

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN *SYAIR SULTAN MAULANA*

(Penyelesaian Konflik dalam Syair Sultan Maulana)

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Abstract

This article discusses the conflicts and resolutions in *Syair Sultan Maulana*. The researcher aims to prove that works written in the past do not come out of nowhere but are the products of the author's wisdom to deliver a meaningful message through the use of symbols. In the context of this text, the author has applied several ways or methods of conflict resolution used by the local people in the past to ensure continued harmony in their fatherland. Therefore, this article will use the conflict resolution approach introduced by Abdullah Hassan and Aion Mohd. This approach lists several methods for resolution, such as cooperation, negotiation, domination, avoidance, integrity, obligation, and compromise. Malay literary works, especially historical ones, usually also deal with the lives of the people at the time. In traditional Malay literary works, many issues are discussed for the benefit of future generations. The most interesting aspects of these classical texts are the conflicts, problems, and disputes occurring in the community at the time, whether they are among the royalty, nobility or ordinary folk.

Keywords: Conflict, resolution, *syair*, historical literature, harmony

Abstrak

Makalah ini membincangkan konflik dan penyelesaiannya dalam Syair Sultan Maulana. Melalui penulisan ini pengkaji ingin membuktikan bahawa karya silam bukanlah lahir daripada kekosongan, tetapi daripada kebijaksanaan pengarang untuk memaknakan maksud yang ingin disampaikan dengan penuh perlambangan. Dalam konteks teks ini pengarang telah mengetengahkan beberapa cara atau kaedah penyelesaian konflik yang digunakan oleh masyarakat silam untuk memastikan keharmonian tanah air terus berlangsung. Oleh itu, makalah ini menggunakan pendekatan penyelesaian konflik yang diperkenalkan oleh Abdullah Hassan dan Aion Mohd. Melalui pendekatan ini disenaraikan kaedah penyelesaian tersebut seperti berkerjasama, rundingan, dominasi, pengelakan, integriti, obligasi dan kompromi. Karya sastera Melayu terutamanya sastera sejarah tidak pernah lari daripada memuatkan kehidupan masyarakat pada zaman tersebut. Dalam karya sastera tradisional pelbagai isu yang dikemukakan untuk tatapan generasi akan datang. Antara aspek yang sangat menarik untuk dilihat dalam teks klasik termasuklah konflik, masalah atau pertelingkahan yang berlaku dalam masyarakat tersebut sama ada melibatkan golongan diraja, bangsawan mahupun rakyat bawahan.

Kata kunci: Konflik, penyelesaian, syair, sastera sejarah, keharmonian

INTRODUCTION

Malay historical literature is a veritable treasure inherited from the Malay forebears. This historical literature often depicts actual events but due to their nature as literary works, they do not contain as much detail as factual historical writings. Yet, they are still able to present events accurately and relevantly. As literary works that reflect ancient cultures, historical texts such as these are recognized as the social documents of bygone societies. This is the view held by Wellek and Warren (1963, p. 102), who stress that “the most common approach to the relations of literature and society is the study of works of literature as social documents, as assumed pictures of social reality”. Even though this view dates back to 1963, it is still relevant to the present time. In fact, the view that literature is a reflection of the lives of societies of the past and is a source for understanding the culture and history of the past is also held by Azhar (2017, p. 20), who says, “We can see these narratives as cultural documents that recorded various strands of

thought in society and can be one of the sources for our understanding of socio-cultural and economic history”. Therefore, the view presented by Azhar is in line with that of Wellek and Warren; in other words, the narrative of a literary work is a record or a source by which current generations can understand the culture and history of people from the past.

