



The Song of *Macapat Semarang*: The Acculturation of Javanese and Islamic Culture

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Abstract

The research objective is to explain the *macapat Semarang* song which is the result of acculturation of Javanese and Islamic culture. The study used qualitative methods by uncovering the concept of processing of Javanese music and acculturation. Research location was in Semarang with the object of *macapat Semarang* song study. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and study documents. The validity of the data was examined through triangulation techniques and the analysis is done through the stages of identification, classification, comparison, interpretation, reduction, verification, and making conclusions. The results showed that the *macapat Semarang* song has unique characteristics of arrangement. The song's grooves use long and complicated musical ornamentations with varying pitch heights to reach high notes. This is a manifestation of the results of acculturation of Javanese and Islamic culture seen from arrangement on the parts of *Adzan* (call to prayer) and *tilawatil Qur'an*. The process of acculturation of elements of Islamic culture also involves scales. *Azan* songs use diatonic scales, some *macapat Semarang* songs also use the same scales, but a cycle of five notes close to nuances of Chinese music scales. Various elements of arrangement on the *Azan*, Chinese and European musical scales then formed a new culture, *macapat Semarang*.

Keywords: *Azan* Song; *Macapat*; *Semarang*

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INTRODUCTION

Macapat is a classic Javanese literary work bound by rules *guru lagu*, *guru wilangan*, and *guru gatra* read by a vocalist with a certain vocal song (Saputra, 2001). *Macapat* can also be interpreted as poem that is bound by poetry and contains the tones that make up the song (Widodo, 2006; Widodo, 2008). *Semarang* is derived from the word *Semarang*, the name of the area on the north coast of central Java. The suffix-an in the word means possessive, has

something distinctive and unique that is *macapat* artwork. Its specificity concerns style or *céngkok*. *Macapat Semarang* style is also called *macapat céngkok* or *gagrag* or *cakrik Semarang* (Supanggih, 2002). *Macapat Semarang* is a type of recitation art that grows and develops in Semarang. The inheritance system of *macapat Semarang* uses oral tradition (Puguh, 2017).

The classic *Macapat Semarang* has four metrum, they are: *Dhandanggula*, *Sinom*, *Pangkur*, and *Asmaradana*. *Dhandanggula* and *Sinom* song *Semarang* are

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composed in pitch of *sléndro pathêt sanga* or *manyura miring*, while *Pangkur* and *Asmaradana* was composed in *pélog pathêt nem* pitch which is colored by the notes on *pélog pathêt lima* and *pathêt barang*. The interpretation of the term *miring* on *sléndro pathêt sanga* pitch or *manyura* is different from the understanding of Javanese musical actors in general as tones in the *sléndro* pitch which is raised or lowered by half the bar. In *macapat Semarang* the term *miring* pointing to pentatonic tones rooted in Western music that is close to nuances of Chinese music. Therefore, the local people often refer to it as *sléndro*-diatonic pitch. Notation of song compositions using *miring* pitch is easier to do using a diatonic number notation (solmization) system than *kepatihan* notation system. *Pathêt* as a concept discussing about an atmosphere of feeling stop in the arrangement of Javanese traditional music instrument (*gamelan*), in *macapat Semarang* songs are less applicable (Hastanto, 2009). Although the sound of notes in certain song lines in *Macapat Semarang* often sounds *blero*, it is outside the frequency limits of the tone on the *sléndro* dan *pélog* pitch, but the Javanese musicians who are sensitive to the pitch do not feel disturbed.

According to conventional aesthetic rules about the reading of the Surakarta style *macapat* text as *waosan*, it is *winengku sastra* song (framed songs of literature), giving a long song line in convoluted syllable *macapat* text is not justified (Waluyo, 1999). The aesthetic rule would not apply to *macapat Semarang*. In certain syllables the *Semarang macapat* text especially those in the near position of stop point, is often sung with numerous tones. If *wiled* or musical ornamentation is simplified, then the composition character is lost. The vocalists in various art performances still carry it with long *wiled* to reach high notes. When *macapat Semarang* is performed, the appreciators are often carried away with long breaths to hear such a song.

