

**The Roles and Significance of *Wong Pinter*,
the Javanese Shaman**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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April 2014, the University of Leeds, Agustinus Sutiono

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Abstract

Exploring the phenomenon of the socio-religio-magico reality in Java called *wong pinter* which has not been academically examined before, this thesis argues that this social type is a definitely Javanese shaman whose existence has become a cultural system, thus demonstrating that their multidimensional roles reveal a web of significance. Throughout the course of investigation involving anthropological and ethnographical approaches, every discussion on the fundamental aspects of *wong pinter* is scrutinised within the context of existing study on shamanism. The outcome shows that there is connectivity between Javanese shamanism and Asian or Southeast Asian shamanism. Thus, shamanism is a valid instrument for a study on *wong pinters* and *wong pinters* are a valid object for scientific approach. This thesis therefore contributes to the richness of the study on shamanism, the anthropology of shamanism and religious studies since this topic is of interest for these disciplines. Simultaneously it lays claims to be a pioneering academic work on *wong pinter*, the Javanese shaman, based on first hand study. The roles and significance of *wong pinters* are a never-was reality for Javanese society because their relevance has embodied with people's everyday preoccupation with maintaining and enhancing their lives to its maximum possibility. Despite the fact that they have to deal with various challenges, such relatedness to the needs of their community has been expanded to more established institutions and involvements with larger concerns. This has resulted in them engaging more in relationism than in individualism. The application of their knowledge and skill both to their local communities and spheres beyond responds to the spiritual call to partake in the kingly ideology to enhance the beauty of the world. This social type proves itself resilient yet it has to deal with suppression both from the current religious establishment and political authorities.

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Abbreviations

Acts.:	Acts of the Apostles
ASC:	Altered state of consciousness
BTJ:	Babad Tanah Jawi
CJv.:	Central Java
CSIS:	The Centre for Strategic and International Studies
EJv.:	East Java
Ex.:	Exodus
Feb.:	February
FKPPAI:	Forum Komunikasi Paranormal dan Penyembuh Alternatif Indonesia
HS:	Horisontal shaman
Is.:	Isaiah
IQ:	Intelligence Quetient
Jan.:	January
Jer.:	Jeremia
Jh.:	John
Jv.:	Java
Lk.:	Luke
Lt.:	Latin
Mat.:	Matthew
MSC:	Metaphysics Study Club
Neh.:	Nehemia
NKRI:	Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia
NU:	Nadhatul Ulama
Oct.:	October
OED:	Oxford English Dictionary
Sep.:	September
SOED:	Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
STT:	Shamans throughout Time
UU 45	: Undang-Undang Dasar 1945
VS:	Vertical shaman
WJv.:	West Java

WHO: World Health Organisation

2 Ptr.: 2 Peter

1 Sam.: 1 Samuel

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A map of Indonesia



PROVINCES of INDONESIA

01. Aceh	07. Bengkulu	13. West Java	19. East Nusa Tenggara	25. Gorontalo	31. Maluku
02. North Sumatra	08. South Sumatra	14. Central Java	20. West Kalimantan	26. West Sulawesi	32. West Irian Jaya
03. Riau	09. Bangka-Belitung	15. Yogyakarta	21. Central Kalimantan	27. Central Sulawesi	33. Papua
04. Riau Island	10. Lampung	16. East Java	22. East Kalimantan	28. South Sulawesi	
05. West Sumatra	11. Banten	17. Bali	23. South Kalimantan	29. South East Sulawesi	
06. Jambi	12. Jakarta	18. West Nusa Tenggara	24. North Sulawesi	30. North Maluku	

Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis explores a particular social type of magico-religious specialists found in Java called *wong pinter*, the Javanese shaman. It argues that in Javanese society there are practitioners of shamanism who display unique characteristics and multi-dimensional roles which show a web of significance. The practice of wongpintership or shamanism practiced in Java has become part of the Javanese culture and shaped society's identity from generations to generations. However, such significance and roles are under a shadow of uncertainty because these spirit experts have been challenged by mainstream religious establishment and political authorities although the current television broadcastings expose convincing evidences that many prominent figures in the operating governmental body and religious teachers have benefited from these Javanese shamans. On the one hand they are disregarded in the formal level. On the other hand in the informal level they are needed either secretly or openly. This introductory chapter will delineate the background of the thesis, its key research questions, aims, methodology and how this thesis will be organized chapter by chapter.

1.1 Background

This research project is a result of an ongoing interest in the phenomenon of wongpintership because of some direct encounters with several practitioners at the very early stage of the research and also because of 2009's public enthusiasm to revisit the 1999 Banyuwangi tragedy in which more than 150 people suspected as *wong pinters* were killed. Like many other mass murder tragedies in Indonesia, no one has come forward to be held responsible, yet there are some hints as to who might have organized the massacre and what the reasons behind it were. Why and how did I get interested in this issue? While the debate itself tries to put this issue into legal regulation and categorise that practice as anti social behaviour, contrary to the spirit of modernity and viewing practitioners as enemies of some mainstream religions, many people swarmed around Ponari, a young practitioner from Megaluh, a village in Jombang-East Java, who suddenly acquired healing powers after possessing a mystical stone. These practitioners are despised by some mainstream religions but are needed by many people who do not

have adequate access to public health service. Nevertheless, mass media, TV programmes, and newspapers continue to cover such issues and show that they are used by politicians, lecturers, traders, students, celebrities, soldiers, police officers, fortune and love seekers and other elements of society. This is an interesting phenomenon which can be classified as a Turnerian key symbol because it consists of both elements of acceptance and contradiction and widespread familiarity among the society (Ortner 1973, 1339). However, it has not been an object of academic scrutiny yet and, therefore, no academic approach has been used to understand this phenomenon. As a result, there is no academic publication that specifically discusses this theme.

There is a need to have both a balanced understanding of Javanese shamanism and to identify practitioners' distinct place in the wider constellation of society since most of these practitioners are related to the Javanese nobility and the nationalist movement. Besides that, in a matter of religious orientation they tend to be theosophical, syncretic and are intimately associated with Javanese mysticism and Islamic Sufism. Moreover, the theme concerning their unique social standing comes up again in the discussion about the concept of big men (*wong gedhe*) or the concept of nobility in modern Javanese society. There I find that this particular social class pays a high degree of respect to the role of *wong pinters*, known to them as spirit masters, wise men, spiritual advisors, protectors, local prophets, healers and other roles. So there is a question as to why Java has not become a domain of academic interest to explore further the local phenomenon of shaman and shamanism. For this reason, my intention is to fill this gap and to provide a balanced view about this social type. I consider that shamanism offers the possibility to become an apt instrument for these tasks.

Having met with Hmong, Paraguayan, Ecuadorian, and Zimbabwean shamans during an international conference of shamanism in September 2010, I am convinced that any conversation about Javanese shaman and shamanism must be a discussion on *wong pinter* and wongpintership. That conference and workshop suggested that there are similarities between both social types in terms of their historical experience, varieties, and engagement with social, political, religious and cultural spheres. They have a great significance in those spheres which touch on people's preoccupation with maintaining and expanding their psychological well-being, economic prosperity and health to their maximum possibility. Sharing in the basic concept of their nature, which is a matter of vocation and way of life, they experience similar benefits. They have an

intimate relation with religions either negatively or positively, and have survived persecutions, demonization, being sacrificed for political gain and used as political alibi. Both shamans and *wong pinters* are associated with mysticism and messianic movements. The difference is that the study on shamanism and shaman is comparatively advanced whereas that of wongpintership and *wong pinter* is not. By connecting them to the study of shamanism, I intend to argue and demonstrate to the people of Java and their culture that *wong pinter* and the practice of *wongpintership* are rooted in a wider tradition, the world of shamanism. It is not just a product of local tradition.

Placed within the historical context of Indonesian society, this research is relevant to current religious movements which pay more attention to mysticism and the world of TV entertainment. Many television stations employ practitioners of wongpintership to boost their rating through some live shows such as dare tests, uncovering local myths and mediumship to know the history of sacred sites. Some *wong pinters* have started to reorganize their fellow practitioners and create networks such as The Communication Forum of the Indonesian Paranormal and Alternative Healers (FKPPAI), Metaphysic Study Club (MSC), and other mysticism groups both inside and outside of formal religions. The emergence of these groups answers people's longing for an alternative way of living out their sense of spiritual experience or *rasa ketuhanan*. Religion is not the only giver of essential answers to humanity's fundamental questions and these practitioners still find that the local tradition offers a deep understanding of the surrounding world.