The transcription of *Syair Sultan Maulana* by Muhammad Yusoff can be classified as historical literature. This *syair* (long poem) has 1104 verses and relates about the relationship between Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Abdul Halim Shah II (known as Sultan Maulana) and the Siamese kingdom. The text also records the war between Burma and Salang, in which Kedah got involved on the orders of Siam. In the course of the analysis of this text, several conflicts are depicted, and these serve to sustain the readers’ interest in this narrative. As a historical literary text, this *syair* was composed for one main reason. This text clearly foregrounds the wisdom of the Malays, especially the Malay kings, in order to resolve conflict without bloodshed. Apart from this, the *syair* also narrates the superiority of the Malays of Kedah when facing the Burmese upon the instructions of Siam, resulting in Sultan Maulana being awarded the title *Chao Phra Ya* (Grand Duke) by the King of Siam. However, there is a hidden implication behind this main event concerning the conflict between the Sultan of Kedah and the King of Siam, which almost cost Kedah its sovereignty. This *syair* also shows the conflict-resolution method applied by Sultan Maulana to resolve any issues faced.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study was carried out based on several important studies by previous researchers. The researcher encountered several past studies undertaken by scholars of historical texts in the past, such as *Hikayat Patani*, *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*, *Syair Siti Zubaidah Perang China*, *Misa Melayu*, and *Syair Perang Mengkasar*. However, no studies concerning conflict and conflict resolution in *Syair Sultan Maulana* were found. Therefore, the main concern of this study is the conflict and conflict resolution found in this text. Apart from focusing on the conflict and resolution as depicted in the text of *Syair Sultan Maulana*, this study also analyses the actions of the olden-day people to look at how they dealt with problems in a wise and intelligent manner.

PAST STUDIES

A number of scholars have undertaken studies in conflict resolution and among them is Siti Hajar Che Man, in her article titled “Memperkenalkan Tatacara Penyelesaian Konflik Tradisional dalam Konteks Kontemporari: Kajian Teks *Syair Siti Zubaidah Perang China*” [“Introducing Traditional Conflict-Resolution Methods in the Contemporary Context: A Study of *Syair Siti Zubaidah Perang China*”] (2015). In this article, Siti Hajar not only deals with external but also internal conflict, that is, the unseen conflict between Siti Zubaidah and Sultan Zainal Abidin. In this study, she highlights the woman’s superb ability to resolve conflict. Another such study is “Penyelesaian Konflik dalam *Misa Melayu*” [Conflict Resolution in *Misa Melayu*] (2015) by Membunga (Siti Meriam Yaacob). Membunga dissects the conflict resulting from the struggle for power and the throne depicted in this text, and lists the methods used by those involved in this conflict. Even the book *Rekayasa Kearifan Tempatan dalam Sastera Melayu [Engineering Local Knowledge in Malay Literature]* (2014) also contains several articles that deal with conflict resolution, such as “*Konflik Resolusi dalam Hikayat Patani*” [Conflict Resolution in *Hikayat Patani*], which was written by Membunga (Siti Meriam Yaacob), Muhammad Haji Salleh, Siti Hajar Che Man, Mohamad Luthfi Abdul Rahman, and Sakinah Abu Bakar. This article discusses the conflict and resolution found in *Hikayat Patani*. The strength of this article lies in the presentation of each of the conflicts and the strategies used to resolve each of them. This article presents five methods used by the author, that is, domination, obligation, avoidance, deception, and self-defence.

In the same book, Siti Hajar, Muhammad, Mohamad Luthfi, Membunga (Siti Meriam), and Sakinah have conducted an analysis of *Sja’ir Perang Mengkasar [Syair of the Makassar War]* entitled “Tatacara Penyelesaian Konflik dalam *Sja’ir Perang Mengkasar*” [“Conflict-Resolution Strategies in *Sja’ir Perang Mengkasar*”]. This *syair* brings to the fore the clash between East and West. Several conflicts are unearthed by the researchers, that is, conflict of values, power conflict, and economic conflict. These conflicts are more in the form of internal conflicts and are resolved through good values.

Membunga’s (Siti Meriam) article titled “Penyelesaian Konflik antara Dua Kuasa dalam *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*” [“Resolution of Conflict Between Two Powers in *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*”] (2019) reveals that *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* is a text that shows how evil will

never overcome good. The researcher successfully examines not only the conflict between humans and animals, but also between humans and the devil. Membunga stresses that acting wisely is the ideal method for conflict resolution.

A study of *Syair Sultan Maulana* by Muhammad Yusoff was published by Universiti Malaya in 1980. Apart from transliterating the manuscript, the researcher also deals with the text in five parts: the first part concerns writing and presentation techniques; the second concerns the background of the production of the text; the third concerns the validity of the facts; the fourth chapter discusses the poet; and the final chapter deals with the interpretation of history. This study is important because it led to Muhammad Yusoff's study of *Syair Sultan Maulana*, though the latter study leans more towards being an analysis of history than literary criticism.