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(Darsono, 1995). *Slendro*-diatonic vocal work combined with Javanese gamelan instrumental playing *slendro* in *Semarang* sounds is unique. Parts of the vocal track that have long wiled lilted songs resemble the call to prayer or tilawatil quran with a mix of *slendro*, *pelog*, diatonic scales, and even the nuances of Chinese music further strengthen its uniqueness. While the instrumental work on *Semarang* music is a form of adaptation or mixing of many regional musical styles, such as the *Surakarta*, *Yogyakarta*, *Banyumas* and *Sundanese* styles.

The task is to work on building all musical elements in musical composition creatively and systematically to form a unified musical sound quality according to the character and function of the performance. Supanggih (2009) said, that the concept of working on Javanese music has six elements, namely: (1) working on material, in the form of *gending* and *balungan gending*; (2) artists, such as: *pengrawit*, *wiraswara*, and *waranggana*; (3) media to discover arrangement, i.e., a set of *gamelan*; (4) tools or arrangement device vocabular technique, *céngkok*, *wiled*, *irama* and *laya*, *laras*, *pathêt*, dynamics, and all musical elements of *gending*; (5) determinants of working on, namely: the authority of the person or institution as well as the function of musical and social services; and (6) consideration of arrangement, in the form of situational circumstances that occur in the show. Creative actions on each musical element contribute to the realization of the quality of musical compositions.

Hidayatullah (2005) noted five problems related to cultural acculturation, namely: (1) methods for observing, recording, and describing the process of cultural mixing; (2) elements of migrant culture that are accepted and rejected by local culture; (3) elements of local culture that are easily and difficult to be changed or replaced by elements of foreign culture; (4) individuals in society who are fast and slow in accepting elements of foreign culture; and (5) tensions or crises arising from the acculturation process.

The study of cultural acculturation symbols, Javanese and Islamic acculturation, Semarangan music, Adzan and *macapat* Semarangan have been conducted by several researchers, including Triyanto, Nur Rochmad, and Mujiono (2013), Amir Mahmud (2012), Dhanang Respati Puguh (2017), Muntoha, Jamroni, Ali Abdul Jabbar (2015), and Widodo (2008). Triyanto, Nur Rochmad, and Mujiono discusses the symbol of cultural acculturation in the Warag Ngendog visual art (Triyanto, et al., 2013). Amir Mahmud discussed about the acculturation of Middle Eastern culture to Indonesia (Mahmud, 2012, pp. 17-28). Dhanang Respati Puguh examines the preservation, development and policy of Semarangan cultural heritage in a historical perspective (Puguh, 2017). Muntoha, Jamroni, Ali Abdul Jabbar discusses the call to prayer (adzan) and the iqomah (Muntoha, et al., 2013). Widodo discusses the theory and practice of *macapat* song (Widodo, 2008). Among the studies that have been done, there is not even one that mentioned the acculturation of Javanese and Islamic culture in the context of the *macapat* Semarangan song and adzan.

The focus of the discussion in this article is on the Semarangan *macapat* song which is allegedly the result of Javanese and Islamic acculturation, namely from the flow of Adzan as material for making Semarangan music (*gending-gending*). The purpose of the discussion is to find and explain the characteristics of the *macapat* Semarangan song, *Dhandanggula Sl. Sanga Miring, Sinom Sl. Sanga Miring, Pangkur Pl. Nem, dan Asmaradana Pl. Nem*.

METHODS

The study used a qualitative method with a knife analysis of working on concepts in Javanese music and cultural acculturation. The study was conducted in Semarang with the object of study working on the composition of the *macapat* Semarangan song. Data was collected through interview, observation and document study techniques. Interviews were conducted

with the experts and Javanese musical artists who worked on the *Macapat* Semarangan song. Observations were made at various Javanese traditional art performances in which there was the *macapat* Semarangan song as material. Document study in the form of appreciation of the composition of the *macapat* Semarangan song on audio and audiovisual recording media such as: audio recording of Javanese music by Ki Narto Sabdo and live musical performances by the karawitan group Sekar Dhomas Semarang. Azan song data is extracted through the appreciation of the sound of its compositions which reverberate in Muslim places of worship before the prayer time in Semarang as well as in local and national television media.