The last two decades of Java has been recognized as a 'renaissance' of Java, meaning more a cultural gesture to revive the Javanese tradition of mysticism and mystical teachings.¹ For some of the wongpintership practitioners, current New Age and theosophical movements match perfectly with their religious orientation. The practice of wongpintership reacts to the superficiality of formal religions and their failures to touch their basic religious soul rooted in local tradition. This research will therefore contribute

¹ Koentjaraningrat writes: "The Bureau for the Supervision of Religious Movements (PAKEM) of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, registered 360 movements in 1964. However, after the 30 September 1965 affair, many movements which sympathised with the Indonesian Communist Party disappeared, so that another PAKEM list in 1971 only included 217 movements, 177 of which were located in Central Java. Of these 177 movements, 13 were located in the city of Surakarta" (1985, 399). Rahmat Subagya makes a similar list (1976, 129-138). The most recent list is published in an encyclopaedia of the traditional religious movement in Indonesia (*Ensiklopedi Kepercayaan Terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*) by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia in which just over 219 organisations and groups are included (2006, iv-ix).

to religious studies, the promotion of religious harmony in the context of contemporary Indonesia. Most practitioners are aware of the fact that religions have divided people into social clusters and ideologies and put them into social conflicts. To comment about who these practitioners are, most of them are nationalistic by political inclination, syncretic in a matter of religious orientation, oriented to the Javanese court tradition and values regarding their vocational ideology and aristocratic in terms of their social ideals. Currently, they relate themselves to shamanic communities both in America and Europe as some of them have attended conferences of shamanism in San Francisco and Germany. Seen from this new development, this research adds more evidence that shamanism in Java is more connected to the practice of shamanism both in Asia and Southeast Asia than to European and American shamanism.

Besides its ancient elements of religious practice, multidimensional significance, unique orientation, popularity and academic neglect, this topic attracts my concern more because of its controvercies –which have always been with it- rather than because of its antiquity. *Wong pinters'* position in their own society and their practice of wongpintership have been regarded as controversial in many ways. On the one hand the Javanese know that their existence is a social fact. However, this may not be the case for the other parts of the world. Mircea Eliade reminded us that “shamanic complex in one region or another does not necessarily mean that the magico-religious life of the corresponding people is crystalised around shamanism” (1964, 5). On the other hand, most practitioners choose not to be recognized or to reveal their wongpintership-based ministry to the public because it is against the Islamic teachings. According to them, it is a shameful and *musrik* act to get in touch with these practitioners or master of spirits because their practices will turn believers away from worshipping Allah. Currently, it is a public regulation that to offer mystical objects or activities, such as giving magical charms or amulets, is forbidden and can be prosecuted under criminal law. Another reason of why they choose not to be recognized publicly is found in their custom that to demonstrate their shamanic ability is against their ethic code.

1.2 Hypothesis and research questions

Considering the background outlined above, I see that this research topic is as a challenging one. The fact that there is a lack of academic sources done on this topic makes this research pioneering and original. It has pushed me to find an appropriate

analytical instrument and to reveal the reasons why it has not been explored. If the phenomenon of *wong pinter* shows connectivity to the practice of shamanism and if shamanship is equal to wongpintership and shaman to *wong pinter*, the study of *wong pinter* and the practice of wongpintership could benefit from the existing study of shamanism as undertaken by different disciplines. This thesis will turn first to the study of shamanism in order to identify aspects of shamanism applicable to understanding the phenomenon of *wong pinter* and the practice of wongpintership. The suggestion is that *wong pinter* and wongpintership is compatible with shaman and shamanism. Consequently, the finding here will confirm that there is a practice of shamanism in Java and it is not just in the forms of shamanic complex as concluded by Andrew Beatty (2004, 817). It exists in its own complete nature and partakes in the general practice of shamanism. The questions are what arguments will support that statement, why shamanism is the most fruitful instrument of analysis and how this can be theoretically explained. I set out the following research questions as fundamental for answering these questions and undertaking the task to reveal the roles and significance of *wong pinters*:

First, what basic elements of the study of shamanism can be drawn to explain the phenomenon of *wong pinter*? Based on the answers of this question, is there any practice of shamanism in Java? Is there connectivity between the shamanism practiced in Java and in the wider Southeast Asian region? What foundation is needed to validate the claim that wongpintership is a type of shamanism practised in Java and that it partakes in the wider practice of shamanism? This first set of questions is to examine the nature of shaman. It is proposed in order to find an operating definition of it and to outline basic aspects of shamanism as detailed in their academic research on the topic. This step will help in founding the claim that both shaman and *wong pinter* share the same operating definition of their nature. This set of questions is to confirm that both are consociates of each other. In turn it generates questions which lead this research to find the connectivity between the practice of shamanship and that of wongpintership and to explain why they are different in manifestation.

Second, by looking at the constitutive elements of what is meant by shamans' preoccupation of life within their community, can *wong pinters*' internal concerns of life be systematised? Why shall it be explored? What significance may come after it? Is it useful for explaining why *wong pinters* are respected and at the same time despised and why they always have to redefine their social standing? How do they, in their

community, struggle to sustain their existence? This second set of questions is to explore the reality of *wong pinter* in their community with a certain purpose to see whether such experience of rejection or being welcome also happens in the world of *wong pinter*, to answer why they have to redefine themselves and how they sustain their existence through their day to day activities for themselves and their society.

Third, do they make a contribution to the more established spheres? Do they deal with greater concerns such as political, social, religious, cultural and environmental issues? Are there any hints from the world of shamanism about shamans' involvement in the more established spheres? Why and how are they involved in these areas? Is there any ideological motif which obliges them to engage with larger concerns and more formal institutions? This third set of questions aims at exposing *wong pinters'* various activities which encompass their domestic concerns.

Fourth, will *wong pinters* and the practice of wongpintership persist in contemporary Javanese society just as the experience of shamanism in the wider world which has proved resilient after facing many challenges? The fourth set of questions are to reflect on the future of *wong pinters* and the practice of wongpintership in the Javanese society and thus to gauge whether they will continue to exist or find an end.

There are some barriers and limitations to be addressed from the beginning as they might affect the course of the research. These include public fears about the general image of this social type especially the danger they may pose to religious faith. These fears are reflected in some basic questions such as whether this research will gain approval from religious establishments and will not affect people's faith; whether I would be aware of the possibility of bewitchment or able to find enough participants and to explain their works under the principles of science. These questions are part of people's understanding about the phenomenon and related to the common stigmatisation that *wong pinters* are friends of devils and fraudulent tricksters beguiling susceptible individuals for money. Besides suspicion, scepticism and misunderstandings, implicit in these questions are a feud between mainstream religions and local religious practices which says more about religious hegemony, superiority, modernity and purity. These issues may be products of the stereotyping of the phenomenon. However, they are reminders which are useful in drawing a clear boundary between acting as a researcher and as an outsider, a problem concerning detachment and involvement that is to be dealt by every domestic researcher who has

been part of the local tradition. However, Kate Fox sees that the combination of both is “the best method for exploring the complexity of human culture” (2004, 4). Other issues affecting this project are problems of subjectivity and methodological approaches to be applied. I will deal with them in the discussion on *wong pinters*’ sources of knowledge, spiritual technology and problem of scientific justification in Sections 1.4 and 4.4.2. To ensure that this research is within scientific principles, I will look at some existing academic works on the topic of Javanese shaman as far as spelt out in the local names.

1.3 Existing works in the area and significance of the study

Although there are some published works on traditional healers and *dhukun* in Java which use the term ‘shaman’, there is no academic work on the term “*wong pinter*” itself, yet this term has been familiar to the ears of most Javanese people. I will discuss these works specifically in Section 4.2. At this introductory stage, the focus is on how the term ‘Javanese shaman’ has been used. There is only one academic article written by Andrew Beatty in an encyclopedia of shamanism (2004, 815-818). This article uses the direct title “Javanese Shaman.” However, it does not engage intimately with the phenomenon as it is based on second hand sources. Along time before the appearance of this text, Dr. G.A. Wilken in 1887 wrote about shamanism in the islands of what is now known as Indonesia in his work *Het Shamanisme bij de Volken van den Indischen Archipel*. Wielken writes that the formation process of becoming a Javanese shaman involves the necessity for the candidate to retreat to the mountains, sleep in the graveyards, or meditate in the river in order to gain a direct contact with the spirits (1887, 437-438). This work is not thorough and like Beatty’s, it is based on second hand sources. Mircea Eliade’s book *Shamanism* mentions the robe trick and horse ecstatic dance which are part of the shamanic ritual in Java, which demonstrates there is shamanism in Java (1964, 429 & 467). However, Beatty regards them as “other related phenomena” showing that there are features of shamanic practices in Java (2004, 815). There is reluctance to say that there is shamanism in Java. Nevertheless, Kusumanto Setyonegoro uses the term ‘shaman’ as an international term compatible with terms like traditional doctors, healers, witch doctors and medicine man yet (1983, 32-34). What can be said of these sources is that while written sources about Javanese shaman are scarce, there is evidence that the existence of shamanism in Java has become an object of academic interest yet it has not been approached thoroughly using first hand sources

to explore more closely who they are and to examine its roles and significance. Except from that of Beatty, other works like the ones mentioned above do not include any in-depth comments.

