

DREAM AS A NARRATIVE STRATEGY IN SELECTED CLASSICAL MALAY TEXTS

*(Mimpi sebagai Satu Strategi Naratif Pengarang dalam Teks
Melayu Klasik Terpilih)*

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Abstract

This paper discusses dream as a narrative strategy in selected classical Malay texts. The discussion covers six Malay historiographical texts: *Sulalatus Salatin*, *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai*, *Hikayat Banjar*, *Tuhfat Al-Nafis*, *Babad Tanah Jawa* and *Syair Peperangan Aceh*. Mieke Bal's narrative theory (2017) is used as the main method of discussion. In her book, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (2017), Bal presents 12 important characteristics in narrative theory; event, character, time, location, plot, repetition, focalization, text, author, description, narrative stages and ideology. Based on the analysis, the characteristics can be condensed into five categories: text (theme, point of view, repetition, description, narrative stages, plot, and focalization), author, setting (time, place, and event), ideology and character. However, the discussion of this paper uses one element only, which is the author's ideology. The findings intend to show the author's ideology in using dream as one of the narrative strategies to highlight the sovereignty and veneration of the Malay kings. The study's results prove that dream was used as a narrative strategy by the past royal court authors.

Keywords: dream, Mieke Bal, narrative strategy, author's ideology and selected classical Malay literary texts

Abstrak

Makalah ini membicarakan unsur mimpi sebagai satu strategi naratif dalam teks kesusasteraan Melayu klasik terpilih. Perbincangan ini akan menelusuri enam teks historiografi Melayu, iaitu Sulalatus Salatin, Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai, Hikayat Banjar, Tuhfat Al-Nafis, Babad Tanah Jawa dan Syair Peperangan Aceh. Bagi memperdalam perbincangan, teori naratif oleh Mieke Bal (2017) dijadikan sebagai metodologi utama perbincangan. Menurut Mieke Bal dalam bukunya Narratology Introduction to the Theory of Narrative (2017) telah mengetengahkan dua belas ciri penting dalam teori naratif iaitu peristiwa, watak, masa, lokasi, plot, perulangan, fokus penceritaan, teks, pengarang, deskripsi, tahap-tahap narasi dan ideologi. Namun begitu, berdasarkan analisis yang dilakukan dua belas ciri ini dapat di ringkaskan kepada lima bahagian utama iaitu teks (termasuk tema, sudut pandangan, perulangan, deskripsi, tahap-tahap narasi, plot dan fokus penceritaan), pengarang, latar (termasuk latar masa, tempat dan peristiwa), ideologi dan watak. Namun perbincangan ini akan menggunakan satu elemen sahaja iaitu ideologi pengarang. Hasil daripada penulisan bertujuan memperlihatkan kecenderungan ideologi pengarang istana menjadikan mimpi sebagai salah satu strategi dalam penulisan untuk mengetengahkan kedaulatan dan ketinggian raja-raja Melayu. Penulisan ini telah membuktikan bahawa unsur mimpi telah dijadikan sebagai salah satu strategi naratif oleh pengarang istana silam.

Kata kunci; Mimpi, Mieke Bal, strategi naratif, ideologi pengarang dan teks-teks kesusasteraan Melayu klasik terpilih.

INTRODUCTION

Dreams were one of the popular myths frequently used by past authors in classical Malay literary texts, in either storytelling for entertainment or historiographies. Dreams became an integral part of the ancient Malay psyche because they believed that dreams were premonitions in the course of living. According to the famous psychologist, Sigmund Freud, dreams are in the realm of the subconscious that occurs during sleep. People only realize that they had dreams when they are awake and fully conscious (2002:84).

Freud added that dreams are a matter that is complex and difficult to believe because what happens in dreams is controlled by the subconscious. Dreams can also be considered as an emotional release for an individual who is undergoing stress or extreme exhilaration. Fear and severe anxiety are also triggers for nightmares. Hence, stress or extreme provocation or exhilaration in

the individual is transmuted into dreams (King, 2011:152). Based on Freud's views, it can thus be concluded that dreams evoke long-suppressed desires in the individual. Every dream has a particular meaning and needs to be analysed. Freud stated that there are two parts in a dream (King, 2011:152):

Manifest content is the dream's surface content, which contains dream symbols that disguise the dream's true meaning; latent content is the dream's hidden content, its unconscious and true meaning.

Freud explained that there are dreams that are manifest and also dreams that are latent and will only appear in the subconscious. Sometimes, an individual who has a latent dream will attempt to forget it, as opposed to a manifest dream. Dreams also have particular meanings and should be interpreted, though there are dreams that do not carry any meaning at all or is termed as sleep's imaginative play (Freud, 2002:87).