Data validity is examined through triangulation techniques on sources, methods, and theories to ensure their validity. Data composition of the songs above is notated according to the aesthetic rules that apply to identify and classify similarities and differences. The similarity of working on the songs in the azan and *macapat* Semarangan songs shows the adaptation of cultural elements. The acculturation process on the Semarangan *macapat* song was analyzed through the stages of reduction, identification, classification, comparison, verification, interpretation, and making conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Azan Song

Azan is a dhikr with certain texts taught first by the Messenger of Allah, Rosulullah SAW to his companions as knowledgeable of the establishment of fard prayer. Its announcement was referred to by some experts as *Sunnah Kifayah* but some other experts said *fardu kifayah*. It is a must even though it is done by at least one person. In the beginning the azan lafaz were echoed by a simple song but over time it developed into a diverse composition of different tones throughout the world following the culture prevailing in an area. This confirms that the recitation

of Azan has certain standards and specifications according to the agreement of the Islamic community in an area (Khasyaf, 2017).

Azan is sounded vocally with a certain song line by a muazzin at the time of prayer to remind Muslims that prayer time has arrived and / or to invite them to pray in congregation in certain places of worship. Because of its function, the sound composition is arranged so that it sounds loud and beautiful. So that the call to prayer can be heard as widely as possible, today the call to prayer in certain places in the archipelago is even channeled through loudspeakers. In connection with this, Kasyaf (2017) again states that there is a sunnah value for the muazzin, they are : (1) speaking out loud so that the echoes of the call to prayer reach out to many people; (2) has a beautiful voice so that the call to prayer attracts many people; and (3)

should be fair so that the recitation of the call to prayer is to avoid mistakes.

In Semarang the sound composition of the call to prayer is also diverse. In general, the call to prayer is performed in a certain groove with a diatonic scale. The following is an example of an outline notation of the composition of the azan song that is most often heard directly or through loudspeakers in Muslim worship places as well as in the electronic mass media in Semarang and surrounding areas.

When examined, the azan song notation shows that the parts of the song's plot have much in common or the same song's plot is presented repeatedly. In addition, certain syllables, especially at the time of the break, were chanted by involving a lot of tones so that the presentation was memorable liting. The composition of the song is rhythmic, not bound by beats. Therefore a *muazzin* can bring it freely without