Beatty's short article 'Javanese Shamanism' is comprehensive and concise. Acknowledging that first hand anthropological accounts are scarce, he refers to his own book (1999) and other books written by Benedict Anderson (1990), Clifford Geertz (1960), Koentjaraningrat (1985) and Robert Wessing (1986) and three articles written by Roy Jordaan (1984), Jerome Weiss (1977) and Mark R. Woodward (1985). He does not mention Wielken or Eliade's works. In this article he looks at four concerns: the historical background behind hints of shamanic practices, the practitioners, elements – concepts and techniques- of shamanism and some phenomena related to shamanism such as mysticism, trance and spirit mediumship. Despite its brevity, it covers issues such as the negative and positive influence of Islam on shamanic practices, varieties of names for practitioners derived from the term '*dhukun*' (which refers to the works of Koentjaraningrat and Geertz), people who have benefited from their services, how these practitioners generate income themselves and why they try not to become full timers, some concepts and techniques applied in their practices, and their closeness to the practice of Javanese mysticism.

Apart from these findings, Beatty does not include the possibility of exploring the essence of shamanism and make further judgement of whether it can become a useful tool to assess whether the existing 'shamanic features' found in Java can be studied under the schematic of general shamanism. He comments that even such a *dhukun prewangan* (traditional healer guided by the tutelary spirit) and a respected healer who operates through mediums are not categorised as shaman because they are not incarnating the spirit guides but only passive vehicles for them (2004, 815). However, according to Stephen Hugh-Jones they are shaman both in the sense of horizontal or vertical shaman (1996, 35-37). A vertical shaman does not need to become an embodier of spirit(s). Ruth-Inge Heinze remarks that in Asia shamans act as spirit mediums, mediator between the sacred and the profane, helper of the community to fulfil their need which otherwise are not met, and someone who can alternate their states of consciousness at will (1991, 10&13). So, there are differences in opinion but there is no doubt that scholars of shamanism acknowledge the existence of shamans in Java.

Vitebsky's definition includes "any kind of person who is in control of his or her state of trance, even if this does not involve a soul journey". He witnesses that "shamanism is scattered and fragmented and is not a single, unified religion but a cross-cultural form of religious sensibility and practice" (1995, 10). Thomas A. DuBois states that "a shaman is a communally recognised professional who cultivates personal relations with helping spirits [for] healing, divination and the control of fortune" (2009, 6). Winkelman (2010, 48), Harvey Graham (2003, 9) and Ripinsky-Naxon (1993, 70) substantiate the essence of who a shaman is and define them as someone relates to spirits in one way or another to serve the needs of others. There is no single definition.

In the light of the various definitions, Beatty should emphasise that there is possibly an operating definition that can represent the universality of shamanism, one by which a study on Javanese shamanism could be seen part of it. Nevertheless, despite this oversight, Beatty leaves useful remarks:

It would be fair to say that the figure of the shaman, in the classical sense of an embodier and master of spirits, a voyager on soul journeys, hardly exists in Java as a distinct social type. Curers, midwives, and magicians may call upon supernatural aid, but very few incarnate their spirit helpers. Nor... is there a distinct shamanic worldview. Shamanic voices must compete with Islam, Sufi- and Indian-influenced mysticism, Indian mythological heroes, and village cults. Nevertheless features associated with shamanism –spirit possession, mediumship, the ritual use of trance, curing based upon soul recovery, and not least the parade of spirits in dubious public entertainments- are widely found in rural and urban settings. Generals and presidents, merchants and peasants, all alike have occasional recourse to the spirit world through the service of a specialist (2004, 815).

I am convinced that with an increasing number of practitioners connecting themselves to both an international and local network of shamanistic practitioners, their existence has come to the fore as a distinct social type. To deal with Beatty's hesitation to say that the practice of shamanism in Java is widespread in the region, this thesis offer evidence collected from participants from different locations in Java. The next step is to explain that Javanese shamanism has connectivity with shamanism practiced outside the island of Java, even with the classical shaman both in Asia and Southeast Asia and to delineate why it is largely different from it.

1.4 Methodology

This thesis is indebted to the scholarly works done on shamanism and aims to provide a bridge between shamanism in general and the practice of shamanism in Java. Working

on the literature is as important as collecting the data from the field; quantitative research is as vital as qualitative research. A direct encounter both with practitioners of shamanism in Java and shamans from other societies outside the island can be useful. The latter was done by attending an international conference on Shamanism in which some shamans performed their knowledge and skills and were interviewed. This is how the data collection has been carried out:

Firstly, as for the issues on general shamanism, I select the most comprehensive books on shamanism in order to discover the fundamental elements common to most studies. This method aims at finding the common pattern of the study of shamanism and then uses it to frame the study of *wong pinters* into a systematic way of thinking. The result will be employed to assess whether the material object of both the study on shamanism and wongpintership contains elements of connectivity. This point is important to establish a strong foundation to proceed in the course of the entire research because it will assure that every discussion on the reality of *wong pinters* as a social type is in conformity with fundamental elements found in the study of shamanism. This will confirm further that shamanism is a valid academic tool of analysis to study on *wong pinters* and that the reality of *wong pinters* is a valid material object for it.

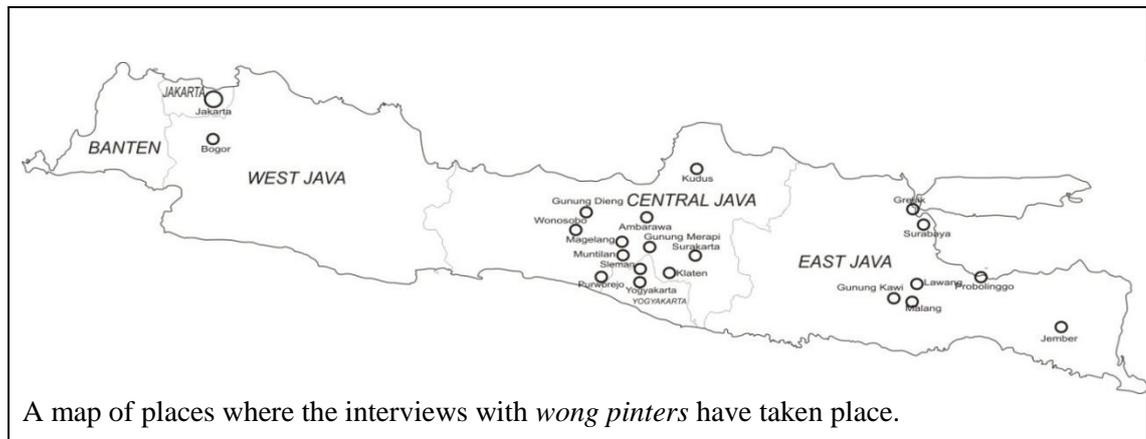
Secondly, as for first hand data collection, I employ the following approaches:

1). To gain a clear description about the familiarity of this research topic among the people in Java, I circulated a questionnaire to non-practitioners involving individuals from different ages and backgrounds. This was done by making it available via mailing lists and in some churches and schools for anyone who might be interested to participate. There were 206 responses from which I received names of practitioners and with their help I arranged interviews both a face to face interview and via telephone. In addition, 23 interest group meetings occurred during the data collection. The questionnaire questions covered participants' familiarity with research subject and how accounted or how engaged their knowledge about it is;

2). I sought assistance from some politicians, CSIS researchers and clerical friends as to whether they can recommend any names to contact and meet. From them I interviewed a vertical shaman Sabdana, the head of the MSC, and could attend a conference held by the Indonesian National Library in Jakarta on a theme relevant to Javanese mysticism, 'the Union between Master and his Subjects' (*Manunggaling Kawula lan Gusti*) at

which Abdurrachman Wahid, the former Indonesian president, was one of the speakers. This conference gathered *wong pinters*, Javanese mystics and those who benefitted from their roles. From these gatherings, more practitioners stated their interest to participate in the research. At last, I interviewed 108 participants, out of which 16 of them are from East Java, 48 Central Java, and 44 from West Java. Added to this number are 20 names of practitioners found in the *Profil 20 Paranormal dan Keunikan Daya Linuwihnya* (20 profiles of paranormals and their prowess) written by Dakas, Masruri and Rochim (1997). The interviews were done using structured questions. Most names mentioned in this thesis are real names as they do not mind them being used in this thesis as they are.

