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The poetry of minor characters and everyday life in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*

TONY DAY

ABSTRACT

The 722 cantos and 247,766 lines of poetry in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, composed in Surakarta by Ki Ng. Ronggasutrasna, R.Ng. Yasadipura II, and Ki Ng. Sastradipura under the direction of the Crown Prince of Surakarta (later Pakubuwana V, r.1820-1823) in 1815 during the British occupation of Java (1811-1816), are arguably the greatest expression of literary art ever written in Javanese. The earliest version of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* comes from Cirebon at the beginning of the seventeenth century. When the poem reached Surakarta in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, court poets rewrote it, greatly expanding the number of episodes and characters, as well as the kinds of information and literary style to be found in the text. My interest in the excerpt I have translated from Canto 364 focuses on two aspects of this process of literary revision: characterization and the representation of everyday life.

KEYWORDS

Surakarta; *Kadipaten*; *santri lĕlana*; encyclopaedia; characterization; everyday life; gamelan; *gĕndhing*; Islam; translation; poetry; aesthetics.

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INTRODUCTION

Arguably, the 722 cantos and 247,766 lines of poetry in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, composed in Surakarta by Ki Ng. Ronggasutrasna, R.Ng. Yasadipura II, and Ki Ng. Sastradipura under the direction of the Crown Prince of Surakarta (later Pakubuwana V, r. 1820-1823) in 1815 during the British occupation of Java (1811-1816), are the greatest expression of literary art ever written in Javanese. The eminent philologist R.M.Ng. Dr. Poerbatjaraka called the poem “*de onvolprezen Tjĕntini*” (the unsurpassed *Cĕnthini*) (Poerbatjaraka 1940: 361, note 3)! But what kind of inimitable literary work is it? C.F. Winter Sr.’s mid-nineteenth-century fictional informant, Parakawi, called the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* a “*pĕrlambang ngelmi*” (revelation of sciences), an enigmatic phrase that points to both the work’s encyclopaedic character and its interest in esoteric thought and techniques of all kinds (Winter 1862: 193). More than a hundred years later, Theodore Pigeaud classified the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* as a “romance of vagrant students containing encyclopaedic passages”, grouping it with three other works (Pigeaud 1967: 227-229). Nancy Florida (2012) coined the phrase “*santri lĕlana story*” to expand the family of texts to which the *Cĕnthini* belongs and Tim Behrend adopted and refined Florida’s definition of the *santri lĕlana* (wandering student of Islam) genre in order to clarify its common characteristics. According to Behrend, all *santri lĕlana* stories have: (1) At least one *santri* (pious Muslim, student of religion) as protagonist (2) who wanders (*lĕlana*) in search of a lost relative as well as religious knowledge, through forests and populated countryside far from courts and cities, a landscape that may or may not be identifiable as “Java”, (3) enacting a story of adventure which is told by means of recurring episodes that are combined or omitted in various configurations, (4) ending when the protagonist, who holds heterodox religious ideas, gets into trouble because of them and either escapes punishment or is killed (Behrend 1987: 325-326). The *Cĕnthini* certainly fits that definition but also exceeds its criteria in an astonishing, encyclopaedically complex way.

The earliest version of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* comes from Cirebon at the beginning of the seventeenth century. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the poem was recopied and read in religious schools (*pĕsantren*) in West and East Java. When the poem reached Surakarta in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, court poets rewrote it, greatly expanding the number of episodes and characters, as well as the kinds of information and literary style to be found in the text. The version I am discussing, the so-called *Major Cĕnthini* or *Cĕnthini Kadipaten*, which was written in the household of the Crown Prince of Surakarta in 1815, is forty times longer than the original version from Cirebon (Behrend n.d.).

My interest in the excerpt translated below focuses on two aspects of this process of literary expansion: characterization and the representation of everyday life. As Behrend notes in his discussion of the *Sĕrat Jatiswara*, the expanded versions of poems from the early nineteenth-century *Kadipaten*

Surakarta (household of the Crown Prince of Surakarta) exhibit a marked interest in introducing minor characters to old stories. These new characters are often “given odd traits or speeches to make them stand out” (Behrend 1987: 261).¹ In addition, descriptions of locations, food, plants, emotions, and so forth become more detailed and “exuberant” (Behrend 1987: 314). It seems as if the Surakarta authors of the expanded *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* wanted to turn an ancient *santri lĕlana* tale focused on the exposition of religious ideas into a gigantic, meandering, poetic encyclopaedia of all aspects of early nineteenth-century Javanese culture. Or a modern novel perhaps!²

Be that as it may, the excerpt below comes from the very detailed, exuberant, and character-rich section of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* set in the fictional East Javanese village of Wanamarta, renowned for its wealth, cultural sophistication, and Islamic piety due to the *sawab* (holy influence) of the learned and pious Ki Bayi Panurta, who studied religion in Cirebon.³ Ki Panurta has three children: Tambangraras, Jayengwesthi, and Jayengraga. The main protagonist of the poem, Seh Amongraga, formerly known as Jayengrĕsmi, has arrived in the village in search of his own younger siblings after they flee Giri, which has been attacked by Sultan Agung.⁴ Amongraga and Tambangraras share a devotion to Islam. After Amongraga has demonstrated the superiority of his religious learning, Ki Panurta implores him to marry his pious daughter. Amongraga (‘He who practices self-control’) agrees.⁵ The episode below takes place at the

¹ My interest in the role of “minor characters” in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, and fiction generally, was sparked by reading Woloch (2003).

² Compare this thought with Behrend’s suggestive remarks about the influence of nineteenth-century Dutch print culture on the manuscript-writing traditions of mid- to late-nineteenth-century Surakarta (Behrend 1987: 287-288). If Behrend is right, the “novelistic” characteristics of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* may already have been intrinsic to Javanese literature even before the advent of printing in Java.

³ For the opening description of Wanamarta, Ki Panurta and his children, and the “problem” Ki Panurta faces in finding a suitable husband for his daughter, see Kamajaya (1988a: 84, v. 11-22).

⁴ There are seven sets of *santri lĕlana* in the poem that appear in the following order: (1) Jayengrĕsmi (later named Amongraga) and his two servants from Karang in Bantĕn, Gathak and Gathuk (later named Jamil and Jamal); (2) Amongraga’s siblings, Jayengsari and Rancangkapti; (3) Cabolang, the son of the village head of Sokayasa, who later marries Rancangkapti, and various followers; (4) the two brothers of Amongraga’s wife (Tambangraras), Jayangwesthi and Jayengraga, together with their uncle, Kulawirya, and Nuripin, a *santri* who is the first to welcome Amongraga to the *santri* village of Wanamarta; (5) Tambangraras and her servant Cĕnthini; (6) Ki Panurta and his wife Malarsih; (7) and Amongraga and Tambangraras. To see how the wanderings of these groups of *santri lĕlana* map onto the structure of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, consult the detailed synopsis of the poem in Pigeaud (1933). I follow Kamajaya, Behrend, and Florida in treating the differently named texts synopsisized in sequence by Pigeaud (1933) as all belonging to the *Cĕnthini Kadipaten*.