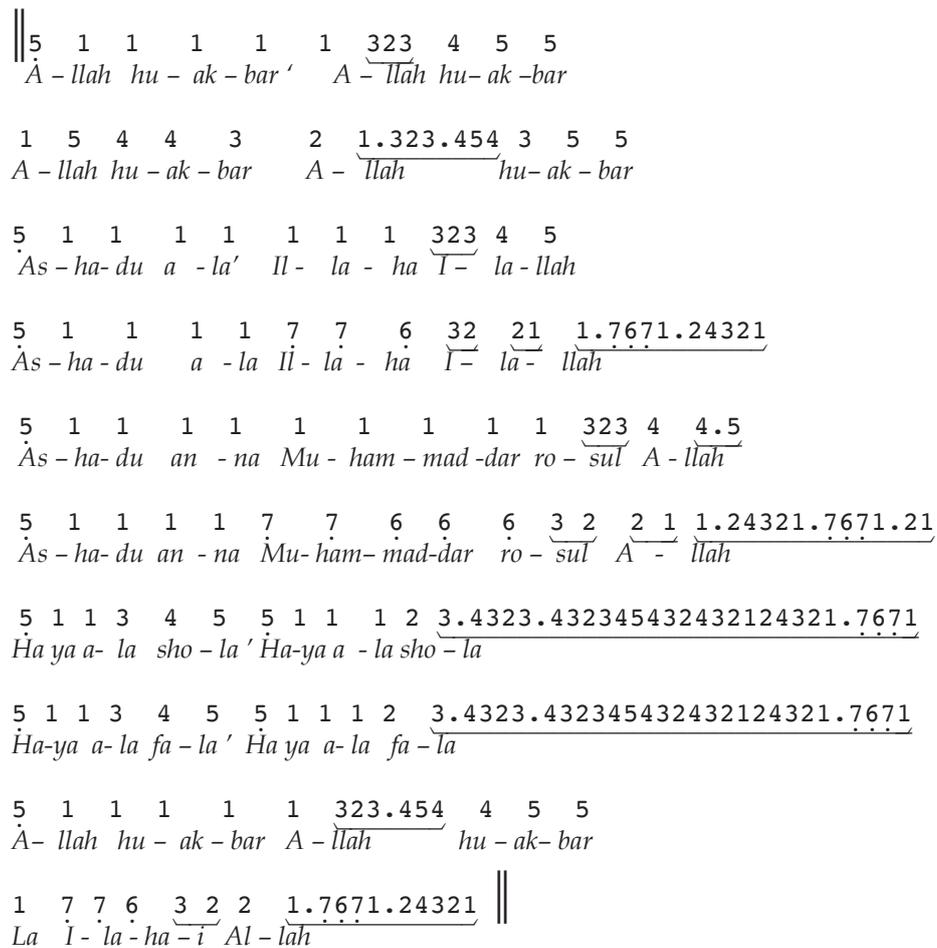


Figure 1. Azan Song Composition Notation in diatonic form

being bound by a beat (beat). The height of the tones and the speed of their delivery are adjusted to the sound capabilities of the Muazzin.

Macapat Semarangan song

At this time there are four meters of classical Semarangan *macapat* songs, namely *Dhandanggula Sl. Sanga* or *Manyura Miring, Sinom Sl. Sanga* or *Manyura Miring, Pangkur Pl. Nem*, and *Asmaradana Pl. Nem*. The two *macapat* song compositions mentioned first use pentatonic tones rooted in Western music which is thick with nuances of Chinese music. Therefore, local people often refer to these scales as *sléndro-diatonik* pitch. Two composition the second *macapat* song uses tones of *pélog* pitch with a certain tones composition that its musi-

cal feeling tends to be *berpathêt nem*. The next explanation is an outline of the song in the form of notation. In this context for example *macapat* song *Dhandhanggula Semarangan Laras Slendro-Diatonik* uses diatonic number notation, and *macapat Asmaradana Semarangan Pelog Nem* uses kepatihan notation.

Macapat Semarangan Song as a Phenomenon of an Acculturation

Linton (2002) states that acculturation begins with a meeting of two or more different cultural elements. These cultural elements influence each other, give, receive, and integrate so that a new culture is formed. The selection and adaptation of cultural elements then occur in the process of cultural struggle. Cultural elements that

	3 5 3 5 ' 3 5 3 5 <u>5 6</u> <u>4.34.32</u>
	<i>Ka - dya dhan-dhang a - tur i - ra ma - nis</i>
	1 2 2 2 ' 2 7 24 3 2 3
	<i>Ki Pa - ngu - lu a - tur - nya mang-ka - na</i>
	1 6 1 5 ' 6 1 7 1 <u>2.564.3432</u>
	<i>Pu - ku - lun ta - dhah du - ka - ne</i>
	<u>3 5</u> 5 4 <u>3.231</u> 2 <u>4.3235</u>
	<i>A - jrih a - mba ka lang - kung</i>
	3 2 1 <u>6.712.765</u> ' 5 5 3 5 5 6 5
	<i>Mring Dhi - pa - ti kang ta - gya sa - kit</i>
	3 6 5 3 2 1 <u>6.7127</u>
	<i>Nul - ya ri - sang Pa - ndhi - ta</i>
	5 3 5 5 <u>356</u> <u>4.3432</u>
..	<i>Gya be - dhug ti - na - buh</i>
	5 6 6 6 <u>6 5</u> 3 5 6
	<i>Gu - mu - ruh swa - reng ka - pyar - sa</i>
	5 4 3 2 ' 2 2 2 2 2 3 5 6
	<i>Wong sa - pra - ja ma - mya ta - ken kang ka - pyar - si</i>
	2 3 5 4 <u>32127</u> ' <u>1.712</u> <u>7617.6765</u>
	<i>Prap - ta ing nda - lem pu - ra</i>

Figure 2. Macapat song notation of *Dhandhanggula Semarangan Laras Slendro-Diatonik*