RESEARCH ISSUES

Studies have been done by scholars in the past to discuss the element of dream in traditional texts. Dreams about the Islamisation of kings in *Sulalatus Salatin* and *Hikayat Raja Pasai* are among the popular examples and are often debated on because of the association with Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet's appearance in a king's dream is aimed to distinguish the status of the royals from the people. This is also to deter acts of treason. Among the scholars who have studied the element of dream in classical works are Muhammad Yusoff and Abdul Rahman in the book entitled *Sejarah Melayu* (1994). The writings of both these scholars focus on the original myth of kings, the myth of dreams, the myth of opening up new territories and other myths. It cannot be denied that the writings of these two scholars are almost similar to the present study carried out by the researcher in maintaining the dream element as a narrative strategy to reinforce the position of kings. However, their research did not touch on the narrative theory, which is discussed in this paper. In fact, these two scholars did not delve into other historiographic texts, as discussed in this paper as well.

At the same time, Noriah, in her book entitled *Dunia Sahibul Hikayat* (2006) which was published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, stated that the myth elements contained in historical literary works are a source of ethnocentrism in the Malay psyche, which brings about a sense of pride to the Malay ethnic when narrating the greatness of the Malay kings. However,

she only touched on *Sulalatus Salatin*, while this study covers other historical literary texts.

Ali (1987) in his book entitled *Karya-karya Bercorak Sastera Sejarah*, and Harun (2000) in his writing entitled *Kesusasteraan Melayu Tradisional*, both described myth as the main element that should be included in historical literature and without which the writing of the texts are deemed incomplete. They both stated that historical literature has similar characteristics in storytelling and present the same myths, such as dreams, genealogy of kings and the founding of a new country. Although there are differences, the situation is the same, which is to validate the status of kings through the concept of the myth.

In her writing entitled *Perihal Keintelektualan dan Kepentingan Teks Tradisional* (2013), Nor Hashimah wrote that *Sulalatus Salatin* and *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* are twin texts but not similar since the similarity is from the aspect of dreams as both kings in these texts were converted to Islam by Prophet Muhammad. In fact, the fall of the Melaka and Pasai kingdoms was similar in that it came about due to the greed of the last ruling kings. Nonetheless, she did not discuss dream as a narrative strategy by the authors. Jelani (2003), in his working paper entitled “Sastera sebagai Dokumen Sosial: Satu Interpretasi terhadap *Syair Peperangan Aceh*”, also hinted at the element of dream as one of the myths that triggered a war between the people of Aceh and the ruling Dutch. Here, Jelani focused on the historical aspect contained in the war poem, but he did not deny the existence of myth elements in the poem, such as the sudden appearance of huge cannons. In fact, his writing did not touch on the narrative theory in the same manner as this paper.

Based on past research, it cannot be denied that studies related to the element of dreams have been carried out. However, there is a void to be filled since the myth of dreams has not been linked to a narrative theory or a narrative strategy by the author in order to elevate the position of Malay kings. Hence, this paper explains that such writings are still inclined towards the royal court and that previous researchers only focused on *Sulalatus Salatin* and *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* as the basis for their discussion on the myth of dreams.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to analyse the myth of dreams as a narrative strategy in the selected texts—namely *Sulalatus Salatin*, *Hikayat Raja-*

raja Pasai, Tuhfat Al-Nafis, Hikayat Banjar, Babad Tanah Jawa, and Syair Peperangan Aceh—based on the narrative theory by Mieke Bal. Besides analysing the factor of dreams, this study also aims to discuss on the author’s ideology in using dreams as a source of creativity in the writing of these historical literary works. In line with this objective, this study will prove that this storytelling strategy succeeded in pleasing the kings where their ancestry was concerned and that the author’s ideology in these historical literary works was centred on the royal court.

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the narrative theory put forward by Bal in her book entitled *Narratology: Introduction To The Theory Of Narrative* (2017). Bal laid out 12 important aspects about narrative: event, character, time, location, plot, repetition, focalization, text, author, description, narrative stages and ideology. However, based on further analysis, these 12 aspects can be condensed into five main categories, which are text (including theme, point of view, repetition, description, narrative stages, plot, and focalization), author, background (including that of time, place, and event), ideology and character.

The importance of choosing the narrative theory by Bal as opposed to other narrative theories is because she is the only theorist who has discussed the importance of author’s ideology in narrative, whereas other theorists from the United States of America and France are of the view that every narrative must have a plot, event, and other elements that build up the structure of a piece of work, such as language, theme, and point of view, and does not express an author’s ideology as the main basis in building up a narrative.