⁵ The entire section of the poem from canto 349, when Amongraga is welcomed in Wanamarta, to canto 385, when he leaves the village to continue searching for his siblings, is really just a creative elaboration of four set scenes that are generic to *santri lĕlana* stories, what Behrend (1987: 96-97) calls: the *adĕgan tĕtamuwan* (welcoming a visitor scene); the *adĕgan rĕrasan ngelmi* (discussion of esoteric knowledge scene, accompanied by musical performances and recitations of various kinds); the *adĕgan tilamwangi* (bedroom scene, involving not much sleep but a lot of sex); and the *adĕgan pamitan* (the departure scene, after morning prayers and respectful goodbyes

beginning of a canto in the metre *Sinom*.⁶ In the preceding canto in *Pucung*, Tambangraras's little brother Jayengraga has spent the morning organizing his wives and retainers to prepare for a feast in honour of the bridal pair to be held at his house. During a break in the afternoon, he and his friends relax by playing some music on *gamēlan* instruments in the *slendro* scale that happen to be at hand. After a few pieces and some spirited banter between the musicians Widiguna and Crēmasana (who are also *dhalang* and *topeng* dancers) and Jayengraga and his uncle Kulawirya, Jayengraga proposes bringing the heirloom *pelog gamēlan* "Ocean waves" (*Alun Jaladri*) out of storage for some further music making. For an impression of the extraordinary musical properties of this ensemble, as well as some details about the characters Jayengraga, Kulawirya, Widiguna, and Crēmasana and an introduction to the poetic virtuosity to be found in the *Sērat Cēnthini*, let us turn to our passage.

CANTO 364

Sinom (8a-8i-8a-8i-7i-8u-7a-8i-12a)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. <i>Mangkana Ki Jayengraga
dennira amanku kardi
katongton wibawanira
tan ana ingkang yom-yomi
sor sutaning bupati
dhasar ki putra ingugung
datan sinungan rēngat
sakarsane denlilani
mring kang rama kalangkung sangēt sihira</i></p> | <p>Thus it was Ki Jayengraga supervised the preparations. On display his authority, no one cast him in the shade, besting sons of <i>bupati</i>. In fact milord was a spoiled child, not given cause for grief, every desire was indulged by his father, so exceeding his devotion</p> |
| <p>2. <i>Yen putra Ki Jayengraga
yen kadang Kulawiryeki
pan ingugung alit mila
mila ladake ngebēki
mung ladak tingkahmeki
labēte ugunganipun
nanging putus piyambak
dhasar landhēp tyasireki
ngelmu bantas ing kukum yudanagara</i></p> | <p>to his son, Ki Jayengraga. As for kinsman Kulawirya, he too was spoiled from childhood, so he was completely stuck up, nose in the air whatever he did because of having been spoiled, yet accomplished in everything, deeply clever in his sense of things, highly skilled in the rules of administration.</p> |

to the pious host, with dejected, deflowered daughters left behind in tears). It is fascinating how the expansion of these standard *santri lēlana* scenes in the *Sērat Cēnthini* makes the poem read almost like a modern novel, peopled by realistic characters in situations of everyday village life, albeit "everyday village life" as imagined by court writers living in Surakarta.

⁶ The Javanese text is taken from volume 6 of the twelve-volume edition of the *Sērat Cēnthini* prepared by Kamajaya (1988b: 141-142, v. 1-14). This edition can be read and searched online at the wonderful website of the Yayasan Sastra Lestari, sastra.org or downloaded from the Internet Archive, archive.org. My warm thanks to Els Bogaerts, Nancy Florida, and Edwin Wieringa for their valuable suggestions for improving the translation and commentary.

3. *Andële ing Wanamarta
pan amung awirya kalih
Jayengraga Kulawirya
keringan ing kanan kering
pataren angrampungu
pakewède ada dhusun
nadyan murading kitab
gathak-gathuk amēdhoti
watak kēras krawusan nanging wēlasan*
- Most trusted in Wanamarta
the both of them were valiant,
Jayengraga Kulawirya,
respected right and left,
as advisors they settled
the problems from village disputes,
even meanings of scripture,
they made connections, brought closure,
harsh of manner, scolding and yet
empathetic.
4. *Yen kalērēsan tyasira
kēccondhong lēga kang galih
paring sih tan sita-sita
mila sadaya jrih asih
maring sang Jayengragi
miwah mring Kulawiryeku
mangkana wayahira
waktu Luhur pēcak kalih
samya kendēl reren marang masjid salat*
- If it happened that their moods
were in agreement and both good,
they bestowed favour without stint.
Thus all felt awe and affection
for the noble Jayengragi
as well as for Kulawirya.
It had now become the time
for midday prayers, two o'clock,
all stopped work, took a break for prayer
in the mosque.
5. *Sadaya samya sēmbahyang
jalu estri tan na keru
namung niyaga kewala
ingkang kantun neng pandhapi
wus antara kang sami
asalat luhur bakda wus
wangsul sewang-sewangan
punapa garaping kardi
kang mring pawon mring kēbon kang mring
pēndhapa*
- Everyone worshipped together
men, women, no one was absent
except for musicians, just those
who remained in the pavilion.
After a while those who had all
prayed at midday finished doing so
returning each separately
depending on the job they handled
to kitchen or garden. To the pavilion
went
6. *Jengraga lan ingkang paman
Kulawirya lingira ris
kowe mau Widiguna
apa salat maring mēsjid
matur kasupen yēkti
ki Crēmasana anjagur
dhasar wong kēneng lara
laline wiwit dhek cilik
dinangu mring bēndara (n)dadak sēmbрана*
- Jengraga and his uncle.
Kulawirya asked casually:
Widiguna, just now, did you
go to the mosque for your prayers?
With respect, I forgot in fact!
Ki Crēmasana rapped his skull.
For sure you're asking for it!
Forgetting your place since childhood,
how dare you answer your betters so
rudely!
7. *Jengraga mesēm ngandika
ya Widiguna sireki
jumungahamu kewala
aja pot liyan sukēr sakit
kang kērēng lehmū mrēdi*
- Jengraga smiled and remarked
Yeah, Widiguna my fellow,
Fridays for you would suffice.
Don't omit them unless you're ill.
Be firm in your instructions