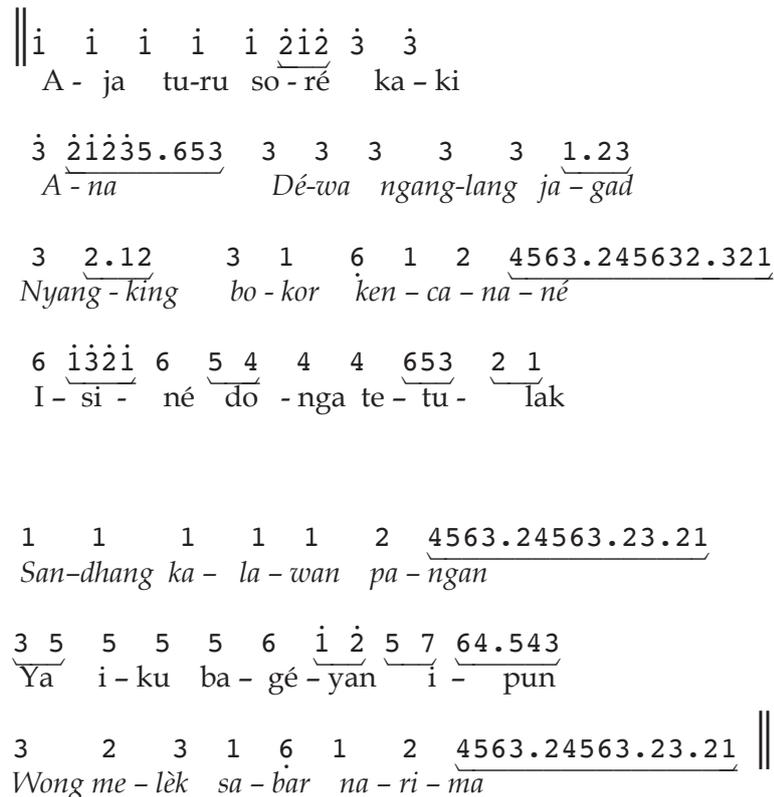


Figure 3. Song Notation of *Macapat Asmaradana Semarangan Pl. Nem*.

are suitable are accepted, and vice versa. The initial phase of acculturation is assimilation, cultural change involves one aspect. Diffusion shows the distribution of cultural elements from one place to another or a group to another group that opens opportunities for inter-cultural meetings. Diffusion summarizes three kinds of cultural formation processes, they are: serving foreign cultural elements; acceptance of the cultural elements; and integration of cultural elements

Based on observing the composition of the song Azan and *Macapat Semarangan* along with the way they are carried out, they have a lot in common. The composition of Azan and *macapat* both have the main elements of literature or poetry and song. Azan text in the form of standard dzikir taken from the Koran with the core meaning of praise to God and the Prophet (Khasyaf, 2017). The composition of the song is rhythmic without being bound by beats. The presentation was performed by a single vocalist with the functions mentioned above. To reach the height and length

of the notes in the flow of the song, a muazzin can measure the ability of his own voice.

The *macapat Semarangan* text has standard provisions concerning *guru gatra*, rules regarding the number of lines in each stanza; *guru lagu*, rules about the last vowel on each line; and *guru wilangan*, rules regarding the number of syllables in each line. Its composition in function as a *waosan* is also rhythmic without being bound by beats. The presentation was performed vocally by a vocalist. He can measure the ambitus of his own voice in order to reach the height and length of the notes in the groove song Semarang *macapat* composition.

The requirements of a *muazzin* implicitly also apply to *macapat* performers. Those requirements on *waosan macapat* are express in the convention of *lagu winengku sastra* (framed song of literature). These rules are detailed by some experts to arrange their nature so that the messages contained in the *macapat* text can be clearly expressed. Some conventional rules are: recita-

tion of each syllable no more than three notes; pauses in parts of the song do not break words; the tempo of reading is like people read prose with regular dynamics; and the connection of certain words with other words are dissolved. If a pause in a part of the song is performed, the conventional provisions are: (1) the pause for the six syllable line is performed after the first two syllables; (2) pause for the seven syllables, performed after the first three syllables; (3) pauses for an array of eight syllables, performed after the first four syllables; (4) pauses for a range of nine syllables, performed after the first four syllables; (5) pause for the ten syllables, after the first four syllables; (6) pause for eleven syllables, after the first four syllables; (7) pauses for the twelve syllable array, performed after the first four syllables (Darsono, 1995). Examples of the application of conventional rules are as follows.