A narrative refers to a story or account of something that is found in every text. Narratives or stories take place in our daily lives. Narratives can also be linked to communication or speech in order to explain and convey important information to readers or listeners. Narratives can be in the form of writing, publication, speech, or images. Without narratives, information cannot be conveyed effectively. According to Bal (2017:5):

A narrative text is a text in which an agent or subject conveys to addressee (“tell” the reader, viewer, or listener) a story in a medium, such as language, imagery sound, buildings, or a combination thereof. A story is the content of that text and produces a particular manifestation, inflection, and colouring of a *fabula*. A *fabula* is a

series of a logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors.

The above excerpt means that a narrative acts as an agent of conveying information to readers and listeners. The elements contained in a narrative are language, images, sound as well as a combinations of these. A narrative or story refers to these elements found in texts or works. The narrative would form the plot of the storytelling from the beginning to the conflict and its resolution. Conflict is the event that colours the narrative in a text—the bigger the conflict found in the story, the more heightened are the reader's emotions. Apart from that, the narrative also produces various changes in the storytelling, such as elements of a particular event or occurrence that have been built up based on opposition or conflict experienced by the character(s), chronologically or otherwise.

Therefore, the narrative is symbolic of each event that is related momentarily, such as in films, dramas, comics, novels, and historical articles. In this context, the narrative can be built up using various mediums, whether they are printed or written, spoken, images, movements, or even signals. As a result, the narrative can be understood as a way of looking at the arrangement and structuring of language to become a larger unit. The narrative can also be explained as a sequence of events that form a story. The plot or structure that forms the narrative has social and psychological functions. The structure of the narrative may be similar or different from one narrative to another.

In addition, the narrative is a form of writing that requires thinking, creativity, and keen observation, and is based on extensive knowledge derived from surroundings, experiences, reading, or stories from people of the past. Through narratives, the readers can also understand the author's ideology in storytelling. The narrative becomes a strategy for the author to convey his objectives to the readers for interpretation. In building up a narrative, the author becomes the creator of a discourse that brings forth his power.

The author as the creator of the discourse was also acknowledged by Muhammad Haji Salleh (2019:53). He stated that the author is the creator of the discourse, narrative, and meaning in his writing. Every author will focus his writing on one theme and event that unfolds and interweaves with the narrative element, but still maintains its focus on the main purpose of the storytelling. The author has the authority to construct the narrative structure and is responsible for developing the plot of the narrative. In traditional literary writings, specifically the historical literature genre, the strategy used by Malay royal court authors is the incorporation of the elements of myth,

magic, and legends to elevate the genealogy of Malay kings as belonging to great ancestors. However, past authors had limited powers as they were under the strict control of those in power. Therefore, it can be concluded from Muhamad Haji Salleh's view that the narrative strategy is the power held by the author in the text produced. Hence, through this power, the author's thinking is brought forth, and this is known as ideology, which is the main purpose he wants to achieve in his writing.

According to Bal (2017:36), ideology is the author's thoughts and ideas. Normally, a text is produced based on the main objective of the author. Ideology is closely linked to history, politics, social life, and the economy. The royal court authors' ideology, which produced historical literary works, was to protect the palace's centrism by placing the Malay kings in the highest position. According to Bal's perspective, ideology in texts is intended to show support or the inclination of an author towards the party that he favours and be critical of the party he dislikes. Bal's view is almost similar to the ideology maintained by past royal court authors who were inclined towards the political power dominated by the elite. This inclination of the royal court authors was acknowledged by Muhammad Yusoff (1980:53), who stated that:

Ideologi pengarang silam terutamanya dalam karya sastera sejarah adalah masih menjurus kepada centris istana, iaitu 'menyukai atau menggembirakan raja' masih utuh dalam karya-karya tersebut. Menyukai atau menggembirakan raja bukanlah bererti seperti berkaitan dengan keindahan yang terdapat dalam karya-karya lipur lara sebaliknya maksud menyukai atau menggembirakan raja ialah tidak menyinggung perasaan raja.

[Past authors' ideology, especially in historical literary works, still veer towards palace centrism, that is, favouring or pleasing the king is still intact in these works. Favouring or pleasing the king does not mean in the sense of beauty in entertaining works. It actually means to not hurt the king's feelings.]

Other than elevating the status of kings, the royal court authors' ideology was also aimed at showing their brilliance in creating a story that is related to the greatness of Malay kings—the more powerful the narrative is about the kings, the better their authorship. The author's ideology should be assessed through text analysis as well as an understanding of the era in which the work was produced. Thus it is not a fair assessment if the text is analysed in the context of today's society. Knowing the objective of the texts in the past based

on the standards of their respective era facilitates the reader's understanding of the ideology of these authors. Normally, the author's ideology is revealed through the title of the work, the characters, events, or themes expressed by him. Therefore, judging literary works without linking it to the respective author's ideology is not appropriate. An author will not begin his work if he does not have a particular objective or purpose that he wants to achieve in his writing (Talib, 2010:52).