3). As I found out that most practitioners of wongpintership interviewed in Jakarta and Bogor claimed origin from Central Java and in a relationship with the Javanese courts, the search for participants was expanded to Central Java, including Semarang, Kudus, Surakarta, Jogyakarta, Ambarawa, Mount Dieng, and locations around Mount Merapi and then to East Java, the latter including Jember, Malang, Surabaya and Gresik. This following map helps to illustrate the areas where interviews took place:



4). The fieldwork data collection was also done using some participatory observations, focus group discussions, and partaking in some activities of martial art and mysticism organisations relevant to the domains of the production of the learned *wong pinters*.

Thirdly, for the data management and the generation of knowledge, narrative reports from interviews will be used in the thesis to both as evidence of conformity between elements of shamanism and elements of wongpintership discussed and as instruments to show the uniqueness of the practice of wongpintership. At the same time fieldwork data are presented as an object of analysis and hermeneutic in the process of

revealing layers of significance which can be explored. The narratives displayed are to be seen as a text to interpret. The tool for interpretation is the theoretical knowledge collected from library research. Moreover, this theoretical input offers a framework useful to organise the fieldwork data into a systematic order relevant to the study.

Taking into considerations the whole process and reflecting on the direct encounters as well as on the content of the conversations, it will do justice if this thesis deals with several issues coming up in order to expose the web of significance which this reality of *wong pinters* as a cultural system has embodied. Along with these urgent issues such as the varieties of *wong pinter*, the need to provide an operating definition, the problems concerning genuine and false *wong pinter*, the curriculum for their formation, their relation with mainstream religions, engagement with more established spheres, the need to constructing the wholeness of the fact into perspective and whether they will survive in the future, are to be addressed as well throughout the whole body of the thesis. Employing ethnographical and anthropological methods, this thesis includes theoretical and practical approaches in which statistical data and examples from the field are presented to justify the preceding theories as part of the hermeneutic analysis. It should be acknowledged that 108 face-to-face-interviews have produced an extensive research journal. Although we can draw certain patterns, the variation remains open and it is difficult to generalise. So this thesis develops the discussion on *wong pinter* on the basis of patterns found in the study of shamanism. This may present some problems because most information about shaman and shamanism is gathered from second-hand sources and only from four direct encounters with shamans.

As this research topic is part of my own culture I am aware of the objectivity-subjectivity problem. Since “neutrality is impossible”, Meyerhoff stated (1989, 90), I should find a balance in the management of data collected from interviews, participatory observations and focus groups through reflections and reflexivity so that it considers both emic and etic readings of the fact for the advancement of knowledge and contribution for the practice. Reflection, according to Maggi Savin-Baden and Claire Howell Major, includes: “deep thinking about design, planning, and methods” (prospective reflection); “the capture of thoughts and ideas on the spot” (spective reflection); and retrospective reflection comprising “a consideration of what could have been different” (Savin-Baden and Major 2013, 75). In term of reflexivity, this thesis is epistemological as it involves an exploration of the existing belief system and the

interpretation of findings; personal because of personal values, experiences and beliefs involved throughout the process; and is mutual, collaborative and intersubjectively endogenous since it invites the reflexivity of participants throughout data collection, analysis and interpretation and includes both negotiation between the researcher and the researched and community's awareness of the way people construct their own reality.

1.5 Chapter Contents

This thesis is organized in an order to follow the main themes found in the study of shamanism, which is done in chapter 2. Each theme will be developed and expanded as it engages with the management of fieldwork data. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 are designed to answer the first set of research questions. Chapter 2 focuses on the studies about the problematic origins of the word 'shaman', the essence of shaman and shamanism, varieties of shamanism and the shifts of approaches and attitudes towards shaman and shamanism. These shifts show that shamanism has been found to be resilient. Its aspect of resilience will be examined in Chapter 6 to answer the fourth set of research questions. The study intends to prove that shamanism is universal and that it has attracted disciplines outside anthropology. In its core shamanism is a matter of gaining practical knowledge directly or indirectly from the world of spirits either by involving an altered state of consciousness or without it.

Chapter 3 will focus on the connectivity between the practice of wongpintership and that of shamanism. Reflecting the study on the origin of the word 'shaman', its varieties and essence, it will deal with terminological problems about two replaceable terms namely '*wong pinter*' and '*dhukun*' followed by a search for the essence of wongpintership needed to connect its practice with the essence of shamanism. From there, it will be further theorized about how the connectivity between shamanism and the practice of wongpintership in Java can be explained. There is continuity in the essence of shamanism that can be abstracted from the nature of who a *wong pinter* is. This step is to be the foundation of the claim that the practice of wongpintership partakes in the practice of shamanism in the wider world because in their very nature, both are the same regardless of differences in their material culture. It is because of the contingent material culture and the needs for cultural and social adaptation that both are different. This chapter concludes with an elaboration of the characteristics and diversity existing among the *wong pinters*.

Chapter 4 corresponds with the points laid behind the shifts of attitudes and approaches found in the study of shamanism. While answering the second set of research questions, this chapter will see the preoccupation of shaman with their internal accounts including their formation, service to their surrounding community to find a clue why shamans are welcome and rejected and what issues may fill their domestic concerns. This is to be used to explain why *wong pinter* as a social type has to redefine themselves in their domestic milieu. This reflection is expanded to the elaboration of their survival strategy manifested in their way to be at a network of *wong pinters* and in their consciousness to integrate themselves into the existing social structure.

Chapter 5 continues the theme developed in Chapter 4, but with different emphasis. It looks at the engagement of *wong pinters* with more established and wider spheres. They do not only concern with issues around their internal account and milieu but also engage with larger topics and concerns. This generates a question regarding the possibility of finding the ideological motives which have driven them to engage with these spheres, which in fact are considered to be part of the kingly ministry of any leaders in Java. So while deepening our exploration on the various attitudes toward *wong pinters*, this chapter expands the study into discussions related to the third set of research questions.

As we have explored the resilience of shamanism, Chapter 6 is concerned with similar issues and delineates them under the fourth set of research questions. This is a consequence of the exploration of *wong pinters'* expanded involvement in more established sphere which provide an answer to the haunting crisis of existence that they may have suffered from. Considering the set of arguments offered in this chapter, I would envisage that *wong pinter* and the practice of wongpintership is more likely to prove resilient although it has suffered various challenges, as shamanism has, which has threatened its existence both structurally and socially. There is a time of submergence but there is also a time to re-emerge.

Chapter 7 will conclude the whole study. At the same time, it will propose some observation regarding effective methodology and outlines some recommendations which may be useful for anyone interested in broadening and expanding this research topic. There are some specific areas relevant to this research which I consider complementary to it and these could be fruitful for research at a future time.

Chapter 2

Some Essential Themes in the Study of Shamanism

As stated in the Introduction, it is necessary to discuss shamanism as a stepping stone to understand the phenomena of *wong pinter*, the Javanese shaman. The aim of this chapter is to provide some basic knowledge about the nature of shaman and shamanism by tracing its development and key areas of exploration. In doing so it will provide an overview of the main academic views which address the most fundamental questions about shaman and shamanism. The phenomenon itself is relevant to gender studies, pharmacology, archaeology, ethnobotany, neurobiology, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, religious studies, psychotherapy and psychology. It must be acknowledged that the study of shamanism has involved many disciplines. It is impossible to accommodate the whole ideas of shamanism and put it as an overview. However, I will focus on an exploration of its essence, universality, varieties and challenges. The study of shaman and shamanism has increased since the 1980s and attracted a new scholarly interest with the emerging of New Age movement in the twentieth and twenty first century.

Most writers of shamanism include the development in the study of it in their writings. Michael Winkelman (2010) explores shamanism as an approach to neural ecology of consciousness and healing. Thomas A. Dubois (2009) summarises the whole study on shamanism with a focus on Hmong shamanism. Lawrence E. Sullivan leaves a remark that the twentieth and twenty first century “intellectual curiosity and spiritual seeking have churned up a sea of information about shamanism and produced a flood of interpretations regarding its practices, experiences, and overall meaning” (2004, ix). To give a concrete figure, he said that in 1985 there have been more than 2,000 book-length studies and countless scholarly articles of shamanism written in many languages. He says that “the subject of shamanism has long called for an encyclopaedic treatment, but the subject has proven increasingly daunting due as much to the breadth of its manifestations as to the difficulty of specifying its precise nature” (ibid.). The publication of the encyclopaedia of shamanism gives a useful map about the richness and complexity of shamanism as it presents 180 contributors’ perspectives from various academic specialties (Walter and Fridman 2004). It is organised within two major categories, the alphabetically listed general themes in the world of shamanism and

specific themes found within regional entries comprising ten major regions of the world (2004, xxiv-xxvi). Based on his intensive study on shamanism, Alby Stone (2003) writes *Explore Shamanism* to provide an “up-to-date guide” to the study of shamanism.