- kabeh wong rerehanamu
matur inggih sandika
Crēmasana anudingi
o nglēburi babon dimene andhēndha*
- to all those under your command.
Sir, with respect, I obey!
Crēmasana pointed at him:
Okay, to wipe away the sin just pay the fine!
8. *Ngandika mara unekna
lirihan wae kang gēndhing
lima rēbab kombangmara
kēmbangmara daradasih
muntap lawan pēngrawit
limang gēndhingan bae wus
kang sinung ling sandika
Crēmasana angrēbabi
asēsēndhonan pathēt lima rum araras*
- Jengraga said: Come let it sound,
ever so softly, the *gēndhing*
in *lima* for *rēbab*, *Kombang Mara*,
Kēmbang Mara, *Daradasih*,
Muntap, and *Pengrawit*,
five pieces, that will be enough.
Those spoken to did as commanded.
Crēmasana played the *rēbab*,
a mood song in *pathēt lima* sweetly in
tune.
9. *Nulya mungēl kēmbangmara
alun-jaladri ngrērangin
sakathahe kang miyarsa
jalwestri tyase mong brangti
rēmpēg panabuhneki
ukur jawil ngēnut-ēnut
ungēle kang anglola
rēbab gambang lawan suling
sarancak ungēle kamot jroning kawat*
- Then resounded *Kēmbang Mara*,
Ocean Waves ringing soft and sweet.
Everyone who was listening,
men, women, was deeply lovestruck.
The notes struck right together:
measured touches one by one;
sounds that were left abandoned:
rēbab gambang and the *suling*;
ensemble of sounds: contained in a single
string.
10. *Nganyut-anyut langkung raras
kasmaran ingkang miyarsi
lir mamrēsing karasikan
ēngēse ngēkēsi ati
weh wilēting malatsih
lir winulang ing wulangun
raosing tyas mangkana
saking nyēnyēting kang gēndhing
nguyu-uyu ngrērantēg dennya gamēlan.*
- Swept along by sweetest music
smitten were those who heard it.
As if squeezing out pure pleasure,
moving, it caused hearts to tremble;
enhancing romantic desires,
like being taught sexual longing.
The feeling was just like that
from the stillness of the *gēndhing*.
On and on the *gamēlan* played without
a pause.
11. *Mangkana ing wanci ngasar
Jayengraga ngandika ris
suwukēn gamēlanira
muni ladrangan nuli wis
singgahna kang meranti
ladrang pēlayon den gupuh
nulya buka ladrangan
pēlayon lima angrangin
dangu nēsēg ngandhēlong alon suwuknya.*
- When time for afternoon prayer
Jayengraga quietly spoke up:
Let's bring the playing to a close
sound a *ladrang* then quickly end,
put away the instruments.
Quickly now *Ladrang Pēlayon!*
Right away it opened
Ladrang Pēlayon Lima sounded.
At length the quick tempo slackened
slowed and ended.

12. *Wusnya kendel kang gamelan
Kulawirya ngandika ris
lah wis padha singgahèna
panganan brèkatèn mulih
para niyaga nuli
angusung gamèlanipun
mring dalèm pasimpènan
wus tēlas samya neng ngarsi
ngandika rum wis padha muliha dandan.*
- After the *gamelan* had stopped
Kulawirya quietly spoke up:
So, that's it, let's put it away,
with your ritual meals go home.
Forthwith the musicians
transported all the instruments
to where they were being stored.
Finished, they waited before him.
Quietly Jengraga ordered: Go home now
and change.
13. *Kang liningan tur sandika
nēmbah mundur samya mulih
Jengraga malih ngandika
kabeh sanak-sanakmami
padha dandana mulih
nganggoa kang sarwa luhung
saduwek-duwekira
kurmat panganten kang prapti

kang liningan matur sandika sadaya*
- Those addressed agreed with respect
paid homage, withdrew, all went home.
Jengraga once more gave commands:
All of you my relations and friends
All go home and change your clothes,
put on your very finest dress
whatever you may possess,
honour bride and groom when they
come.
Those addressed all murmured their
respectful assent.
14. *Mangkana bubar sadaya
sudagar myang magèrsari
mitwah santri ingundhangan
badhe sēlawatan dhikir
Kulawirya wus mulih
Jayēngraga maring tajug
asalat waktu ngasar
lan para santri kang bumi
wusnya bakda kundur malēbeng ing wisma.*
- And so it was that all dispersed,
all the merchants and their tenants,
as well as *santri* invited
to sing holy songs and prayers.
Kulawirya had gone home,
Jengraga to the house of prayer
to worship during Ngasar
with the *santri* who were local.
He finished praying, went home and
entered his house.

COMMENTARY

In the 196 stanzas of *Pucung* (12u, 6a, 8i, 8a) in canto 363, a four-line form that lends itself to rapid shifts of descriptive focus and light-hearted narrative (Arps 1992: 423), Jayengraga's leadership style has been on full display as he directs his household to prepare a feast in honour of the newlyweds. The first 14 stanzas of canto 364 in *Sinom*, a nine-line metre well suited for introductory, friendly, and "instructional" passages (Arps 1992: 422), serve as a transitional passage that connects the lively descriptions of everyday life as the village of Wanamarta celebrates the marriage of Tambangraras and Amongraga in *Pucung* to the main subject of the *Sinom* canto, beginning in stanza 16: long, richly detailed and instructive descriptions of the beautiful ceremonial attire donned by Jayengraga and other members of his household before they process to Jayengwesthi's house to fetch Amongraga and bring him back to Jayengraga's place, accompanied by a group of singing, praying *santri*. Jayengraga's sense of authority (if not of entitlement due to a spoiled youngest son) has been illustrated best in

Pucung when he takes it upon himself to play on the sacred *gamēlan Alun Jaladri* without asking the permission of either his father or the bridegroom, his brother-in-law Amongraga. The opening stanzas of our excerpt sketch Jayengraga's character – his authority, his musicality, his attractiveness as a man and skill as a leader, his zest for life, but also his modest, everyday religiosity.⁷ All of this and more (including his insatiable sex drive!) has already been amply described in many preceding cantos, but the succinct depiction of him here focuses and adds further depth to the reader's sense of this character as a real person. Jayengraga and Kulawirya are two of the most important "minor characters" in the *Sērat Cēnthini*, appearing often as musicians, dancers, discussants, and sexual adventurers as they wander through later episodes of the poem looking for Amongraga after he disappears from the village, since married or not, Amongraga must continue his own quest in search of deeper knowledge and his lost siblings.