A narrative is also constructed as a weapon or strategy to persuade or influence the readers to agree with the ideology presented by the author. The narrative strategy also aims to convince the reader that the events contained in the text—through the author's keen observation and creativity based on past events—are true. This truth is the main basis in developing the narrative strategy. Based on the ideology put forth by Bal, the narrative theory is advanced further because it brings a new idea into the world of authorship, be it in the classic or modern field. From this angle, Bal concluded that the narrative is not only a matter of storytelling, but it is also the goal of the author in producing a narrative that would be accepted by the reader.

TEXT ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Dreams are a part of peoples' beliefs that have existed from long ago and have become a guide in the happenings of ancient societies. Although Islam had spread to Nusantara, belief in dreams strongly influenced the way of thinking in the society of the past. Harun (2000:318) stated that the traditional Malay society placed significant importance on the element of dreams in their lives due to the influence of Hinduism, which was still embedded in the society even though the people had already converted to Islam. The ancient society regarded dreams as holy and pure, and should be believed. The natural environment, including animals, plants, and the weather (natural disaster) as well as the souls of ancestors, were signs that often appeared in dreams to indicate a good or bad omen (*Tamadun Islam dan Tamadun Asia*, 2004:169).

Hence, the royal court authors of the past used dreams as the main idea or narrative strategy in their works. Strategy refers to an action, plan, method, approach, way, or technique that is used by an individual to achieve his objective or purpose (Wan Azmi, 1997:85). In the context of authorship and writing of literary texts, the author has his own strategy to deliver his discourse. The royal court authors of the past had to write under limited circumstances and were inclined towards favouring the nobility. Therefore, their works were interwoven with myths as well as the royal language to produce texts of high quality.

DREAM OF THE FOUNDING OF A NEW STATE

Episodes involving the founding of a new state are one of many important events in Malay historiographical texts. Many strange incidents took place in these episodes. Typically, the appearance of small but strong animals that are agile and with extraordinary characteristics were the favourite of the authors. The appearance of these animals signified luck for these new lands, which would then become strong and prosperous states.

The narrative of the founding of Dipa in *Hikayat Banjar* is different from that of other states in the Malay world. The founding itself was triggered by the element of dream in which Saudagar Mangkubumi willed to his son, Ampu Jatmaka, to leave the state of Keling and establish a new state. The land chosen to become the new state should have a fragrant and warm scent (*Hikayat Banjar*, 2004: 2). If that land fulfilled the criteria as laid out by Saudagar Mangkubumi, it was thus suitable to be turned into a new state. However, Ampu Jatmaka failed to find a land with the characteristics that his father had described until he received a sign from a dream:

Tengah hari itu Ampu Jatmaka tertidur, lalu dia bermimpi bertemu dengan ayahnya. Kata ayahnya, "Hai anaku Ampu Jatmaka, jangan engkau masyghul, malam nanti pergilah ke pulau Hujung Tanah itu tebuk seperti pesanku itu. Nescaya ada alamatnya seperti pesanku dahulu itu." Sudah itu terkejutlah Ampu Jatmaka dari tidurnya lalu berfikir, "Benarkah tiadakah mimpiku ini?" (Hikayat Banjar, 2004:4)

[That afternoon, Ampu Jatmaka slept and he dreamed that he met his father. His father said, "My son Ampu Jatmaka, don't be sad. Tonight, go to Hujung Tanah Island, enter the place as I instructed. There will be a sign as I instructed before." After that, Ampu Jatmaka awakened from his sleep and thought, "Is my dream real or not?"]

The exceptional nature of the narrative by the author of *Hikayat Banjar* regarding the history of the founding of Dipa on its own gave it significance and importance, and instilled a sense of pride and awe in the people of Banjar about the history of the founding of their state. This exceptional narrative was one of the author's strategy to link the king's existence through dreams. The founding of the realm should go hand-in-hand with the king's existence in order to show the majesty of the king who would rule the state. It was also the author's strategy to clarify that Dipa would become a great and strong country. This episode further clarifies that it is not only the king who can be the chosen one, but even a place can be the chosen land.

DREAM AS A STRATEGY TO FIND A KING

A king's greatness is shown by the author through the genealogy of the Malay kings. The person chosen or selected to be king should radiate a presence or appearance that is different from ordinary folks. This was acknowledged by Jelani (2017:18), who stated that almost all Malay historiographical works begin with a chapter on the myth of the origins of kings and the founding of kingdoms in order to elevate the king who would rule the state as someone who is strong, great, and feared. Therefore, the myth found in these historiographical texts succeeded in shaping an archetype of Malay Nusantara society towards the calibre of Malay kings. This view is extremely relevant based on the narrative in *Hikayat Banjar* regarding the appearance of the king of Dipa. The author of *Hikayat Banjar* succeeded in creating a unique myth about the origins of the King of Dipa, compared to other historiographical texts.

