preserved its old Hindu world-view.

13 Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Javanese Ethics and World-view*, 112.

14 Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Javanese Ethics and World-view*, 113.

15 Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Javanese Ethics and World-view*, 102.

16 According to the falsifiability criterion of the British epistemologist Karl Popper, a theory should be considered scientific if and only if it is falsifiable. (see Popper 1959)

17 As an intentional object, *keramat* receives as many meanings as there are points of view directed towards it: either the intentionality of those who shaped the place with its characteristics, or the intentionalities of *keramat* users, or the perspective of those who refuse to visit what they consider to be "animistic" places, because of their fear to associate God with the worshiping of things which have nothing to do with God (*shirk*, *syirik*).

18 In Java, like in many other cultures (see Dupront 1992), distinctive features of nature (sources, volcanoes, rocks, trees, caves, etc.) and of human constructions (tombs, *petilasan* which is a kind of cenotaph, etc.) become physical supports to anchor the so-called "sacred". It is important here to distinguish between "sacred place" and "holy place". For those who use the first notion, sacredness is the quality of a place, a thing or a person's nature. On the contrary, a "holy place" is an ordinary place which has been introduced, by means of a ritual, into a religious history from which it receives its determination without losing its physical neutrality.

19 Unlike a common opinion widely shared in Indonesia, it seems that the Javanese don't use their mind less cognitively than Western people. In Java, very often, one set a discursive "logic" (characterized by reasoning and non-contradiction principle), which is said typical of the Western mind, against a Javanese mind qualified as "intuitive" and "dialectic", which overcome contradictions to combine them together (see the still available article of Bonneff (1976: 234) which deals with this point). To declare the non-Javanese unable to think according to Javanese categories, inapt to feel in a Javanese manner is to put a (Javanese) ethnocentrism in place of a (Western) ethnocentrism, and to assert the intercultural dialogue as impossible. Such oppositions seem to bring us back to Lucien Lévy-Bruhl' speculation (1910) about what he posited as the two basic mindsets of mankind: logical and non-contradictive mind in one side, mystical and pre-logical mind in the other side. Later, Lévy-Bruhl criticized his own way of seeing in a courageous and honest self criticism admitting that "*the logical structure of the mind is the same in all human cultures*" (Lévy-Bruhl 1938) but that the intuitive mind "*is preoccupied by something else* (…) *that one has first to look for*". In *The Savage Mind* ([1962] 1966) Claude Lévi-Strauss gave the finishing stroke to this pre-logical mind theory underlying that structures of thoughts whatever the culture are all guided by a same logic which classify through contradiction and contrasts available in their natural and social environments. The fact that many Javanese assert that their proper way of understanding the world – *rasa* – is different even opposed to the Western one – *ratio* – reflect unconsciously a deep logic of thinking (that is a cognitive mechanism) which works in a same mode of differentiation and classification.

20 The Geertzian definition of religion as a cultural system seems here very relevant: "*A system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.*" (Geertz [1966] 1993: 90).

21 The word "identity" should not be understood here in the psychological and Western meaning of the "I" (*ego*). In the Javanese context, local philosophy and mysticism (*kebatinan*) claim that a person achieves its true identity through its unification with the divine basis of existence (*manunggaling kawula Gusti*: see Zoetmulder [1935] 2000). That leads to recognition of the relative unimportance of the individual "I". In the present article, "identity" has to be understood in a logical sense: a mental process by which things are identified so as to be distinguished from one another.

22 In the nominal version of totemism, the differences between natural species are used by men to define, by homology, social differences. This leads Levi-Strauss to sum up his argument by saying that "*it's not similarities but differences which are alike*".

23 Javanese word which means "the reds/browns". When it appeared only near the year 1855, this term did not referred yet to a social group. That word was not defined yet by itself but was the negation of the word *puthian* that means "the whites" to refer to the color of the clothes of puritan Muslims. The historian Merle C. Ricklefs writes: "*it seems clear that* abangan *was initially a pejorative term used by those who prided themselves on their superior piety and purity*" (2006a: 45). At the end of the 19th century, continues to explain Ricklefs, "*as the devout Muslims became more pious, the abangan were beginning to become less religious and pious*" (idem: 49). And slowly appeared two groups, religiously, socially and culturally different, living side by side: one those members was showing the perfection of their faith through the rigorous practice of the Islamic five pillars; in response, others broke away from those practices to find their own practices in the local beliefs in spiritual entities and forces geographically localized (idem: 53).

24 This is the model followed by the observers of Java when they give an "animistic" interpretation of the *keramat* phenomenon, on the basis of the one and only indigenous explanation.

25 See Bachtiar (1973: 80-90) for sociological critics, and Ricklefs (2006a; 2006b) for historical critics. According to a recent survey (Ricklefs 2007: 23-24), people no longer use the category *santri-abangan*, but prefer to identify themselves as "nationalist Muslims", "neutral Muslims", etc.

26 C. Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, 232.

27 "The *lair* is composed of his behaviour, movements, gestures, speech, and so forth whereas *batin* manifests itself in the inner life of subjective consciousness", notes Magnis-Suseno (1997: 118).

28 D. Khudori, "L'éclectisme religieux en Indonésie",

29 "Deculturation" is made by the word "culture" and the prefix "de-" which refers to something opposed to or removed of. In the same way that "acculturation" is the process of adoption of elements from an alien culture, "deculturation" is the process of removing or destroying elements of the local culture: a partial or complete destruction of the cultural identity of an individual or a group.

30 A network is made with two elements: spots (or junctions) connected together by links. The international computer network (the Internet) is a network of something non-physical – information – that is exchanged between physical spots: computer users who are connected and can communicate through computers. The Internet is used as the support of a social network and infers new behaviours.

31 Arnold Van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage*.

32 V. Turner, *Ritual Process.*

33 Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Javanese Ethics and World-view*, 147.

34 In Java, the rites of passage don't have the ascetic and constraining character that Turner attributes to them (1967) in the context of Ndembu tribe in Nothern Rhodesia (now Zambia). The "liminality", as described by the Scottish anthropologist, is associated with temporary death, isolation, social "nudity" (lack of status) and often even physical nudity, and so consequently people find themselves in an egalitarian state. The Javanese, who are initiated, for example, to

the marriage life through the celebration of marriage, are considered during the time of this "liminality" as the most important persons of the social group. Indeed, the new couple who is being "made" combines in them the masculine and feminine aspects of life: they embody Shiva and his wife (his *shakti*, who is the feminine personification of the cosmic energy which is fertile and active). In one of the Hindu mythologies, the cosmos was born from the union of Shiva and his *shakti*. The bridegroom and his bride, as a couple, become temporarily – the time of the ritual – a pole of cosmic energy, and that is why people come to them. While in the Ndembu tribe the initiates become isolated and live apart from the society, the Javanese initiates become temporarily the poles that polarize everything around them: they reflect the world-view and the favourite values of the Javanese. They represent although imperfectly – in the ritual form of the marriage – the invisible cosmic order of everything.

35 Donald Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena".

36 Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, *Balinese Character*.

37 Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language*.

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