THE CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF CONFLICT

Abdullah Hassan and Aion Mohd (1998, p. 130) state that conflict is something that often occurs in interpersonal relationship and because of the frequency of its occurrence, it should be considered as normal. Every relationship involves individuals who have their own personalities, ideas, emotions, concepts of self, and so forth. Abdullah and Aion (1998, p. 130) further explain that there are two types of conflict: content conflict, which means that the conflict is centred on a thing, issue, event, or person as the source of the conflict; and relationship conflict, meaning that a relationship exists between the individuals concerned, such as being husband and wife, or children and family members. It could be that the wife opposes the husband, or that the child opposes the parents. Here, the conflict is not due to content but a result of the relationship. Basically, conflict is a failure to agree, or not being able to suit different needs. This means that we do not agree on a certain issue, and we believe that the decision made will not be satisfactory. Conflict basically occurs when there is a clash of priorities, values, objectives, or anything that is different from our own opinion. Conflict can also be defined as a natural phenomenon involving the continued process of perception between two or more people who have different aims, ideas, values, behaviours, or emotions (Md. Yadi, 2006, p.10).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The text of *Syair Sultan Maulana* is examined intrinsically to trace and analyse the elements that exhibit the conflicts occurring in the text. The method employed by the researchers to trace conflict in this text is to study the language aspect of the transliteration of *Syair Sultan Maulana* by Muhammad Yusoff (1980). Language was the vehicle for authors in the olden days to express their emotions and their wisdom when faced with problems. As such, the present study scrutinizes episodes of conflict by looking at the language aspects (use of metaphor, symbolism, rhetoric, and diction) that reveal the conflict and resolution.

Abdullah (1998, pp. 163-225) suggests eight methods for conflict resolution: negotiation, obligation, domination, avoidance, accusation, deception, weakening the opponent, and cooperation. A combination of methods may also be necessary to achieve agreement because different conflicts require different ways to resolve them. However, for the purposes of this article, only six methods are found to be suitable: negotiation, obligation, domination, avoidance, deception, and cooperation.

TEXT ANALYSIS

Historical literary texts usually contain elaborations of problems encountered and the lives of the people of the past. This is in line with the view held by Muhammad Haji Salleh (2006, p. 268) that “Malay literature, especially the traditional, was very close to its society. It dealt with its real problems”. Since literature by nature has a close relationship to the time in which it is produced, literary works do present real issues. The author narrates each episode creatively, and includes the successes achieved in overcoming each problem; more interestingly, this is done without any bloodshed on home soil in *Syair Sultan Maulana*.

“Rebelling to Free Oneself”

The first conflict in this *syair* occurs when Patani, a state under the protection of Siam, begins to rebel in order to liberate itself from the grasp of Siam. Siam responds by attacking Patani. This event is captured in the lines below:

Kepada Siam berbuat bantahan
Barang kehendaknya semuanya ditahan

Sudah diketahui diri kelemahan
Hendak melawan berbunuh-bunuhan

Hendak dilawan Siam berperang
Hal dirinya sekalian kurang
Raja Siam melakukan garang
Dengan sebentar disuruhnya serang

[**Against Siam we object**
All our wishes they reject
We know our weakness is abject
To fight to the death we do expect

To war against Siam we will go
Although lacking we are so
The King of Siam cruel does show
Swift attack he orders on his foe]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, pp. 209-210)

As a result, Siam assembles an army at Senggora (Songkhla) to attack Patani. Kedah, which has no interest in this quarrel, is ordered to immediately join the Siamese to attack Patani. They are warned that any delay in doing so will incur the wrath of the Siamese King:

Kedah dan Petani sudah tertentu
Takluk ke benua Siam itu
Tatkala demikian perintah ratu
Kedah pun disuruh memukul ke situ

Angkatan sekalian berhimpun di Senggora
Angkatan Kedah pun suruh sigera
Naik memukul Petani angkara
Jika lambat Kedah pun cedera

[Kedah and Petani, that is sure
To the Siamese king vassals were
The king of Siam sent the order
For Kedah post-haste to go thither

At Senggora the soldiers did gather
The army of Kedah was to go thither
The Patani rebels to overpower
Without delay, or their kingdom would suffer]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, p. 210)

The wording of the second line, “*Takluk ke benua Siam itu*” [to the Siamese king vassals were], and the fourth line, “*Kedah pun disuruh memukul ke situ*” [For Kedah post-haste to go thither], prove that Kedah, as a vassal state of Siam, has been ordered to destroy Patani.