After establishing the state of Dipa, Ampu Jatmaka told his sons, Ampu Mandstana and Lambu Mangkurat, to find a king for Dipa. Since they were not from the royal line, they were not allowed to become one. Here, the author stressed that only those from the line of kings have the right to rule. Ampu Jatmaka bequeathed to his sons to find an individual who could rule the state. The search for a king included undergoing a meditation ritual.

“Pergilah bertapa untuk mencari raja. Maka engkau Ampu Mandastana, bertapa pada bukit atau pada gua atau pada pohon kayu besar menjadi raja itu. Dan engkau Lambu Mangkurat bertapa pada air; mana teluk yang dalam atau liang yang dalam itu tempat engkau bertapa mencari raja.” (Hikayat Banjar, 2004:11-12).

[“Go into a meditative state to find the king. You, Mandastana, go and meditate on a hill or cave or big tree to look for the king. You, Lambu Mangkurat, meditate in the water; wherever there is a deep bay or hole, that’s where you meditate to look for the king.”]

Even though they followed their father’s instructions, they were unable to find a suitable candidate to become king. Finally, the problem of finding a king was solved through a dream by Lambu Mangkurat.

Ketika Lambu Mangkurat tidur pada waktu tengah hari lalu dia bermimpi bertemu dengan ayahnya Ampu Jatmaka. Ayahnya berkata, “Hai anakku Lambu Mangkurat, engkau mencari raja terlalu jauh, itu

maka salah, tiada beroleh raja. Engkau bertapa jangan jauh, di dalam negeri ini sahaja.” Seterusnya Ampu Jatmaka menyuruh Lambu Mangkurat membuat rakit daripada batang pisang dan hendaklah dia duduk di atas rakit itu dan membiarkannya hanyut mengikut arus ke tempat yang dituju. (Hikayat Banjar, 2004:12-13).

[While Lambu Mangkurat was sleeping one afternoon, he dreamt he met his father, Ampu Jatmaka. His father said, “My son, Lambu Mangkurat, you are looking for the king too far away, that is not right, you will not find the king there. You must not wander too far, only within this country.” Ampu Jatmaka then instructed Lambu Mangkurat to make a raft from the trunk of a banana plant, sit on the raft and let it float with the current to its destination.]

The author of *Hikayat Banjar* used the element of dream as a problem solver after Lambu Mangkurat failed in his effort to find the king. The element of dream used by the author succeeded in evoking wonder, strangeness and awe regarding the existence of the king of Dipa. This uniqueness awakened the feelings of awe and fear in the hearts of the people of Dipa towards the greatness of Puteri Tunjung Buih. The appearance of Puteri Tunjung Buih amidst the rolls of foam and meditation ritual signified that the king was sacred and extraordinary, and possessed magical powers that reinforce his standing as a holy king, in addition to possessing *shakti*, which refers to strength, heroism, courage and other extraordinary skills.

Based on these phenomena, the Banjar royal court author succeeded in making the element of dream as one of the strategies of storytelling in order to present this strange story so that the king’s majesty could be strengthened and the author’s ideology is displayed so as to prevent himself from repeating the same myth in other literary texts. Therefore, the uniqueness highlighted by the Banjar royal court author shows his wisdom in arranging and mixing this important episode in the history of his state. His main objectives were to extol the king’s strength and, at the same time, attempt to show his prowess in writing. Apart from that, the author of *Babad Tanah Jawa* also used the element of dream as a narrative strategy in a related episode concerning the presence of the king.

Ki Jaka telah bermimpi beliau sedang bertapa di gunung pada waktu malam dan bulan telah jatuh. Beliau telah diangkat menjadi bupati Panjang dan menjadi Sultan Demak (Babad Tanah Jawa, 1975:25&35)

[Ki Jaka dreamt that he was meditating on the mountain at night and the moon fell. He was lifted and became the Regent and Sultan Demak.]

Based on the quoted text above, the moon carries the meaning of someone in power—if a dream of the moon takes place at night, then the dreamer will become prosperous and rich, or receive wealth and high position. Meanwhile, the mountain brings the connotation of the highest place and a just ruler (*Tafsir Mimpi dengan Al-Quran*, 2000:70,128).

This type of extraordinary episode was included carefully and linked to the element of religion. The author's duty to please the king was a heavy responsibility that had to be fulfilled to the maximum level. The arrangement of this distinctive narrative displays the subtlety and care used by the royal court authors in fulfilling their duty as servants of the king, as they were responsible for safeguarding the king's dignity from being diminished. Through the dream narrative, the ideology of the author, whose purpose was to place his king's position at par or even higher than other kings, is clearly evident.