Cakepan Macapat Mijil

*Dedalane' gunalawan sekti, Kudu' andhapasor,
Wani ngalah' luhur wekasane, Tumungkula' yen
dipundukani, Bapang' densimpangi,
Ana' catur mungkur.*

Comma punctuation marks on parts of the Mijil macapat text above indicate pausing in parts of the song if necessary. In other macapat text cases, pausing different parts of the song adjusts the order of words and their meanings. However, the rules for recitation of *macapat* songs above are not applied in *macapat* Semarangan song. In this case the nature of macapat Semarangan places more emphasis on the song aspect even though the pronunciation of the literary aspect is not ruled out. The aesthetic rules used are not *lagu winengku sastra* (song framed literature) but *sastra winengku lagu* (literature framed song).

Although they have a lot in common, but the song of Azan and *Macapat* also has a little difference. Azan is generally recited by men, while macapat can be performed by men and women. The many similarities in the composition character and the way they are carried out in the two types of song compositions open up opportunities for mutual borrowing and integration of

cultural elements. Certain parts of the *macapat* Semarangan song, the composition of which involves many tones in certain syllables, especially before the stop points, indicate an adaptation to the elements of Azan and also *tilawatil qur'an*. This is not uncommon in macapat performance in general as a reading function. The influence of the azan and tilawatil qur'an songs can also be seen in the use of the pentatonic scale which is rooted in the Western musical scale which is thick with nuances of Chinese music on the composition of the macapat songs *Dhandhanggula* and *Sinom Semarangan*.

The process of acculturation on the Semarangan *macapat* song is inseparable from the contact between cultures, namely the Javanese, Chinese, Arabic and European local cultures. The city of Semarang since the 8th century has become an important port on the north coast of Java, namely the port of Pragota or Bergota which is the destination of arrivals and stops for foreign ships. The city of Semarang since the 8th century has become an important port on the north coast of Java, namely the port of Pragota or Bergota which is the destination of arrivals and stops for foreign ships. Since 1435, Admiral Cheng Ho, leader of the Chinese royal army in the Ming Dynasty and his troops had landed at the port. He and his Muslim army made Semarang the most important center for the spread of Islam on Java (Budiman, 1978). Their presence then triggered the establishment of the first Islamic Kingdom in Java, Demak. At the end of the 15th century, Sultan Demak assigned Sunan Pandanaran I to manage the Pragota area. Its main task is to spread the religion of Islam to the surrounding community which starts from the hills of the Pragota. Since its arrival, the area then developed more fertile and advanced for the spread of Islam in Semarang (Hidayatullah, 2005).

Another important historical journey took place on 15 January 1678. At that time Sultan Amangkurat II as the Mataram Sultanate authority in Kartasura, mortgaged the area to the VOC as part of compensa-

tion for debt payments and port taxes that were not paid until they were settled. In 1705, Sunan Pakubuwono I returned Semarang to the VOC as part of an agreement that had helped him retake Kartasura Palace. Since then Semarang has officially become the territory of the VOC ruled by the Dutch. In 1906 with Stadblat No. 120 of 1906, the Dutch Government changed its management system to the city of Gemeente, headed by the Burge-meester or Mayor. The head of government was held by the Dutch in turn until it ended during the Japanese occupation in 1942.

The brief illustration above shows that Chinese, Islamic and European cultures have been an important part of the life of the Semarang people since a few centuries ago. Azan is an important part of the process of spreading Islam. The composition of the song is certainly often echoed in the process of the spread of Islam. Azan is often heard, so the local people in Semarang who have a tradition of bringing macapat-shaped literary works then adapt the elements of Azan arrangement and also tilawatil quran. Until today, the city of Semarang is still a dwelling place for multi-ethnic communities, namely Arabic, Chinese, and Javanese Islam. They struggle in daily life by expressing their respective cultures. Semarang Central Statistics Agency in 2016, noted that the majority of the population of the city of Semarang adheres to Islam. The number of Muslim-Arabs in that place ranks third after Javanese and Chinese.

CONCLUSION

The macapat Semarangan song has the characteristics of a unique arrangement. Parts of the song's groove use long and complicated musical ornamentations with varying pitch heights to touch high notes. This is a manifestation of the results of the acculturation of Javanese and Islamic culture seen from working on the parts of Azan and tilawatil Qur'an. The process of acculturation of elements of Islamic culture also involves musical scales. Azan songs

use diatonic scales, some macapat Semarangan songs also use the same scales, but a cycle of five notes close to nuances of Chinese music scales. Various elements of Azan arrangement, Chinese and European musical scales then formed a new culture, *macapat Semarangan*.

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