Conflict Resolution through the Cooperation Method

In order to resolve conflict and ensure the continued sovereignty of Kedah, Sultan Maulana chooses to cooperate with the Siamese. This proves to be the best strategy for conflict resolution as both sides have long-term goals to protect their own interests (Abdullah & Aion, 1998, pp. 203-204). In this context, the Sultan of Kedah wishes to maintain harmony, while the Siamese wish to obtain Kedah’s loyalty. As a result of accord between them, Kedah continues to be a trusted ally of Siam. This can be seen in the excerpt of this *syair* given above: “*jika lambat Kedah pun cedera*”. The word “cedera” (literally: injured) means that should Kedah delay or not assist Siam, it would be attacked by Siam in turn, since Kedah is a vassal of Siam. Therefore, Kedah has no choice but to obey—to refuse would have meant inviting disaster. Kedah is well aware that they were no match for Siam.

Conflict Due to Treason

However, conflict continues when Datuk Maharaja disobeys the Sultan and refuses to go to war in Patani after hearing that Patani is very powerful and had succeeded in overcoming the Siamese:

*Titah tiada juga diberati
hingga surat datang berganti
mklumkan khabar beribu kati
menyatakan Patani terlalu sakti*

*Pada Patani sangat diberatkan
keadaan diri tiada diingatkan
kebinasaan negeri tiada disedarkan
khabar yang dusta didengarkan.*

**[The king's decree lightly was taken
though letter followed letter hard upon
heavy with news again and again
saying that Patani had to be won**

Patani was of great importance
Oneself of no consequence
**The kingdom almost ruined by ignorance
Untrue report was given credence]**

(Syair Sultan Maulana, 1980, p. 213)

The above excerpt of the *syair* shows how the Kedahan army led by Datuk Maharajalela defied Sultan Maulana because they believed the rumour that the Siamese had been defeated by Patani.

Avoidance Strategy

The Kedahan army assembles at Padang Terap but delays and does not march to Patani, as Datuk Maharaja attempts to find a way to avoid joining the war, and Paduka Maha Menteri is afraid of going to Patani. Here, Datuk Maharaja and Paduka Maha Menteri use the avoidance strategy to avoid conflict. The avoidance strategy is a strategy that does nothing; it aims to delay or postpone negotiations (Abdullah & Ainon, 1998, p. 207). This can be seen in the lines from the *syair* below:

*Habis berhimpun segala tentera
di Padang Terap berapakah dura
Maharaja duduk mencari sigera
berlambatan duduk mencari kira*

*Di Padang Terap sehari-hari
Bermain herabab kecapi, muri
dihimpun menorah disuruh menari
menorah pun mati dengannya sendiri*

[**All the soldiers together did come**
at Padang Terap, far from their aim
the great king did count on them
but they sought to delay all the same

At Padang Terap every day
The rebab, kecapi and muri they played
with dancers the time they whiled away
the *menorah* dance till death can they]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, p. 211)

While at Padang Terap, the Kedahan army does not engage in battle with Patani. Instead, they entertain themselves playing musical instruments, such as the *rebab*, *kecapi* and *muri*, and also with *menorah* dances. They do not obey the Sultan and merely wait it out on the hope that the rebellion in Patani would soon be over and they would not have to go to war. At the same time, Sultan Maulana is put under pressure by Siam because the Kedahan army has not arrived, while the others are waiting. The Sultan urges his army to proceed with war but to no avail. Although the Sultan's messengers arrive bearing letters and suits of clothing for the officers, he continues to be ignored because they believe the rumour that Patani has defeated Siam. The Patani fortress at Cheni is very strong and impossible for the Kedahan army to defeat:

Sudah berangkat dari Senggora
Duduk berhimpun segala tentera
Di negeri Petani berapakah dura
Angkatan di Kedah tiada ketara

[Senggora they had left long since
all assembled were the soldiers
in Petani they became nervous
nowhere seen were the Kedahan forces]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, p. 212)

Mudik pergi ke Padang Terap
Membawa persalin cukup semerab
Kurniakan pegawai yang diharap
Itu pun tiada juga mujarab.