THE DREAM STRATEGY IN THE ISLAMISATION OF MALAY KINGS

The story of the coming of Islam to the Malay world was an important episode because it was historical and the narrative of the Islamisation of kings was the climax of such stories in historical literary works. The myth related to the coming of Islam often linked the kings not only with religious figures, but also of their meeting with Prophet Muhammad through dreams. The element of dream was an effective tool because the Malay society in the past placed importance on dreams in their lives (Harun, 2000:318). The accounts of the Islamisation of the kings of Melaka and Pasai by the Prophet not only elevated the position of the kings, but it also presented them as chosen individuals who received guidance in the holy religion of Islam. In addition, it was able to widen the gap between the king and his people. Such myths were needed to ensure that the people continued to give their complete loyalty to their king.

Setelah berapa lamanya baginda di atas kerajaan, maka baginda bermimpi pada suatu malam, berpandangan dengan keelokan hadrat nabi Mustafa Rasulullah. Maka sabda Rasulullah pada Raja Kecil Besar, "ucap oleh mu: Asyhadu alla ilaha ilaha I'l Allah wa asyhadu anna Muhammad-ar- rasulullah. Maka oleh Raja Kecil Besar itu telah dituruti. Maka sabda Rasulullah kepada Raja Kecil Besar. "Ada pun namamu Sultan Muhammad Syah". (Sulalatus Salatin, 1979:72).

[After being on the throne for some time, one night, the king dreamt of seeing the beautiful vision of the Prophet. The Prophet said to Raja Kecil Besar, “Say, *Asyhadu alla ilaha ilaha I’l Allah wa asyhadu anna Muhammad-ar- rasulullah.*” Raja Kecil Besar obeyed the Prophet. The Prophet then said to Raja Kecil Besar, “Your name now is Sultan Muhammad Shah.”]

Sebermula maka bermimpi Merah Silau dilihatnya dalam mimpinya itu ada seorang orang menampung dagunya dengan segala jarinya dan matanya pun ditutup empat jarinya , demikian katanya , “Hai Merah Silau, ucap olehmu dua kalimah syahadat. “Maka sahut Merah Silau, “Tiada hamba tahu mengucap akan dia”. Maka ujarnya. “Bukakan mulutmu.” Maka dibukakannya oleh Merah Silu, maka diludahinya mulut Merah Silau itu. “Hai Merah Silau, engkaulah Sultan Malikul Saleh namamu, sekarang Islamlah engkau dengan mengucap dua kalimah syahadat itu (Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai, 1999:15).

[Once, Merah Silau had a dream, and in his dream, there was someone who held his chin with his fingers and his eyes were closed by his four fingers. He then said, “Merah Silau, recite the *kalimah syahadah.*” Merah Silau replied, “I do not know how to say it.” The person then said, “Open your mouth.” Merah Silau opened his mouth, and the person spat into his mouth. “Merah Silau, your name is Sultan Malikul Saleh, now you are a Muslim by reciting the *syahadah.*”]

Raja Kecil Besar and Merah Silau’s respective dream of meeting the Prophet successfully instilled an ideal sense of trust in the Malay people’s beliefs as they followed the religion of Islam and considered dreams of meeting the Prophet to be true because meeting this sacred figure cannot happen easily and not many individuals have the opportunity to do so.

According to the book entitled *Tafsir Mimpi dengan Al-Quran* (2000: 315), the best dream to have is that of Prophet Muhammad. To dream of meeting him signifies truth, honesty, surrender, and honour. A person who meets the Prophet, even if in just a dream, means that he is a pious person. The presence of the Prophet in a dream brings a special meaning, that is, this individual has been chosen by Allah. As narrated by Anas:

The Prophet said, “Anyone who sees me in his sleep means he has really seen me because the devil is not able to fake my appearance.” (quoted from Majdi, 203: 95)

From this myth, the royal court authors were able to build the image of a king who is mighty, has magical powers, and is regal and sacred to the extent that he is feared, even in his absence. The saying, “The king is the representative of Allah on earth,” further strengthened the might and sacredness of a king and this was supported by the myth of the dream episode in which the Prophet appeared (Noriah, 2008:50). Therefore, the appearance of the Prophet and the religion of Islam inspired the royal court authors of Melaka and Pasai to use them as a narrative strategy in order to place the king in a higher position. This episode clearly shows that the author’s ideology was strongly influenced by the palace. The author was deeply convinced that the episode in which the king embraced Islam would be the climactic episode in his writing. This narrative should be told in an effective manner and not in a random way without linking it to the greatness of kings, yet at the same time, must be different from other texts.

Dream as a War Strategy

Dreams were also used as one of many military strategies in historiographical texts. Dreams in *Syair Peperangan Aceh* and *Tuhfat Al-Nafis* were used as the main basis for war between Aceh and the Bugis people. This main basis is known as the Grand Strategy, which is an early preparation before going to the battlefield. The Grand Strategy refers to early planning as well as the motive that must be achieved in the war undertaken or joined (Johson, 1989:760). The Acehnese people’s motive for war against the Dutch was to defend the religion of Islam, whereas the Bugis joined the war to wrest political power in the state of Johore. The Sultan of Aceh and Opu Dahing Menambun used their respective dreams as the main reason to engage in war.