The two minor characters Widiguna and Crēmasana also appear in *Pucung* during the long musical performance that takes up 125 out of 196 stanzas in that canto. These men have names that allude to their profession as *dhalang topeng* (mask dance performers and narrators) and they display their multiple skills in several scenes both before and after their appearance here.⁸ "Crēma Widi kalok pasisir, niyaga Wanamarta, kang komuk mumuruk" (Crēma Widi, famous on the coast, Wanamarta musicians, renowned for their teaching) is how they are described in a *Dhandhanggula* stanza in canto 356 as they play the *gēndhing Pētungwulung* during celebrations following Amongraga's betrothal to Tambangraras (Kamajaya 1988a: 218, v. 291). In the *Pucung* canto 363, Crēmasana, as in our excerpt, plays the *rēbab*, and three stanzas are devoted to the skill and beauty with which he plays that instrument (stanzas 76-78). The brief exchange between the two musicians here on the subject of

⁷ Jayengraga's name, *jaya* (victory) -*ing* (of) - *raga* (the body), alludes to his orientation toward and prowess in the physical and material realm rather than in the spiritual aspects of life. In verse 138 of stanza 350 (*Sinom*), his straight-laced older brother sums up what makes him exceptional in the *santri* world of Wanamarta: "Kang raka aris ngandika, mring kang rayi Jayengragi, para iki nora jamak, akeh kang sira-dhēmēni, tan mambu trah ngulama, lir wong nagara angkuhmu, sabarang rinēmēnan, gēgaman gamēlan muni, iku rada sathithik cēgahing sarak" [The older sweetly instructed, his little brother Jengraga, it's out of the ordinary, everything you take pleasure in, not proper for a *santri*, you're arrogant like a courtier, everything you hold dear, weapons, the sound of *gamēlan*, are rather forbidden by religious law.] (Kamajaya 1988a: 109).

⁸ Nancy Florida pointed out to me the obvious giveaway in Crēmasana's name: *cērma* means 'leather'. Widiguna's name has an ancient pedigree linking it to *topeng*. According to the *Kawruh Topeng*, a Javanese text about *topeng* history, masks, and plays based on Panji stories written in 1882 to accompany a collection of masks that was sent by the Patih of Surakarta, R.Ad. Sasranegara, to the Colonial Exposition of Amsterdam of 1883, Widiguna was the name of one of the two *dhalang* who came from Sela and lived in Palar, and who were instructed by Sunan Kalijaga how to perform *topeng* stories about the adventures of Panji and introduce *topeng* dance to Java (Pigeaud 1938: 39-42; Brakel-Papenhuyzen 2020: 6). Jayengraga recites briefly from a Panji poem in the *Pucung* canto preceding our excerpt (Kamajaya 1988b: 134-135, v.125-127) and performs *topeng* in various scenes in the *Cēnthini*, most notably in the passage discussed in Brakel-Papenhuyzen (2020: 5-6). Three times in the *Cēnthini* Jayengraga is said to be as handsome as Wirun (see Illustrations 1 and 2), a character belonging to Panji's entourage and associated with strong drink and womanizing (Pigeaud 1938: 378).

mosque attendance echoes and briefly recapitulates their much longer light-hearted banter on the same subject in *Pucung*. Widiguna and Crėmasana are mentioned again in the poem two cantos later, where they make a spectacular appearance during festivities in Jayengraga's house as identically costumed, unmasked dancers performing the *Klana Kasmaran* (Klana in love) dance,⁹ which is magically and terrifyingly choreographed by Jamil and Jamal, Amongraga's two servants from Karang in West Java, where they have acquired astounding magical skills known as *ilmu ripangi* (Pigeaud 1938: 234, 260, 264).¹⁰ What is the role of Widiguna and Crėmasana exactly in the poem? They are both good examples of the kind of colourful minor character that was introduced into the early nineteenth-century versions of the *Sėrat Jatiswara* and *Sėrat Cėnthini* by authors working in the *Kadipaten* Surakarta. The little vignettes in which their personalities, conversations, and performances are described add vividly to the everyday feel of the poem as well as provide the authors of the *Cėnthini* with opportunities for displaying their knowledge about musicians, music, and performance.



Afb. 19 Wiroen



Illustration 1. *Topeng* mask of Wirun. (Pigeaud 1938: Plate V, illustration 19.)

Illustration 2. *Wayang Gėdhog* puppet of Wirun. (Pigeaud 1938: Plate XLVIII, illustration 115.)

⁹ Klana is Panji's demonic adversary.

¹⁰ Pigeaud (1938: 234) says that the origin of these magical practices was the teaching of Seh Rifa'i (Ahmed ar-Rifa'i, 1106-1182), a contemporary of Seh Jilani (Abd al-Qadir Jilani, 1077-1166), the founder of the Qadiriyya religious order (*tarekat*). Jamil and Jamal are members of Seh Rifa'i's mystical brotherhood, the Rifa'iyyah; the name of their magic, *ilmu ripangi*, derives from its founder's name. See Trimmingham (1998) for general background on the Rifa'iyyah and other Sufi brotherhoods and Drewes and Poerbatjaraka (1938) for a discussion and extensive paraphrase of an early seventeenth-century West Javanese *macapat* poem about the life and miraculous deeds of Seh Jilani.

Apart from the representation of character and everyday life, interest in this opening section of *Sinom* centres on the playing of the *pelog gamēlan* ensemble *Alun Jaladri*. Just as there are short reprises about the characters Jayengraga, Kulawirya, Widiguna, and Crēmasana, so *Alun Jaladri* and its powerful, magical effect on those who hear it are briefly invoked before the instruments are put away and removed from the world of the poem. In *Pucung* the history of *Alun Jaladri* is told (it was a gift from the Adipati of Wirasaba, a fascinating minor character who has a steamy sexual encounter with Mas Cabolang, an important wanderer in the early part of the *Cēnthini* and the chief protagonist of that section of the poem).¹¹ Its special magical power on the listener is described as villagers, inspired by the sound of *Alun Jaladri*, put on their finery and troop to Jayengraga's house with small cash donations to the wedding preparations. Here their enrapturement, illustrated at length in *Pucung*, is succinctly recalled in two stanzas of poetry that also evoke the aesthetics of playing and listening to *gamēlan*.

The reader will notice how the prayer times of Luhur and Ngasar give chronological structure to the verses and organize the social world they describe. Every day in the *Sērat Cēnthini* is punctuated by the times of prayer, which are also occasions for quoting from religious texts and describing ritual practices, which either precede or follow other kinds of noteworthy activity, that is, discussions about the many secular areas of "encyclopaedic" interest in the poem as well as vigorous scenes of sex, musical performance, and dance. Even the naughty, worldly Jayengraga regularly attends prayers at the mosque where his beautifully sung prayers instil piety (and perhaps other sentiments) in the ears of his fellow worshipers. Islam, in all of its various early nineteenth-century modalities, pervades and structures the social world of the poem, notwithstanding the many secular topics that are also examined. Even the banter between Widiguna and Crēmasana in both the *Pucung* and *Sinom* cantos draws attention to religious practice and devotion, as does the playing of *gamēlan*, the sound of which in this excerpt is compared to a kind of religious instruction (*lir winulang ing wulangun*).¹²