[A messenger to Padang Terap came
Bearing suits of clothing full fine
As gifts for the officers depended upon
Even then nothing was acted upon.]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, p. 213)

Conflict as a Result of Accusation

On the insistence of Sultan Maulana, the army proceeds to march on Patani but by this time, the war is over and Patani has been defeated by the Siamese. This incident arouses the anger of the King of Senggora, who chases the Kedahan army back home. However, the Siamese detain the Temenggung (chief of security). The King of Senggora accuses Sultan Maulana of conspiring with Patani and condones Datuk Maharaja's delay tactics, allowing him to remain at Padang Terap and not coming to Siam's aid. So, while in the early stages Datuk Maharajalela successfully employed the avoidance strategy, its success was only temporary. The Kedahan army is punished by the King of Senggora. Avoidance has not brought about a resolution, therefore another strategy becomes necessary to solve the problem. The verses below explain the anger of the Siamese towards Kedah:

***Dituduh Siam duli makota**
Dengan Datuk hendak beserta
Siam pun hendak berbuat menta
Katanya Kedah hendak diserenta.*

***Temenggung pun tiada dilepasnya mari**
Gundahlah pula seisi negeri
Surat Temenggung berdudun mari
Menyatakan hal berbagai peri.*

[**The Siamese the king suspected**
With the Datuk to have plotted
Siam was infuriated
Kedah to attack they wanted

The Temenggung they did not let go
The entire land was worried so

Many letters the Temenggung wrote
Telling of all kinds of woes.]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, p. 217)

Negotiation Strategy

This misunderstanding causes Siam to plan an attack against Kedah. While being detained by the Siamese, the Temenggung writes a letter to Sultan Maulana and tells of the suffering he has to endure during his detention. The Sultan then orders his Laksamana (Admiral) to seek audience with the King of Siam, convey an apology, and obtain the release of captives from Kedah. The Laksamana is ordered to negotiate with the King of Siam. The strategy of negotiation is often used for resolving conflicts. Negotiation also means that the parties involved attempt to force each other to agree with their wants. When one opposes someone's wishes, it is assumed that the source of conflict is a very important matter that must be resolved and that the other party merely wants to win (Abdullah & Aion, 1998, pp. 192-193). The Laksamana can be deemed as a "peacemaker" between these two opposing sides. In the end, due to the blessing of Sultan Maulana's divine right to rule, the King of Siam forgives Sultan Maulana, and returns all of the gifts as well as the captives, who then return safely to Kedah.

Dengan kudrat Ilahu'I-ghina
Meninggikan daulat Sultan Maulana
Tatkala sampai Laksamana
Padamlah api yang mengerna.

[With the Grace of Allah the needless
elevating Sultan Maulana to be peerless
when the Laksamana arrived at the place
the glowing fire extinguished was.]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, p. 219)

The Strategy of Deception to "Bring Peace to Both Sides"

The resolution strategy employed by Sultan Maulana proves to be a wise move because he is able to resolve the conflict between himself and the King of Siam without causing any bloodshed in Kedah. More importantly,

the oratory skills and wisdom of the Laksamana are factors in this conflict-resolution strategy in order to bring about peace between these two opposing sides. Without the Laksamana's wisdom and skill, it would surely have been difficult to negotiate with the King of Siam.

Conflict Due to Slander and Blame

Not long after this, another conflict or misunderstanding occurs between the King of Siam and Kedah. Datuk Maharaja complains to the King of Siam, bad-mouthing Sultan Maulana in the process. At this crucial moment, Burma invades Salang (modern-day Phuket). Being a vassal of Siam, Salang seeks assistance from the King of Siam.

*Orang Salang memintok bantu
Sege nap negeri bukan suatu
Barang yang takluk ke benua itu
Disuruh sigera pergi ke situ*

[**The people of Salang begged assistance**
Not one or two but all with one voice
Whoever to this kingdom owed allegiance
Was called upon to return at once]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, p. 221)

The King of Siam comes to Kedah and asks for soldiers and rice to be sent to Salang in order to feed his warring army. The King of Siam also comes to deliver his decree, as well as to warn Sultan Maulana and order him to give Datuk Maharaja the seal and, thus, the reign of Kedah. Sultan Maulana is enraged that the two Datuk Maharaja siblings have slandered him and bad-mouthed him to the King of Senggora:

*Datuk Maharaja pegawai bahari
Raja Senggora memanggil mari
cap dipinta pulangkan beri
disuruhnya pulak memerintah negeri.*

*Sebab demikian kisah ketara
Datuk Maharaja dua bersaudara*

Mengacum kepada Raja Senggora
Memalis malu hendak dikira

[Datuk Maharaja the king's official
By the King of Senggora was recalled hither
the royal seal he asked to be given
to reign the kingdom in his stead.