The Sultan of Aceh dreamt that he was betrayed by his minister, Menteri Rampang. According to Jelani (2003:9), Menteri Rampang was the Panglima Tibang in the actual history of Aceh; he committed treason by selling Aceh to the Dutch after he lost in gambling using money that was entrusted to him to buy ships in Singapore. In order to prevent treason, the Sultan of Aceh acted by gathering all the people of Aceh to drink water from a well that had been steeped with words from the Quran. This strategy was to acquire the oath and loyalty of the people to the king; if the oath was broken by the people, they would have to face the wrath of Allah.

Setelah malam sudahlah hari
Baginda pun masuk ke dalam puri

Baginda pun beradu terlali mata
Ayuhai Ibrahim mamanda berkata

[When night fell, the day is gone
The Sultan entered the room.
He laid down and closed his eyes.
“Come, Ibrahim,” his minister said.]

Janganlah tuanku suka dan walang
Baik muafakatlh tuanku sekarang
Baginda terkejut lalulah sedar
Mendengarkan helah alamat

[“Your highness, do not be happy or grieve
Better to have a meeting now.”
Surprised, the king woke up
To hear what seems like a premonition.]

Sangatlah terkejut rajanya tadi
Mimpi apakah demikian peri
Di dalam hati baginda fikirilah’
Dari mana datangnya bala Allah

[The Sultan was shocked
By the dream he just had.
In his heart he wondered
From where comes the wrath of Allah.]

Lalu bersabda duli Syah Alam
“Di mana rakyat luar dan dalam
Jikalau engkau sungguh Islam
Minumlah segera air kolam.

[So Sultan Syah Alam decreed
“All the people within and without,
If you really believe in Islam
drink this water from the well immediately.”]

Jangan tak mahu semua orang
Negeri ini bala Allah apa datang
Ini negeri tentu berperang
Janganlah belot barang seorang.

[“Everyone must not refuse
Or the wrath of Allah will fall on this country.
This country will have to go to war
No one should betray the country.”]

Telah didengar Yang Dipertuan
Minum semua betina jantan
Minum itu di jari jadi rebutan
Ada yang di mangkuk ada yang di pinggan.

[Hearing this from the Sultan
Male and female everyone
Quickly rushed to drink with the hand
From the bowl, from the plate.]

Orang pun minum berebut-rebut
Habis basah misai dan janggut
Titah Sultan baik diikuti
Supaya berperang jangan belot.

[They all rushed to drink
And wet their moustaches and beards
The Sultan’s decree must be obeyed
To go to war and not rebel.]

Tiada berhenti sehari-hari
Orang berjalan perginya mari
Mana yang sudah semua kembali
Mana yang belum datangnya mari
(*Syair Peperangan Aceh*, 1926:4-5).

[Non-stop day after day
The people came and went
Those who had drunk returned
And those who had not would come.]

The Sultan of Aceh first received an indication through a dream that his country was in danger. He was portrayed as someone who was pious and always devoted to be closer to Allah. In his dream, he met a saint, which is a trustworthy sign since such a figure has foreknowledge of things and events (Zubir, 2013:162). This is further stressed in the book entitled *Tafsir Mimpi dengan al-Quran* (2000:156), which stated that if one dreams of

being betrayed, it is an indication that it will come true. Hence, the Sultan of Aceh made his dream as part of his Grand Strategy so that he could make preparations beforehand to destroy the enemy within.

Opu Dahing Mencilak, together with his relative, agreed to help the Sultan of Kedah who was being threatened by his relative, and also help Raja Kecil to wrest the throne in Johore as well as conquer other Malay states. Then, he dreamt that Opu Dahing Cellak's penis lengthened into a dragon. According to *Tafsir dengan Al-Quran* (2000:319), to dream of a dragon means one will receive a lot of help. It can also signify power, which in this context meant that they would be in power in the Malay world, such as Kedah, Selangor, and Johore. The dream narrative related to Opu Dahing can be analysed in the citation below:

Apabila sudah siap maka muafakatliah ia hendak masuk ke negeri Johor dan Melaka mengembara pada sebelah tanah itu, kerana ia sudah mendapat alamat tatkala masa hendak ia semua keluar daripada tanah Bugis itu. Opu Dahing Menambun ada bermimpi akan zakar saudaranya Opu Dahing Cellak itu menjulur menjadi naga. Adalah kepalanya mengadap ke sebelah pihak Barat Johor. Maka ditakbirkan orang, anak cucunya akan mendapat kerajaan di sebelah Johor dan Riau yang berpanjangan masanya. Syahdan apabila sudah putuslah muafakatnya, maka lalulah ia belayar mengembara ke sebelah Barat (Tuhfat Al-Nafis: 1998:53).