¹¹ The famous Surakarta musician and *gamēlan* historian R.T. Warsadiningrat noted in 1929 in his "Rēringkēsān sējarah gamēlan," which forms part of the Koleksi Warsadiningrat held by the Yayasan Sastra Lestari and available online, that this *pelog gamēlan* set dates from the late fifteenth century: "In 1489, Sinuhun Ratu Tunggul of Giri, acting on behalf of the *karaton* of Dēmak, commissioned the making of a large *pelog gamēlan* set, one that was tuned to the pitch of a *Sēkaten gamēlan* [that is, the special set that is played during the Garēbēg Mulud in the courts of Surakarta, Yogyakarta, and Cirebon]. This is *Gong Kiyai Alun Jēladri*" (Koleksi Warsadiningrat 1929: 15, my translation). Whatever the historical accuracy of this dating may be, the fact that *Kyai Alun Jaladri* was traditionally thought to come from Giri connects it thematically to the historical/fictional world of the poem. Warsadiningrat provides more details about *Kyai Alun Jaladri*, without naming the *gamēlan* set, in Warsadiningrat (1987: 59-60), as well as a fascinating account of the roles of Sunan Giri and Sunan Kalijaga in the "Islamization" of *gamēlan* after the fall of Majapahit (Warsadiningrat 1987: 54-62). See also Sumarsam (2014). Sumarsam summarizes the verses in *Pucung* from canto 363 on *Alun Jaladri* and remarks: "Here, the supremacy of East Javanese art is revealed" (2014: 338).

¹² I say "kind of religious instruction" because throughout the *Cēnthini* there are descriptions of ecstatic religious experiences that involve sexual as well as spiritual arousal. The line in v.10

In the preceding *Pucung* canto, however, the significance of *Alun Jaladri*'s melodiousness is portrayed as magical in an older, pre-Islamic way: hearing the sounds of *Alun Jaladri*, an "heirloom from pagan times" (*bintuwah*¹³ *Buda*), is said to restore a "pagan energy" to the actions of the listeners (*angrungu gamēlan muni, sasolahe mulih tēnaganing Buda*).¹⁴ Clearly the Muslims in the world of the *Sērat Cēnthini* are as culturally Javanese in a deep historical sense as they are religiously Islamic in a way that is still recognizable in Java today.

Gamēlan is one of the several musical ensembles described in the *Sērat Cēnthini*, along with different kinds of dance performance.¹⁵ Why is musical playing mentioned at all in the poem, let alone receive the kind of attentive, poetic treatment it does in *Pucung* and in our excerpt in *Sinom*? The first reason, as I have suggested, is the connection that the poem makes between listening to music and both sexual and spiritual ecstasy. In verse 114 of canto 363 in *Pucung* the musicians themselves become *birai*, sexually and spiritually aroused, from the experience of playing music together.¹⁶

A second reason is that music making is an everyday practice in early nineteenth-century Java, especially in the context of the kind of well-funded wedding celebrations being held for Amongraga and Tambangraras. The kind of relaxed *klēnengan* (jamming) by Jayengraga, Kulawirya, and their musician friends that is described in *Pucung* and *Sinom* also provides an opportunity for character development and the introduction of minor characters that add to the everyday realism that can be found in many other passages in the *Cēnthini*. As John Pemberton observes in his witty and insightful essay on "how not to listen to Javanese gamelan", playing and listening to *gamēlan* at ceremonial events like weddings used to be similar to the experiences described in the *Pucung* and *Sinom* cantos of the *Cēnthini* that I am discussing: relaxed, sprawling, enjoyable social occasions rather than the highly formal, scripted events that

alludes to this kind of sexual-spiritual ecstasy, brought about by listening to *gamēlan* music.

¹³ This word is spelled *bituwah* in all the dictionaries I have consulted.

¹⁴ Kamajaya (1988b: 140, v. 189-190). Just a few stanzas earlier (89-103), while he is sitting playing the *rēbab*, Jayengraga asks Crēmasana to fetch his *Sērat Bratayuda Kawi*, the late eighteenth-century copy of the epic poem in Old Javanese about the final battle between the Pandawas and the Korawas, originally written in East Java in 1157 (Supomo 1993: 8). Jayengraga puts down his instrument and recites a stanza from his *Sērat Bratayuda* in the "Sardula Wikidhriya" (*Sārdulawikriditha*) metre. The corrupt version of the Old Javanese in Jayengraga's manuscript is incomprehensible, but the verse he recites is still traceable to the first stanza of canto 11 of the Old Javanese *kakawin* (Supomo 1993: 74). Widiguna comments that the *Bratayuda* is the *dalil* (Quran) of Javanese puppeteers (Kamajaya 1988b: 132, v.94)!

¹⁵ For discussions and translations of the passages in which *gamēlan* playing is described in the *Sērat Cēnthini*, see Kunst (1973: 177-277) and Sumarsam (2013). The most extended examination of the playing of different *gamēlan* instruments in the poem occurs in the *Pucung* passage I have mentioned above.

¹⁶ Kamajaya (1988b: 133, v.114): "*Tan adangu saya gulēt wilētipun, rēbut ngēs kēsaman, nabuhe samya birai, rahab berag rasa-rasa yen uwisa*" (Soon the interweaving sounds brought greater pleasure: They seized satisfaction! The players were aroused, eager and randy, feeling as if they would burst!).

some readers of this commentary may have endured, involving interminable solemnity and uncomfortable straight-back chairs!¹⁷

A third reason for passages about *gamĕlan* playing in the poem, including information about the history of a specific *gamĕlan* ensemble, *Alun Jaladri*, a famous *pelog* ensemble known to the authors of the poem, has to do with the “encyclopaedic” interest in all matters relating to Javanese culture for which the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* is famous and which has made it of great value to scholars of Javanese religion, music, theatre, and so forth. The kind of sexual-spiritual ecstasy brought about by both playing and listening to *gamĕlan* music in *Pucung* and *Sinom* adds another variant of kinds of religious knowledge and practice stored for posterity within the poem. In the *Pucung* canto, the musical accomplishments of the various musicians are also put on display, adding emphasis placed throughout the poem on the exemplary nature, to use Benedict Anderson’s word, of “professional” know-how, be it of musicians, dancers, thieves, or lovers.¹⁸ Our passage in *Sinom* contains another example of this encyclopaedism in the form of the list of five *gĕndhing* in the *pelog lima* scale.

There may be several reasons why these five pieces have been chosen for playing on *Alun Jaladri* at precisely this point in the story. According to Nancy Florida, the famous Yogyakarta musician and teacher K.R.T. Wasitodiningrat, known affectionately as Pak Cokro, often spoke to her of the spiritual power of *gĕndhing* in *pelog lima*; pieces in this *pathĕt* are also appropriate for the time of day in which they are played in the poem. The five *gĕndhing* listed in the poem have the same names as pieces that are still known and, in the case of *Kombang Mara*, *Kĕmbang Mara*, and *Daradasih*, frequently played in *klĕnengan* in Java today.¹⁹ All five clearly were (and are) well-known pieces in *pelog lima* and as such deserve inclusion in the *Cĕnthini*’s vast collection of cultural lore.²⁰

One final interesting puzzle concerning the choice of music to be played in our excerpt is suggested by a conversation between two *pĕsindhen* (female singers) that can be overheard at the start of a performance of *Kĕmbang Mara* by the Surakarta ensemble Pujangga Laras on 5 May 2006.²¹ On the recording of the *klĕnengan*, one *pĕsindhen* asks the other (in Javanese):

¹⁷ Pemberton writes of an interview he had with an “elderly villager”: “JP: What were the rituals like in the old days? [...] After a rambling sentimental description of domestic rituals in the past – times when neighbors and kin relaxed on rattan mats gambling, gossiping, and story-telling the night away – the old man matter-of-factly decided in favor of chairs” (Pemberton 1987: 28).