During the last two decades, there have been attempts to present a similar summarising work. In the same year with Piers Vitebsky’s re-publication of his 1995 book *Shamanism* whose contents cover fundamental themes in shamanism, Jeremy Narby and Francis Huxley (2001) provide sixty four selected quotations from documents ever written on account of shamanism since five hundred years ago. These are divided into seven parts to show the developments of attitudes and approaches that have ever been displayed towards the phenomena of shamanism. Nicholas Thomas and Caroline Humphrey publish *Shamanism, History and the State* (1996) which presents general and regional themes of shamanism by involving collections of anthropological fieldwork-based essays. However, an earlier summarising work on shamanism is done by Jane Monnig Atkinson. Her article portrays developments of analysis employed in the study of shamanism. It contains concerns of the academic writers on shamanism from disciplines outside cultural anthropology and highlights that psychological anthropology seems to emerge as taking over the concern (1992, 308). More than any other works, Mircea Eliade’s work *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (2004 [1951]) was the first major work on shamanism written by a non-anthropologist writer. His work emphasises the importance of ecstasy as the essence of shamanism which is close to the practice of mysticism in a sense that the practitioners, like what mystics maintain that man is connected with a transcendental world through spiritual entities (De Marquette 1949, 112), live an intimate relationship with and rely on the guidance of the spirit[s] (Eliade 2004 [1951], 74-75). This book proves that shamanic ecstasies are not manifestations of mental disorders as stated by many writers who mostly tend to psychologising shamanism. Richard Noll is one of many scholars who prove that shamans are mentally healthy, even healthier than many other people who benefit from their works (1983, 455).

For this chapter, I will only give attention to five major issues which are relevant to Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6. These five important issues are the origin of shamanism, shifts of attitudes and academic approaches in understanding the phenomenon of shaman and shamanism, the universality of shamanism, varieties and classification of categories of

shamanism, applied to make shamanism more inclusive for wider context as the phenomenon itself has now been studied by many disciplines.

2.1 The origin of the term ‘shaman’ and shamanic practice

The discussion concerning the origin of the word ‘shaman’ has involved debates among ethnologists, anthropologists and philologists. The most intensive study on the issue was written by Bertold Laufer (1917) who examined existing attempts to theorise the origin of the term and suggested that etymologically that word could be linked to Turkish-Tungusian languages. According to him, the origin of the word shaman should not be associated with the Sanskrit word ‘*cramana*’ as theorised by D. Bansarov, Max Muller and A.H. Sayce, three scholars whom he referred to in his article (1917, 362-364). Laufer argued that the term is related to the Chinese word *sa-men*, which was known to be “a transcription from Pali word *samana* corresponding to Sanskrit *cramana*, a technical term for the designation of a Buddhist monk or ascetic” (362). He speculated that this kind of opinion might come from an earlier time because – as stated by Pater A. Georgi – it resembled the Greek word *samananei*, a term used by Clemens Alexandrianus in the eighteenth century, which refers to the adherents of Buddha, and this word, Laufer discovered, has been confused by La Croze with the shamans of the Tungusian (362). Laufer’s argument is based simply on his assumption that it is unlikely that the Sanskrit word has been known at that time, although by the nineteenth century the Sanskrit *cramana* and its Prakrit form *samana* have appeared in the work of Greek writers on India, who described the Buddhist monks under names such as *sarmanes*, *sarmanai*, or *samanaioi*, whose Arabic version was *samaniyya* (364).

This explanation may not be persuasive since the influence of Indian Buddhism, according to Vitebsky, had reached Tibet and Mongol some centuries before in the early reign of Kublai Khan in 1220s (1995, 135). However, commenting on these views, Laufer maintained that the Sanskrit *cramana* and its congeners bear no relation with the Siberian shaman. These words, according to him, are just a pseudo-mate of the Turkish-Tungusian word *saman* and have a purely accidental resemblance since they are essentially different in meaning. This finding has been accepted widely by current scholars (Stutley 2003, 3; Siikala & Hoppal 1992, 1; Vitebsky 2001, 6; Ripinsky-Naxon 1993, 69). However, Laufer did not provide the original meaning of this Tungusian word *saman*. He examined the exact phonetic equivalence of this Tungusian word with

its Turkish, Tartar, Cuvas, Yakut and Mongol equivalents. I would argue that Laufer places much emphasis on the philological aspect but does not give enough attention to the etymology of the word, which I consider to be a useful tool. What he intends by the meaning of the word is about various activities that the word refers to. He did an in-depth study on the philological origin of the word, but if he had considered the etymological root of the word, his conclusion may have been different through taking into account both its literal resemblance and meaning.

Scholars acknowledge that philologically the Siberian-Tungusian word ‘shaman’ means “he (or she) who knows”. This literal meaning accommodates the deeper element of who a shaman is compared to meanings derived from the Yakut word ‘*xamna*’, as proposed by Laufer, which means to move, to be agitated. To complete the argument, he mentions that the word *xam* itself means to step, to stride. In conclusion, this theory is worth accepting because these meanings refer to the shaman’s “peculiar behaviour, his solemn and pompous pacing, his ecstasy, his convulsions, his frantic leaps and dancing” (1917, 370). This literal meaning offers more insights about the purpose of what shamans do through their peculiar behaviour than the types of their behaviours themselves. Shamans do indeed dance, leap, experience convulsions and perform pompous pacing. All of these are meant to gain information. Once the required information is gained, then s/he can give the knowledge needed by his/her guests in need. The correspondence of this knowledge to their need is more likely to be the reason why people call shaman “the one who knows”.

Based on this hypothesis, I consider that the Turkish-Tungusian word ‘shaman’ correlates with the Sanskrit word *cramana* or the Prakrit word *samana*. These words mean a person who holds the knowledge, a meaning which is not different from “he who knows”. As far as Merril-Webster Sanskrit Dictionary is concerned, there is also a Sanskrit word ‘*shamana*’ which means “the act of calming, tranquilizing, soothing or destroying”. This meaning is matched with the emergence of neo-shamans and their modern shamanic practices which are concerned with activities in search of tranquillity and peace through methods of meditation, including those practised by Buddhist monks. This trend makes the hypothesised connection between the practice of classical shamanism with the Buddhist monk or ascetic more plausible. I suggest that the meaning of the word shaman needs to be seen more from the pursuit of knowledge because the word *mana* itself means knowledge.

However, there is another concern which is as important as the terminological origin of the word shaman. It is necessary to consider the origin of shamanistic practice. Michael James Winkelman (1990) admits that the practice of shamanism is found throughout the world. Some scholars object to this statement. Whereas those who are in favour of shamanism acknowledge that such a claim stems from the fact that magico-religious healing practitioners are common to all societies especially where hunting and gathering societies exist, there are those who – in contrast – maintain that shamanism should be strictly limited to the Siberian shaman, and thereby practitioners outside the *locus classicus* of shamanism should take other names. Nevertheless, according to Winkelman, terms such as “shaman, medicine man, diviner, witch doctor, medium, healer and other are often used interchangeably” (1990, 309). He suggests the term ‘magico-religious healers’ for these types of healing practitioners and offers a working definition for shaman as “magico-religious practitioners primarily associated with nomadic hunting and gathering societies” (ibid). This definition opens up the possibility that practitioners outside Eurasian and Subarctic areas can also be termed shaman, thus it becomes an umbrella term. However, it also limits the shaman’s role to a healing act. In fact there are many others. Other scholars mentioned by Winkelman, such as Peter and William Price, underline the core of shamanism by arguing that the term should include all magico-religious practitioners utilizing trances for shaman (ibid.). Thus, the qualifiers are a certain type of community and the utilizing of trance while performing the healing practice. These definitions are more inclusive than just “healing practitioners found in Northern Asia” but reduce shamans to mere healers. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* includes definitions which reflect current developments in the study of shamanism. It states that a shaman is a person regarded as having influence in and powers of spiritual guidance and healing through direct access to the spirit world. This definition reflects the core of who a shaman is. There are two reasons to welcome it.