[When everything was ready, they reached a consensus to enter Johore and Melaka, travelling to neighbouring lands because they had received a sign that it was time to leave the Bugis land. Opu Dahing Menambun had a dream that his relative Opu Dahing Cellak's penis lengthened into a dragon. Its head faced West Johore. It was then proclaimed that his descendants would rule Johore and Riau for a long time. When a consensus was reached, he sailed away to the West.]

The depictions of war strategy show the wisdom of the author in linking the war episode with strange and unusual signs. This strangeness suits the royal court authors' motive to elevate the greatness of their respective state compared to others. This strategy of storytelling succeeded in instilling a sense of pride in each state that is represented in the text because the ruling king descended from great ancestors. Such a narrative description gave rise to the spirit of ethnocentrism in the authors of the royal courts of Riau and Aceh and reveal their ideological inclination towards their own people,

namely the Bugis and the Acehnese, which surpassed the other Malay races. Through the second description, the royal court authors have shown their originality through their talent in combining mythical elements and reality. The authors have proven that they have a strong imagination when creating a particular episode.

DREAM AS A STRATEGY TO HEAL THE KING AND A SIGN OF DESTRUCTION FOR THE COUNTRY

Authors continued to use myths as a strategy to criticize the upper class. In the past, the upper class could not be criticized or denounced openly—instead, it was done in a careful and polite manner. In the text of *Babad Tanah Jawa*, the author's wisdom can be observed through the narrative about Sang Prabu's illness. Many types of medicine were prescribed and doctors were called in to cure him but nothing proved successful. Once again, a dream solved this problem. Sang Prabu dreamt that he must sleep with a *wandan* (a maid).

Sang Prabu Brawijaya penguasa negara Majapahit telah menderita penyakit raja singa dan kesemua tabib serta ubat yang diminum oleh baginda tetapi tidak berhasil. Sehingga beliau bermimpi supaya beliau bersanggama dengan orang wandan yang kuning rupanya maka sembuhlah penyakit baginda. (Babad Tanah Jawa, 1975:15).

[Sang Prabu Brawijaya, the ruler of Majapahit, was suffering from syphilis and all the doctors and medicine he took could not cure him. Until he had a dream that he should sleep with a fair-complexioned maid, then he would be cured.]

This episode about the illness is a form of satire by the author towards the king who had lived a non-exemplary life, for which his country would be destroyed as punishment. Classical texts often show that a country's destruction is imminent if its rulers have no morals, as was the case in Melaka and Pasai.

Sleeping with someone outside of marriage is adultery, or *zina*. Based on the dream interpretation, adultery foreshadows destruction (*Tafsir Mimpi dengan al-Quran*, 2000:52). The reality of the meaning of the dream can be linked to Sang Prabu Brawijaya's destruction. The consequence of Sang Prabu's adultery was that he had a son and, according to predictions from soothsayers, the son must be killed when he turns eight years old because he would challenge Sang Prabu's power. The son was surrendered to Kyai

Buyut Masahar, but the latter did not carry out the order to kill—instead, he had the boy hidden. When the boy reached adulthood, he fought against Sang Prabu and conquered Bitara, Demak, and ruled over the whole of Java (*Babad Tanah Jawa*, 1975:15-20).

The brilliance of the royal court authors can be observed through the subtle narrative that links the element of dream to curing a king's illness. The presence of the element of dream was to balance the punishment that would be received by Sang Prabu when his country was destroyed. The destruction would be a colossal punishment because a king whose country is destroyed would become a fugitive, an outcast or be killed. Therefore, the criticism in the narrative was delivered in a wise manner by the author of *Babad Tanah Jawa* and the class of people who were criticized were unaware that they were the target. Here, the brilliance of the author is proven in the way he criticized the upper class without provoking the king's wrath.

CONCLUSION

This discussion has succeeded in delving into the royal court authors' creativity in describing and devising a strategy in their storytelling using the element of dream as the main basis of their respective narrative. Based on the five discussions presented above, it is proven that the writing and ideology of the authors inclined towards the royal court. The responsibility of the royal court authors in fulfilling the duty placed upon them in order to please the ruling class indeed achieved the desired results through unique and sacred depictions, as explained in the analysis section. Episodes involving the myth of dreams reveal the wisdom of the past writers in creating stories about kings. Also, when interwoven with Islamic elements, which was one of the ideas and strategies of the author to please the kings, it was proven to be effective. This combination succeeds in reinforcing the idea that these authors did not write in a vacuum since these elements were combined together with the culture and beliefs of societies in the past.

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