¹⁸ See Anderson (1990: 271-298) for a lively discussion of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*’s “Enlightenment”-like critique of Java’s early nineteenth-century feudal values.

¹⁹ My thanks to Sarah Weiss for this information, which she gleaned from Barry Drummond’s “encyclopaedic” website of Central Javanese *gĕndhing* notation, information about Central Javanese *gĕndhing* recordings, and recorded performances.

²⁰ I have speculated that the impulse to gather cultural information and describe it in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* was at least partly inspired by the culture-gathering expeditions being carried out by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles and other British Orientalists during the British occupation of Java in 1811-1816. See Day (2002: 114-143).

²¹ My thanks again to Sarah Weiss for sharing a recording of this *klĕnengan* with me.

"*Kombang* or *Kěmbang Mara*"? "*Kěm*" comes the answer with a chuckle.²² In checking the Kamajaya version of our excerpt against the edition of the Romanized *Sěrat Cěnthini* published in Batavia in 1912, I discovered that the piece named in the first line of verse 9 in that text is *Kombang* not *Kěmbang Mara*: "*noelya moengel kombang mara*" (*Serat Tjenthini* 1912: 252). As it turns out, the manuscript of the section of the full *Cěnthini Kadipaten* that was copied in 1846 and sent to the Netherlands as a gift, Or. 1814 (now kept in the manuscript collection of the Leiden University Library), and which was used to make the transcription published in Batavia also has *Kombang* not *Kěmbang Mara* in this same line of verse 9 (see the beginning of the last stanza at the bottom of p. 913 of Or. 1814 in Illustration 3). Was it Kamajaya's copyist or the copyist of Or. 1814 who, possibly transported for a moment by a musical memory of his own, wrote a *pěpět* (ě) rather than a *taling tarung* (o), or vice versa? Without looking at the original manuscripts involved, I can't say at this point. But irrespective of what was written down, might the description of the audience reaction in verse 10 help us decide which of the two *gěndhing* is the one we are meant to hear in verses 9 and 10? According to the famous contemporary Surakarta musician and composer Supanggah, who discussed the Javanese aesthetic concept of *rasa* with Marc Benamou in 1992, *Kombang Mara* can be described as *wingit* ('eerie, supernatural, awe-inspiring') and *rěgu* ('stately, dignified, majestic; quiet, taciturn; serious, staid; calm'), qualities we can readily associate with the austere religious bridegroom Amongraga (Benamou 2010: 163, 198, 245). But does this characterization of *Kombang* rather than *Kěmbang Mara* help us understand the reaction of those who heard *Alun Jaladri* on that afternoon,

'Swept along by sweetest music
smitten were those who heard it.
As if squeezing out pure pleasure,
moving, it caused hearts to tremble;
enhancing romantic desires,
like being taught sexual longing?'

²² According to Kitsie Emerson, *gamělan* musician, translator, and researcher on Central Javanese wayang, this is a standard joke among *pěsindhen*. She informs me as well that in Java today, "*Kombang Mara* is played for a *midadareni*, the vigil for a bride the night before her wedding, at the reception hosted by the bride's family. The groom comes to the bride's family, hence *kombang* [bee, that is, the groom] *mara* [approaches]. *Kěmbang Mara* is played for a *midadareni* that is hosted by the groom, therefore *kěmbang* [the flower, that is, the bride] *mara* (personal communication, 28-5-2020). Here the music is being played at the house of Jayengraga, a member of the bride's family, so if something like the custom described by Emerson was already being observed in early nineteenth-century Java, *Kombang Mara* was an appropriate *gěndhing* to be played in anticipation of Amongraga's arrival for more feasting and celebration. This time, however, the wedding between Tambangraras and Amongraga has already taken place, in canto 357, and both are expected to *mara*, arrive, together, so perhaps it was fitting that both *gěndhing* were played that afternoon, along with three others in the same *pathět* (mode). Warsadiningrat (1987: 78) says that both *Kombang Mara* and *Kěmbang Mara* were composed during the reign of Pakubuwana IV (1788-1820). On the evidence of our excerpt, these *gěndhing* were being played in 1815.



Illustration 3. Or. 1814, pp. 913-914. (Courtesy of Leiden University Libraries).

The reader might want to click on the links that I’ve provided in the footnote 23 and listen to contemporary performances of both *gĕndhing* to form her own opinion on this question. Both of these recordings allow the listener to hear the beautiful interplay between the three layers of musical experience described in verse 9.²³ Speaking for myself, the insistent, repeated flirtation between high 6 and 7 in *Kĕmbang Mara* is what causes my own heart to tremble!

²³ *Kombang Mara* [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpcPQBUQ-hU>]; *Kĕmbang Mara* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZ_eV6GUFDo&t=0s&list=PLkl6GZGvK0p_eTcjVFilrM5xZFFvU16yZG&index=12&app=desktop]. The notation for the *balungan* played by the *saron* (‘The notes struck right together’) in each *gĕndhing* can be found in Illustrations 4 and 5.