Firstly, society evolves from a simple to a complex one. The nomadic hunting and gathering society has developed into a sedentary one and taken up a new way of living. Some of them chose to live as pastoral societies and others as agricultural ones. Along with this development some social aspects may also evolve or take new forms as a result of compromise and adaptation or adjustment, and shamans are no exceptions. The definition given above, thus, suggests the possibility of that evolution. Here, what is essential in the nature of a shaman is the possession of spiritual and healing power and direct access to and influence in the spirit world. It is that privilege that makes shaman

different from other people and allows them to acquire distinct knowledge and skills in giving counsel, healing and depicting the facts of spiritual life. Here the reality of being in an ASC is instrumental, accidental, inessential, if placed in the whole context of the reason of its being because there is another way to have direct access to – and influence in – the world of spirit as found in locations outside the *locus classicus* of shamanism. To say that it is instrumental is to underline the reason why shaman assumes these roles. The answer to that question is the reason behind their shamanic acts.

Secondly, the etymological meaning of the word ‘shaman’ is reflected in its literal definition. As I have mentioned before, the word shaman means s/he who knows (Ripinsky-Naxon 1993, 69). The question to be raised here is: what does s/he know? It is not primarily about what knowledge s/he may have. This question refers first of all to the reality that s/he does not know about what to say once the visiting guests in need state their situation. To get a practical and corresponsive answer from someone like a shaman, who is not a scholar or medical doctor, is surprising for those who look for solutions to their problems. This is what makes him/her called ‘the one who knows’ though in fact it is the spirit(s) who makes them seem to have the answer for every problem. Thus, if the *OED* definition is accepted as a working definition, then the universality of shamanistic practice is proven by the meaning of the word ‘shaman’ itself. It means that the origin of shamanistic practice is not necessarily associated with geographical origin and type of society. It is obvious that the concrete difficulty faced by people and the lack of informative sources are the constitutive elements which have induced people into the practice of shamanism. Therefore, I would suggest that the origin of shamanistic practice should be sought in its whole constitutive milieu.

In my understanding, the constitutive milieu that generates shamanism is the demand to provide an explanation capable of solving the problems of life. It ranges from how to get an instant solution for dealing with an illness when modern medication is not accessible, to the human search for a holistic view of the past, present and future life and the effective organisation of society. This is a universal human quest. Consequently, it will no longer only be found as to be typical of a certain society, such as an underdeveloped one, but it will also be found even in more complex and modern societies, as the problems faced by humanity seem to be repetitive and universal. It means that the phenomenon of shamanism should be looked at in terms of its formative context. I would suggest that the formative context of shamanism is the search for an

authoritative, practical and instant knowledge that is effective in solving people's daily problems. Here we have to face the human's natural tendency to find a better and more authoritative source of information. Information from a fellow human may be questionable, debateable and doubtful because it is dialogical. In contrast, information claimed to be originating from other beings is seen to be higher, more convincing and more powerful than that offered by human beings. As discussed by the ethnologist Guy E. Swanson, the need to have guiding spirit(s) is to meet the need to have a charismatic skill required "to perform well the office to act on one's own behalf and on the behalf of the social order"(1973, 368). He emphasises that the search for tutelary spirit(s) is a process of empowerment found in simpler societies. With that statement he undermines existing local practice and belief about the reality of spirit. Shamanism is to be understood in the context of establishing communication with spirit(s).

Therefore, based on the discussion above, I would suggest an operational definition. Shamanism is every form of practice that seeks to gain instant knowledge from spirit(s) to meet practical and contextual demands. It is a term to denote a certain practice, which is universal by nature, of having a direct or indirect contact with the world of spirits to gain practical knowledge. The term itself is not known by practitioners. It is an invention of its onlookers, including users and researchers. It is, as stated by Michael Taussig in Atkinson's article (Atkinson 1992, 307), a term which was by chance quoted and popularised by Western early scholars of anthropology.

If it is agreed that the core of the shaman is about becoming someone who has a direct contact and access to the spirits in order to possess practical knowledge, then, to associate the origin of shaman with the Sanskrit word *cramana* or Prarkrit *samana* is still relevant. Both words refer to the Buddhist monk or ascetic who is in fact equal with the Hindus ascetic *bramana*, a term which literally means the master of knowledge, someone with the capability of seeing through or with sharp eyes (*bra* which means 'the king of' or 'the best in', and *pramana* which means 'clear or extraordinary sight' [Prawiroatmodjo 1996, Suparlan 1988 and Winter & Ranggawarsita 1986]). In the book of Mahabharata their role is said to be the decipherers of messages from gods, telling things that are to pass, the individuals who remind people of authority of their misdeeds, teachers of local custom, and specialists in spiritualism. Based on that denotative meaning, the roles of *bramana*, *cramana* or *samana* are matched with the role of shaman both from within and without the *locus classicus*. There is a core of shamanism

which is contained in every type of shamanic practices found cross culturally in all societies. I will discuss the core of shamanism further in Section 2.3.

2.2 Shift of attitudes and approaches towards shaman and shamanism

There have been different attitudes towards shamanism and each of which reflects the approach employed. Among many publications, I consider *Shamans throughout Time (STT)* by Jeremy Narby and Francis Huxley (2001) to be excellent because it offers a comprehensive survey of how Western civilisation, as represented by missionaries, political authorities, scientists and anthropologists, has thought about the phenomenon of shaman and shamanism. This book consists of sixty four selected quotations ranging from the works of missionaries five centuries ago to the twenty-first century writings of scholars and some shamans. Narby and Huxley classify the sources into seven types. I will classify them into three categories: an unsympathetic view, a sympathetic view, and a welcoming and more balanced view. The first view covers parts one to three. The second view includes part four. The third view consists of the rest, parts five to seven.

2.2.1 Unsympathetic views.

The first part of the book *STT* represents early Christian views as they are found in the notes of sixteenth century missionaries. The atmosphere of hostility between Christianity and local religious practices was remarkable. The former emerged as the dominating religion whose religious ideology demanded a sense of superiority. The latter was put into a lower category. Records from anthropologists working on the phenomena of shamanism from all over the world tend to include in their survey that dark period of the history of shamanism that its practitioners experienced after their encounter with Western civilisation as advanced by both missionaries and colonialism. To them, shamans were Devil worshipers (Fernandez de Oviedo 1535), ministers of the Devil (Thevet 1557), evokers and agents of the Devil (Biet 1664), and villains of magicians (Petrovich 1672). These views placed shamans in their most difficult period because they were to suffer from religious condemnation and persecution.

The second part shows how observers from the Enlightenment period dealt with shamanism. As these observers were part of the era of humanism, rationalism, scientific enquiry and classicism, and found themselves having difficulty in understanding the

phenomenon, they considered shamans as the jugglers of the savage (Lafitau 1724), masters of the hocus-pocus deserved of staying in labour camps (Gmelin 1751), people blinded by superstition and imagination (Krashennikov 1755), impostors who led people into blindness of the mind (Diderot 1765 and Herder 1785). Most thoughts about shaman and shamanistic practices in this period were observed through the prism of a Western system of logic and reasoning.

The third part covers the works of the early anthropologists. They place the phenomena of shamanism in the area of religion. It was regarded as a constitutive element of animism, a belief in spiritual beings (Tylor 1871). Practitioners were called indigenous doctors who had extraordinary skills to act as singers, magicians, actors, ventriloquists and warriors fighting against evil (Thurn 1883), and persons who had more talent than others (Sieroshevski (1896). Franz Boaz (1887) thought of these local doctors as priests who exercised great power over the minds of the people. Differing from others, Arnold van Gennep (1903) concentrated more on discussing and disagreeing with the use of the term ‘shamanism’ itself. According to him this term was a rather vague word. Then, a close encounter with the process of becoming a shaman in Northeastern Siberia was reported by Waldemar Bogoras (1904). He writes: “If the person is dilatory in obeying, the calling ‘spirit’ soon appears in some outward, visible shape, communicates the call in a more explicit way” (Bogoras cited in Narby 2001, 63). While Jochelson sees them as ventriloquists and tricksters who performed acts for healing, Franz Boas (1910) found them to be persons who had control over supernatural powers. Indeed, this new way of identifying a shaman represents a progressive move, although a certain scepticism is still there. These anthropologists had been listening to them more closely. At the end of this period, Marie Antoinette Czaplicka (1914) begins a new trend, identifying shamans as persons who are mentally unstable. Since then shamanism and its phenomena have been scrutinised through the perspective of psychology.