This tale is one often narrated
Datuk Maharaja and his brother intended
the King of Senggora they influenced
to remove the shame that they suffered]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, p. 225)

The Cooperation Strategy to Repair Relationships

Before the King of Senggora comes to Kedah, Sultan Maulana receives a letter informing him that Salang is in a state of chaos.

Berbalik pula hendak dicetera
Sebelum datang Raja Senggora
Sepucuk sudah ketara
Menyatakan Salang huru-hara

[But let us then first relate
That before the King of Singgora reached the state
A letter that had arrived of late
Told of tumult in Salang great]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, p. 226)

The Sultan is extremely saddened that he has no army to send and, at the same time, he fears the recurrence of past events. Kedah finds itself in a precarious position, as this conflict causes tension in the relationship between Siam and Kedah. Therefore, Sultan Maulana endeavours to repair the relationship between the two kingdoms so that peace is maintained.

Cooperative Resolution

Once again, Sultan Maulana uses the cooperative strategy to help Salang, one of Siam's vassal states, in its war against Burma. In his effort to repair relations with Siam, Sultan Maulana orders his Laksamana to prepare Kedah's forces and equipment for war:

Kepada Laksamana bertitah sultan
“Sekarang diri punya jabatan,
Segala kerja pihak lautan
Dirilah pergi bawa angkatan”

[**To the Admiral said the sultan**
“Upon you I bestow this position
To deal with all matters of the ocean
Take the fleet and leave anon.”]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, p. 226)

By sending aid to Salang, Sultan Maulana hopes that the tense relationship between Kedah and Siam can be improved and that there will be no more doubt concerning his loyalty on the Siamese side.

Religious Conflict

In order to mend relations with Siam, Sultan Maulana decides to send his navy under the command of the Laksamana to help fight the Burmese. However, during the course of this war, a new conflict arises. Tunku Idris, a religious scholar fighting on the side of Kedah, is unable to deal with the agony and suffering of war. He issues a religious decree that it is *haram* (sinful) to aid the Siamese in their war against Burma, because the Siamese are Buddhists:

Katanya Ugama mereka sebangsa
Menyertai diri kita berdosa
Baiklah kita balik ke desa
menanggung sengsara tiadalah kuasa

Wazir tiada menurut bicara
Kalau negeri mendapat cedera

*Sungguhlah ugama tiada setara
Sebab negeri hendak dipelihara.*

**[It is said they are of one religion
thus in joining we commit a sin
it is best to our hometowns to return
than to bear this suffering.**

The Vizier to this did not agree
the fatherland would suffer injury
of different religions they were certainly
yet the fatherland ever protected must be.]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, p. 298)

Domination of Authority: The King's Wishes Must be Obeyed

Unable to bear the hardship and suffering of the battlefield, Tunku Idris leaves, even though the Laksamana attempts to prevent it. The Temenggung is in agreement with Tunku Idris but turns back because the Sultan decrees that should the Temenggung return to Kedah, he would be put to death. In this situation, Sultan Maulana has used his authority to dominate over the Temenggung by issuing a stern warning that stops the Temenggung from returning to Kedah before the war is over. Domination is also known as a win-lose orientation. Those who dominate try to fulfil their aims without caring about the party over which they dominate. This strategy is used by those who possess authority (Membunga@Siti Meriam *et al.*, 2014; p. 55). In this text, this strategy is used by Sultan Maulana to resolve issues with his subjects. This occurs when the people try to disobey the Sultan's orders. As his subjects, the people are unable to do much, until finally they have no choice but to obey the king's wishes. Sultan Maulana's warnings are reflected in the *syair* in the following stanzas:

*Perintah itu masyur warta
sampai ke bawah duli mahkota
(baginda) murka jangan dikata
sebab hendak memberi leta*

*Seorang pegawai dititahkan
keluar mari menegahkan*

*pulang tiada dibenarkan
jikalau bantah disuruh pinasakan*

[**The order through the landspread**
until it reached the crowned head
(he) beyond words was infuriated
for it was to him an insult great.