Gendhing **Kembang Mara** bebuk 2 kecep mingah 4, laras pelog pathet lima

<p><i>Buka</i></p> <p>• 5̣ 3 • 2 1 6̣ 5̣ • 5̣ 3 • 2 1 6̣ 5̣ • 5̣ • 5̣ • 5̣ • 5̣ • 5̣ • 6̣ • 1 6̣ 5̣</p> <p><i>Mérag</i></p> <p>[• • • 5̣ 2 1 6̣ 5̣ 2 1 5̣ 6̣ 2 1 6̣ 5̣ 1 5̣ • 6̣ 1 • 2 1 3 2 1 2 • 1 6̣ 5̣ 1 5̣ • 6̣ 1 • 2 1 3 2 1 2 • 1 6̣ 5̣ • • 5̣ 6̣ 1 6̣ 5̣ 4 2 4 5̣ 6̣ 2 1 6̣ 5̣ • • • 5̣ 2 1 6̣ 5̣ 2 1 5̣ 6̣ 2 1 6̣ 5̣ 1 5̣ • 6̣ 1 • 2 1 3 2 1 2 • 1 6̣ 5̣ 1 5̣ • 6̣ 1 • 2 1 3 2 1 2 • 1 6̣ 5̣ 3 3 • • 3 3 5 3 6 5 3 2 3 1 2 3 • • • 3 3 5 6 7 6 5 3 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 5 • • • 5 6 5 4 • 5 2 1 • 5 6 1 • • • • 1 1 • • 1 1 5 6 1 1 • 2 3 2 1 6 5 6 1 2 3 2 1 • • • • 2 2 • 4 5 6 5 4 2 1 6 5 1 5 • 6 1 • 2 1 3 2 1 2 • 1 6 5 1 5 • 6 1 • 2 1 3 2 1 2 • 1 6 5 • • 5 6 1 6 5 4 2 4 5 6 2 1 6 5]</p>	<p><i>Umpak</i></p> <p># 6 6 • • 6 6 5 6 • 1 • 6 5 3 2 3 • • • 3 • 1 2 3 • 1 2 3 • 1 2 3 • 6 • 5 • 4 2 1 • • 1 2 4 5 6 5 6 5 4 2 1 2 4 5 6 5 4 2 1 6 5 4 • 4 4 • 4 4 5 6 1 6 5 4 2 1 2 1</p> <p><i>Ingguh</i></p> <p>[2 2 • • 2 2 1 6 • 6 5 6 5 3 2 3 • 3 3 3 6 5 3 2 6 6 5 6 5 3 2 3 • 3 3 3 6 5 3 2 6 6 5 6 5 4 2 4 • 4 4 • 4 4 5 6 1 6 5 4 2 1 2 1 6 6 • • 6 6 1 2 3 2 1 6 5 6 1 6 3 3 • • 6 5 3 2 3 2 1 6 5 6 1 6 3 3 • • 6 5 3 2 3 2 1 6 5 6 1 6 1 1 • • 1 1 • 2 3 3 2 3 2 1 2 1 • 3 1 2 3 5 • 4 2 • 3 2 1 6 5 6 3 3 • • 6 5 2 1 • • 1 2 4 5 6 5 • 5 4 2 1 2 4 5 6 5 4 2 1 6 5 4 • 4 4 • 4 4 5 6 1 6 5 4 2 1 2 1]</p>
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Illustration 4. *Balungan* notation for *gĕndhing Kembang Mara*, in: “Gendhing Jawa – Javanese gamelan notation”. [Retrieved from: <http://www.gamelanbvg.com/gendhing/gendhing.html>].

Gendhing **Kembang Mara** bebuk 2 kecep mingah 4, laras pelog pathet lima

<p><i>Buka</i></p> <p>5̣ 3 • 2 1 6̣ 5̣ • 5̣ 3 • 2 1 6̣ 5̣ • 3 • 3 • 3 2 1 • 1 • 5̣ 6 1 2 1</p> <p><i>Mérag</i></p> <p>[• • • 1 • 5̣ 6 1 • 5̣ 6 1 • 5̣ 6 1 • 3 • 2 • 1 6 5̣ 1 5̣ • 6 1 • 2 1 • • • 1 • 5̣ 6 1 • 5̣ 6 1 3 2 1 6 • • 6 1 • 2 1 6 • 1 • 2 • 3 2 1 • • • 1 • 5̣ 6 1 • 5̣ 6 1 • 5̣ 6 1 • 3 • 2 • 1 6 5̣ 1 5̣ • 6 1 • 2 1 • • • 1 • 5̣ 6 1 • 5̣ 6 1 3 2 1 6 • • • • 6 6 5 6 • 2 • 3 5 6 7 6 • • • • 6 6 5 6 • 2 • 3 5 6 7 6 • 7 6 5 3 3 • • 3 3 • 5 6 7 6 7 • 7 6 5 3 3 • • 3 5 3 2 3 1 2 3 • 5 3 • 5 3 5 6 7 6 5 3 2 1 2 3 [• • • 3 3 5 6 7 6 5 3 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 5 • • • 5 6 5 4 2 4 5 6 • 6 5 4 6 5 4 2 1 4 1 • • 6 6 5 6 • • • • 6 6 5 4 2 4 • 2 4 5 4 2 1 4 1 • 2 4 5 4 2 4 • 4 4 4 6 5 4 2 1 4 1 • • 6 6 5 6 • • 6 5 6 3 5 6 • 7 6 5 3 3 • • 3 5 3 2 3 1 2 3 • 5 3 • 5 3 5 6 7 6 5 3 2 1 2 3]</p>	<p><i>Umpak</i></p> <p># 7 6 5 4 2 1 6 5 5 • • 5 5 3 5 • • 5 6 7 6 5 4 2 1 6 • 5 6 1 6 • • 6 1 2 2 1 2 3 3 • 1 3 2 1 6 • • • 6 6 • 6 5 3 5 3 2 1 2 • 4 4 4 5 6 5 4 2 • 4 4 2 1 6 5 • 2 2 • 3 2 1 6 1 6 5 4 2 4 6 5</p> <p><i>Ingguh</i></p> <p>[1 1 • • 1 2 3 2 3 2 1 6 5 6 1 6 3 3 • • 3 3 5 6 5 3 2 1 3 2 1 6 3 3 • • 3 3 5 6 5 3 2 1 3 2 1 6 1 1 • • 5 6 1 2 3 2 1 6 5 6 1 6 • 7 6 • 6 7 6 • 6 5 3 5 3 2 1 2 6 7 6 • 6 7 6 • 6 5 3 5 3 2 1 2 • 4 4 4 5 6 5 4 2 • 4 4 2 1 6 5 • 2 2 • 3 2 1 6 1 6 5 4 2 4 6 5]</p>
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Illustration 5. *Balungan* notation for *gĕndhing Kembang Mara*, in: “Gendhing Jawa – Javanese gamelan notation”. [Retrieved from: <http://www.gamelanbvg.com/gendhing/gendhing.html>].

I want to end my commentary by making a few remarks about the poetry and how I have tried to render it into English. One of the most obvious differences between an encyclopaedic work like Raffles's *History of Java* (1817) and the *Kadipaten* version of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* (1815) is that the latter was written in verse and intended to be sung, an episode or two at a sitting, one imagines, never from start to finish in its entirety (a recitation that would require weeks!), whether in private to oneself or before an audience. Let's recall how the authors state their purpose at the beginning of the poem.²⁴

*Sri Narpatmaja sudigbya
talatahing nuswa Jawi
Surakarta Adiningrat
agnya ring kang wadu carik
Sutrasna kang kинanthi
mangun reh cariteng dangu
sanggyaning kawruh Jawa
ingimpun tinrap kakawin
mrih tan kĕmba karya dhangang kang
miyarsa*

Sri Narpatmaja, highly skilled
in the land of island Java
Surakarta, loveliest on earth,
ordered the royal servant, scribe
Sutrasna and companions
to fashion a work, old stories,
all of Javanese know-how,
gathered and rendered into song
striving not to bore but to please those
who hear it.

The opening stanza of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* is explicit, therefore, in emphasizing the fashioned, poetic nature of the work. It is poetic form that shapes both the "story" and the way in which "Javanese know-how" is presented to the reader/listener. This fact has implications for how we interpret the poem and how we attempt to translate it into another language.