2.2.2 More sympathetic views

Part four of *STT* demonstrates that during the first half of the twentieth century researchers displayed more empathy than before with the subjects they observed, evident by the fact that they let them speak about themselves. Though there is an urgent need to distinguish shamanism from other practices, such as spirit mediumship and

medicine men, it became clear that shamanism had a certain place in scientific concerns. It meant that the phenomenon itself was studied in much greater detail, covering wider aspects of shamanism. A shaman, according to Ivalo and Rasmussen's observation (1929), should undertake an extremely critical condition. Some of them were even induced to a near death experience in order to become a shaman.

In Rasmussen and Igjugarjuk's point of view (1930), becoming a shaman was a task to discover a knowledge of healing and communication with the spirits, and to start it the candidate needed to "choose suffering through two things, suffering through (days of) hunger and suffering through days cold" (Igjugarjuk cited in Narby 2001, 81). Black Elk and John G. Neihardt (1932) moved one step further. They let the shaman speak about what s/he has done and they were stunned because the shaman talked about things in a fluent speech, which was a sign of mastery and control over spirits. Unlike other researchers, Sergei M. Shirokogoroff (1935) participated directly by giving himself up to be a shaman's assistant to ensure that the shaman remained in a state of ecstasy. In contrast with researchers from previous periods, who were merely bystanders, the researchers in this period really came closer and were more intimate with the shaman's world itself.

An American anthropologist Willard Z. Park studied shaman's role among the Paviotso of Northern Paiute in northwestern America during the spring antelope hunting season when food supplies were exhausted. Using the shaman's charm, he engaged in a conversation with the antelope's spirit in a state of trance and made the antelope docile (2001 [1938], 94). A much closer and direct encounter with shamans helped researchers to gain a better understanding of the matter. A Swiss anthropologist Alfred Metraux (1944) provided a broad definition of the shaman. According to him a shaman was "a person who maintains by profession and in the interest of the community an intermittent commerce with spirits, or who is possessed by them" (Metraux cited in Narby 2001, 97). In doing so, he used invisible substances which were the materialisation of the shaman's power (113). Metraux reduced the main function of the shaman for the community to a matter of curing illnesses. This view is similar to Adolphus Peter Elkin's (1945). To him shamans were aboriginal doctors and men of high rank. This position challenges those who see shamans as people suffering from mental instability. Following Elkin's positive view, Levi-Strauss (1949) as well as the British anthropologist Verrier Elwin (1955), moved further with this theme. To Levi-Strauss a

shaman was not only healthy but even more (s)he was also a psychoanalyst (Levi-Strauss cited in Narby 2001, 108).

Here, it seems that Levi-Strauss tries to provide a scientific explanation and more rational basis to the practice of shamanism. By dedicating himself to that concern, he did not give enough attention to the wider social process of shamanism itself. Thus, in this half of the twentieth century, shamanism found a better and more respectable place with greater awareness of the role of shamans as indigenous healers possessing more talents than other people that enabled them to communicate with spirits, animals, plants, and to become ventriloquists, singers of multifaceted songs and dancers (Dioszegi 1958; Marshall 1962). The Australian writer Ronald Rose (1957) called shaman 'the clever men'. Nevertheless, some researchers in this period still focussed on the shamans' mental health. Shamanism was observed as an object of psychology. The French anthropologist George Devereux (1956) stated that "the shaman is mentally deranged" (Devereux cited in Narby 2001, 119). This tendency to psychologise shamanism invited the emergence of another trend, especially from the discipline of religious studies, which argued that shamanism should not only be approached as a psychological phenomenon, instead, it should be seen from a religious perspective. Eliade was a scholar of the history of religion who offered a great contribution to the study of shamanism.

2.2.3 Deeper and more balanced views

Part five of Narby and Huxley's book collects quotations from researchers who involved themselves in the practice of shamanism. They did not just become onlookers of the shaman in action anymore. Instead, they took part in shamanic practices, including drinking a huge amount of tobacco juice, smoking, fasting and consuming hallucinogenic substances. Francis Huxley (1956), an anthropologist who lived with the Urubu and the Tembe people in the Brazilian Amazon, witnessed that shamans consume enormous amount of strong tobacco and he himself could not stand while doing the same thing. However, his failure taught him that these indigenous people have performed shamanic practices for a long time without being harmed by what they were doing. It seems that to heal someone sick the shaman should be "sick". Gordon Wasson (1957), an American banker and mushroom enthusiast, ate hallucinogenic mushrooms with a Mexican shaman. He gained a shamanic experience and described it as an 'out of

the body' experience. Like Wasson, Barbara Myerhoff (1974) ate hallucinogenic peyote cactus and saw as the *axis mundi*. Michael Harner (1980) felt that "he was dying and learned about life from giant reptilian creatures" (Harner cited in Narby 2001, 136). By involving himself in the shamanic process, Carlos Castaneda (1968) found out and reported the result of his ethnographic method that shamans fight against fear in order to gain clarity when viewing things and thus acquired an authoritative knowledge which, in turn, will change into power.² People who manage to undertake that path of shamanic induction will become a person of knowledge and understand its power (Narby 2001, 149). The idea of the shaman as a person of knowledge came up again in the encounter between a Mazatec journalist Alvaro Estrada (1977) and a Mazatec shaman Maria Sabina. The ethnologist Holger Kalweit (1987) collected answers to his questions addressed to the in-trance-shaman. We see here that the role of shamans is to produce practical knowledge about medicinal plants, directions for the animal hunt, diagnosing illness and understanding the signs of nature.

In the second half of the twentieth century, anthropological studies were shaped by new methods in which the subjects observed were allowed to present their own point of view (Otner 1984, 57). It means that researchers had a predisposition to let the observed manifest themselves as clearly as possible. The task of researchers then was to read the web of cultural systems beyond their direct appearance. As a result, anthropology in the 1960s was marked by concerns about the system of culture, interpretation of symbols, and the structure and nature of the phenomena observed. Part six of *STT* presents works and reports by anthropologists influenced by this intellectual trend. They saw shamans from different angles and approaches. Under this new development, shamans are viewed as artists, actors, intellectuals and as people with an interest in knowledge (Narby 2001, 185). They are represented by scholars in a certain way as if what they have written is these shamans' own work. Don Handelman (1967) wrote about Henry Rupert, a Washo Indian shaman known to mix traditions and culture because of his previous job as typesetter at a daily newspaper. His close encounter with him made Handelman give himself as Rupert's helper and from this participatory observation viewpoint, he sees Rupert as "a creative innovator and potential 'cultural broker'" who cannot avoid the call to heal (Handelman cited in Narby 2001, 187).

² There was some controversy over Castaneda's work. Narby writes that anthropologists have displayed serious doubts on the ethnographic integrity of his report (Narby 2001, 148).

While Michael Harner (1968) focused on the use of magic darts smeared with a substance like ectoplasm for the manifestation of spirits, John T. Hitchcock (1973) gave much attention to shamans' theatrical performance as embodied in the ritual. In consequence, shamans were popularised as specialists in ritual. Carmen Blaker (1975), who conducted her research among the Japanese shamans, distinguished between two kinds of shamans, a shaman primarily acting as a spirits medium and one who is an ascetic whose speciality is to heal (Narby 2001, 208). Blaker managed to explore the genesis and complexity of the Japanese shamanism. She stated:

The phenomena of shamanism in Japan are... complicated by the fact that they do not derive from single homogeneous source: like the Japanese race, language and mythology, shamanism in Japan is of mixed origin. Japanese ethnologists usually relate the instances of shamanism in their country to two broad streams of culture which intermingled in prehistoric time. A northern stream, deriving from Altaic or Tungusic practices on the Asian continent and spreading through Korea, Hokkaido and Ryukku islands, mingled with another stream deriving from ... Polynesia or Melanesia.... (Blaker cited in Narby 2001, 211).

Furthermore she said that these shamans still employed techniques of trance and exorcism. Their practice reflected the continuation of its ancient origins. If Blaker emphasises the characteristic of Japanese shamanism genesis, Dale A. Olsen, an ethnomusicologist (1975), explored the aspect of music used in shamanic ritual and performance to a greater extent. His findings demonstrated that music had become an integral part of shamanism (cf. Schechner 2005 [1994], 624). It helped the shaman of the Warao Indians of the Orino Delta in the Venezuelan tropical forest to reach an ASC without using hallucinogenic substances.