An officer with this decree was sent
to leave no one was permitted
to return home was prohibited
and death to any who disobeyed.]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, pp. 299-300)

Strategies: Obligation and Cooperation

The above strategies are evident when the Temenggung is warned that he would be put to death should he return to Kedah. This action is taken to ensure that Kedah is safe from Siamese attack. At the same time, this punishment is a warning or threat to any Kedahan soldier who attempts to leave the battlefield. Sultan Maulana issues this decree because he does not want what has happened previously during the Patani revolt to happen again. In actuality, the war between Siam and Burma is not in any way of interest to Kedah but, as a vassal state of Siam, the latter is forced to become involved. Sultan Maulana realizes that it is senseless to aid Siam in its war against Burma, but for the sake of Kedah's sovereignty, he is forced to comply. Were Kedah to refuse, Siam would surely see this as an act of treachery and attack Kedah. Sultan Maulana, recognizing that Kedah is incapable of winning a war against Siam, wishes to avoid this unwanted situation. To keep Kedah safe, the Sultan has no choice but to acquiesce to the demands of the King of Siam. This is a good strategy by Sultan Maulana because, in the end, it is Kedah's assistance to Salang in defeating Burma for which the King of Siam gives recognition and reward. This is seen in the following three stanzas of the *syair*:

*Siam pun sangat memuji-muji
Pekerjaan Melayu bagai disuji
tiada suatu dilihat yang keji
laksana emas sudah teruji.*

*Perintah wazir semua kelihatan
tiada dilihat suatu kejahatan
dengan sebenar segala perbuatan
hilanglah segala fitnah dan hasutan*

*Pekerjaan baginda tiadalah cela
dikerja oleh wazir yang 'ali ('ala)
menjadi kebajikan kerja segala
kepada Siam terpuji pula*

[Siam heaped much praise upon
the Malays whose actions flaws had none
it seemed that they could do no wrong
alike to gold whose worth was proven

The order of the vizier to all was plain
nothing bad in it was seen
with the sincerity of all action
gone was all slander and instigation

His Majesty's doings unaffected
by the whatever the high vizier did
only all good was seen in it
full of praise was Siam over it]

(*Syair Sultan Maulana*, 1980, pp. 380-381)

Based on each episode of the conflict as presented by the author of *Syair Sultan Maulana*, it can be seen that the poet manages to compose a narrative that is full of unique qualities by presenting each conflict and the corresponding strategy for its resolution. Therefore, each of the six strategies presented by the author of *Syair Sultan Maulana*, namely negotiation, obligation, domination, avoidance, deception, and cooperation, is extremely suitable in order to resolve the conflict that takes place.

Therefore, through the resolutions that are shown to have been achieved between the parties in conflict in this text—Kedah and Siam—it can be seen that literary works are important social documents applicable for society, both in the past and in the present time, and continue to be discussed. They prove that old literary works never become antiquated where discussion of issues is concerned, and can be used as references by the current generation.

Apart from this, the kind of conflict resolution presented in this *syair* refutes the opinions of Western scholars, such as Wilkinson (in Sweeney, 1980, p.1) and J.C Bottom (in Maier, 1985, p. 16) that Malay literary works are full of fairy tales and empty harbour side lore.

CONCLUSION

The conflict in *Syair Sultan Maulana* involves two parties who are both influential, as well as between subordinates and figures of authority—between two rulers, and between ruler and subject. The ability of a ruler to find a resolution without causing bloodshed is his wisdom. The wisdom of a sultan is usually linked to his divine right to rule.

The Malays of the past were convinced of the invincibility of rulers, whom they revered due to their divine right to rule (*daulat*) and which they linked to the king's success in solving problems. This further increased their reverence for the king and indirectly increased their level of loyalty to the king or ruler. *Syair Sultan Maulana* highlights loyalty that involves no other priority besides maintaining the sovereignty over the kingdom and avoiding destruction by the Siamese.

This *syair* displays many ways in which problems faced are wisely solved. Although the methods used are captured in a literary text, the idea or knowledge is still transmitted to the current generation, so that they may resolve problems wisely if they encounter any. In this text, the author successfully narrates the episodes of conflict that take place and their respective solution in a very dramatic way using well-worded expressions.

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