From the very first stanza of the selection the reader/listener can enjoy the poetic effects that make the verse anything but boring. For example, the sounds of *mangkana ki* in the first line are echoed by *amangku kardi* in the second, binding the lines together, anticipating the "u" in *amangku* and other semantic resonances to come, which do indeed occur, once the words *bupati* (regent), *ingugung* (spoiled), and *kalangkung* (exceedingly) in later lines have been voiced and their resonances with Jayengraga's self-confidence and authority in the lap of his loving family become clear. The word *amangku*, 'to take on one's lap', is the dominant semantic element in the titles of Javanese kings, such as Mangkunagara ('He who holds the kingdom on his lap') and Hamĕngkubuwana ('He who holds the world on his lap'), conveying the total control of a benevolent paternalism. The same kind of knitting together of sound and sense occurs between lines 2 and 3: *dennira amangku kardi, katongton wibawanira*. This is not the only place in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* where alliteration and assonance suggest thematic connections and powerful cultural themes. Throughout the excerpt, the mainly eight-syllable lines, most of which are completed grammatical utterances, slot into one another to form a continuous and pleasing narrative line, the narrative varying between succinct assessments of the characters Jayengraga and Kulawirya, to a rapid overview of unfolding events, to colloquial banter, to a highly poetic evocation

²⁴ Kamajaya 1985: 1, v.1 (*Sinom*).

of the experience of listening to *gamelan* music, back to a plain, economical description of packing up and going home.

In crafting my translation, I have been guided by Nancy Florida's practice of making the English singable in *Sinom* metre by sticking to the syllable count, in English, for each line. This constraint, I found, helped me pay close attention to each word in Javanese and so encouraged me to look for what I hope are creative as well as accurate English translations. I have also avoided supplying subjects to verbs where these are omitted in Javanese unless absolutely necessary to make the meaning clear, in order to give the reader the experience of having to identify the agents of actions and of having to make narrative connections between the line-units herself, a kind of participatory-performative sense-making and world-imagining that makes the experience of reading/listening to the best *macapat* poetry an energizing rather than a soporific intellectual experience. One way in which I have intervened, as translator, and introduced an element not found in the original, however, is in supplying punctuation marks. I have done so in order to clarify, as best as I can, the sense units that extend across line endings and occasionally across stanzas, so that the reader may appreciate the coherence of the narrative and the artistry with which it has been fashioned.

The most difficult stanza to translate is the most beautiful: the one describing the aesthetics of playing/hearing the *gëndhing Kēm-* (or *Kom-*)*bang Mara* played on *Alun Jaladri*. The focus of the first four lines in the stanza is the village listeners. The last five lines of the stanza shift the focus back to the musicians and attempt, in the succinct manner of the whole excerpt, to capture the musical interplay between different instruments of the *gamelan* ensemble. In trying to understand these last five lines I have sought guidance from Sumarsam and John Pemberton. "The point about gamelan's musical processes," writes Sumarsam, "is not so much that one part dictates another, but rather that one part interacts with and affects the other" (Sumarsam 2013: 132). "There are, for example," explains Pemberton,

points in certain gamelan compositions where everyday melodic patterns are replaced by an idiosyncratic melody or a direct musical quotation; this gives the composition its character. Then again, there are melodic impasses, blind spots built into the very structure of gamelan music: points which require the sudden transformation of a two and one-half octave melody into one and one-half octaves; sudden modal shifts within a single composition; broad melodic leaps which, for the detailed workings of the gamelan's elaborating instruments, can create the sense that there is no way to get "there" from "here." [...] It is the solving, or better yet, the playing out of these musical riddles that forms a musician's esoteric know-how: the crystallization from gamelan experience of all that does *not* fit the rules (Pemberton 1987: 26-27).

Pemberton comments in his own footnote to this passage that "The notion 'know-how' refers, in part, to the old sense of *kawruh*: acquired knowledge; lore; the specifics of a trade (before *kawruh* developed a rationalized feel in

Western scientific texts which appeared in Javanese at the beginning of this [20th] century)". *Kawruh* is the word the authors of the *Cĕnthini* use for the "know-how" they are seeking and collecting in the opening stanza to the poem and to which the descriptions of musical performance in *Pucung* and *Sinom*, as well as the list of *gĕndhing* in *pelog lima*, attest.

Returning to the last five lines of our verse about music, the first two lines of the section describe the moments when notes being played on the metallic instruments that sound the basic melody perfectly and beautifully coincide. In contrast, in the next two lines, the haunting elaborating variations of the three non-metallic instruments, the stringed *rĕbab*, the wooden *gambang*, and the wooden flute or *suling*, that can always be heard rising above, and wandering away from, "simultaneously in-synchrony while out-of-phase"²⁵ with, the unified metallophones, are mentioned, described as "abandoned, orphaned" (*anglola*), a beautiful metaphor that resonates with the theme of parents and children, brothers and sisters, mankind and God, separated, searching for one another, and then reunited, that runs through the whole *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*. And finally, in the final, twelve-syllable line of the stanza, the sounds of the entire ensemble are imaged, in a way that is mystically in keeping with the frequent speculations in the poem about the indwelling of God, who Himself encompasses all of creation, in man, as being concentrated within and then sounded by a single, bowed string of the *rĕbab*, the instrument that is thought of as the "soul" of the *gamĕlan*.²⁶

²⁵ The phrase is Stephen Feld's. For a discussion of Feld's concept and the nature and role of "coincidence" in *gamĕlan* performance, see Sumarsam (2013: 133-138).

²⁶ See Sumarsam's discussion of the *rĕbab* in Sumarsam (2013: 129-130). I was dubious about my understanding of the image of the sound of the entire ensemble being contained within a single *rĕbab* string until I read Sumarsam's translation, from a description of music-making from a later section of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, of an almost identical formulation. Sumarsam's rendition of the first six lines of a stanza in *Dhandhanggula* reads: "Intensely clear as the flute fills with essence; Intertwining is the ornament in accompanying the *rĕbab*; Hence significantly appealing as all meticulous embellishing [their playing]. As sliced rattan in a half, the sounds are encompassed in the string [*swara mot jroning kawat*]" (Sumarsam 2013: 130). Sarah Weiss, who is a *gamĕlan* musician, explained to me that the two strings of the *rĕbab* consist of the two halves of a single wire attached to the bottom of the instrument and then strung as two strands up along the body of the *rĕbab* and attached to pegs on either side at the top of the neck. The two halves of wire are then tuned to two different pitches. The comparison of the string(s) of the *rĕbab* to a piece of rattan sliced in two (later to be woven together as part of a mat) and the image of a single string "containing" and emitting different pitches at the same time thus make perfect sense! For the full context of this second *rĕbab* performance, see Kamajaya (1989: 237-238). Kulawirya is playing *rĕbab* on this occasion.

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