Another aspect of shamanism explored by anthropologists is the production of esoteric knowledge beneficial for the well-being of the community. Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff (1975) dedicated his entire professional life to understanding the shamanic practices among the people of Columbia. In his opinion, a shaman is a true humanist with an interest in knowledge. It can be seen here that the more one is involved in the phenomena, the more respect and positive attitudes are displayed by outsiders to the shamans. Alongside this development scientists have moved further and started to explore shamanic traces from an archaeological perspective. It means via the progress of time, shamanism has gained more scientific recognition. Walter Burkert (1979) is one example of this. Based on his study of Palaeolithic caves, he argued that shamanism is related to the quest for animals and played a significant role in hunting and gathering societies in which animals are the basic means of subsistence. They are masters of

animals (see also Ripinsky-Naxon 1993, 27). Not only that, it has been found that shamans are also frequently plant teachers, as Luis Eduardo Luna stated (1984), or botanical researchers, according to the Canadian ethno-botanist Wade Davis (1995).

That view complements the statement that shamanism is a phenomenon of ecstasy and gives evidence to any belief in supernatural beings and the possibility of immortal life. A similar but wider study based on archaeological exploration has been conducted by Miranda and Stephen Aldhouse-Green (2005). Their exploration emphasises more on the origin of shamanic practices and its influence on religious belief than on the nature of shamanism. In the 1990s, some researchers just rewrote reviews taken during the fieldwork research in order to let the shamans speak for themselves. Peter Skafté (1992) published his interview with a Nepali shaman Ashok. Some shamans have been asked to write their own books. Among of them is Fernando Payaguaje (1990), a *yage* (ayahuasca) shaman and Malidoma Patrice Some (1994).

The last part of *STT* covers issues concerning the engagement of shamanism with the various disciplines of science. Levi-Strauss (1962) saw shamanism as a science, while psychologist Richard Noll (1987) argued that shamanism and psychology shared the same concerns, as it deals with mental imagery and ways to control it. Michael F. Brown (1989) studied the dangerous circumstances that surround the shaman. This point underlines that it is important to understand shamanism using a proper appreciation of its context (Narby 2001, 256). Edith Turner (1992), Eleanor Ott (1995) and Jarret Zigon (2008) study shamanism and look at it from the perspective of ethics. Like his fellow British anthropologist Graham Townsley (1993), Piers Vitebsky (1996) pays attention to thinking about the phenomenon of shamanism as a technique for knowing and understanding. The act of knowing is an act of making knowledge and reporting. A shaman, according to Joanna Overing, engages in constructing versions of worlds. At the end of her article she says that the *ruwang*'s (Venezuelan Piaroa shaman) knowledge of the world is ontological and "their capabilities for action were dependent upon ability to state the truth, and powerful true statements had practical effect in everyday life" (1990, 602 & 618). Her work strengthens the research of Julian Silverman who distinguished shamanism from acute schizophrenia (1967, 29).

This growing scientific respect for the entity of shamanism inspired the American ethno-botanist Gleen H. Shepard (1998) to collaborate with shamans in studying knowledge about plants. These anthropologists and ethno-botanists

acknowledged the significance of shamans in the process of curing illnesses and other social roles. Along with new trends in the discipline, from the second half of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century anthropologists have used symbolic anthropology, cultural ecology, structuralism, and Marxian anthropology to explain the phenomena of shamanism by applying other disciplines, such as neurology and studies of human behaviour.

Anthropology is not the only scientific tool with which to understand shamans. Psychology, ethno-botany, religious studies and sociology are also taking part in this attempt. Michael Winkelman acknowledges that “shamanism plays a central role in elucidating neuro-theology because (it) constitutes humanity’s first theological and spiritual system” (2002, 1875). Furthermore, he argues that “shamanism strengthens individuals’ ability to take an active role in their health and well-being” (2002, 1886; Winkelman 2000, 259-262). Shamanism has also been discussed together with the most pivotal concerns of anthropology in terms of material culture, agency, politics and environmentalism. While Sarah Milledge Nelson approaches it from an archeological perspective and shows that shamanism has contributed to the origins of states through leadership (2008, 6), Stephen Hugh-Jones sees shamans’ importance as no different from religious roles such as prophets, priests and pastors (1996, 72). Thus, from this overview of Narby and Huxley’s anthology of quotations on shamanism and other readings, it can be said that there have been developments in the way shamanism has been seen by different disciplines.

Moreover, some anthropologists and ethnologists have stood fast to defend the reality of shamans and their practices. The ethnologist Richard Noll has proved that to describe shamans as persons suffering from schizophrenia is misleading since both are different through and through (1983, 443). A similar study was conducted by Larry G. Peters and his fellow scientist Douglass Price-William (1980). Both concentrate on the altered states of shamans’ consciousness. They maintain that shamans’ trance state during ritual performance is not in itself pathological (407). However, these studies represent practices of shamanism in only some societies out of the many regions in which shamanic phenomena can be found.

Though shamanism has gained wider understanding and recognition, it does not mean that it suffers no prejudice or negative perceptions. For example, like shamanism in Korea (Kim 2003, 155), shamanic practices in Indonesia – and especially in Java –

has to compete with religions and their prejudices (Beatty 2004, 815) and some shamans have suffered from persecution. Such treatment may not happen when practitioners of shamanic acts are examined differently as in David Riches' article in which he argues that shamanism is the key to religion (1994, 397). In this perspective, the persecution inflicted upon the practitioners of shamanistic practices by religious believers can reflect the fact that there is a lack of understanding among religious practitioners regarding their own historical genesis.

To sum up the delineations between these shifts in approach, the way to see and engage with the phenomenon of shamanism has evolved over time, and yet the phenomenon itself has proved to be resilient. These shifts take place when researchers try to see shamans and the practice of shamanism in a wider context by including their domestic sphere and engagement with broader spheres. These two themes, shamans and their domestic sphere and their encounters with more established ones, will be explored more in Chapters 4 and 5 to provide a frame of discussion concerning the Javanese shaman. For the moment I will highlight what lay behind different approaches. Every paradigm that has been used reflects the dominant trends in the intellectual world at that particular time. Shamanism has been overlooked and disregarded by religions as it is accused of being a superstitious practice and associated with the work of devils. However, the principle of "who is in power will define and determine what is genuine or spurious, right or wrong" is at work here. That accusation is the best instrument to underline the otherness of the other (Selberg 2003, 305). Anthropology and ethnography emerge as friends of shamanism until the debate concerning the universality of shamanism as a category becomes a great topic of debate among anthropologists. As Jane Atkinson writes, the category of shamanism "does not exist in a unitary form" and, anthropologically speaking, "there is a great distrust of general theories about shamanism" (1992, 308).

Nevertheless, with the increasing interest from various disciplines outside anthropology in shamanism, shamanism has become a highly studied topic. It has become of interest in psychology, psychotherapy, religious studies, ethno-botany, archaeology, political studies, ethnography and medical studies. Each of these disciplines offers a working definition of what shaman and shamanism are. As a result, there have been many definitions. Currently, anthropology has re-adopted the idea that shamanism is an important topic. However, psychological anthropology has replaced

the role of cultural anthropology (Atkinson 1992, 308). This fact, then, leaves us with a question: what is the essence of shamanism? As in the history of classical philosophy, this question raises another question: what can be categorised as the *accidentia* or the changeable elements of shamanism and what is its *substantia*?

2.3 The core of shamanism practice as the basis of its universality

Winkelman places the shaman and his consociates, including priests, medium, medicine man, diviner, witch doctor, and healer, under the category of the magico-religious healer because of increases in social complexity. These various terms which refer to healing practitioners found in societies all over the world are then used interchangeably due to the fact that they seem to have a shared core characteristic in terms of empirically studied shaman (Winkelman 1990, 310). According to him, some scholars, such as Larry Peters and Douglass Price-Williams (1980, 396), welcome the identification of shaman as one of many types of magico-religious healers, though in doing so they suggest reserving the label of shaman only for all magico-religious healing practitioners who employ shamanic trance as a main technique. According to them, as long as these magico-religious healers show three essential characteristics of shamanic ecstasy, they can be seen as shaman, although they come from geographically different areas. These three criteria are: “(1) voluntary entrance into, and control of, the duration of the trance, (2) memory of the dissociated state, and (3) communicative interplay with spectators” (Peters and Price-Williams cited in Winkelman 1990, 407). Other scholars, including Anna-Leena Siikala, maintain that the application of the label shaman should be limited only to the Tungusian, Siberian, Eurasian and sub-Arctic magico-religious healing practitioners. Winkelman and White accept the need to restrict the category and they suggest that the term ‘shaman’ should be applied to groups of magico-religious healing practitioners primarily associated with nomadic hunting and gathering societies (1992, 309). These suggestions are convincing claims regarding the uniqueness of shaman. However, it should be acknowledged that there are also shamans in agricultural and industrial societies (Harvey 2003, 7).

As I have mentioned earlier, the search for the core of shaman and shamanism undertaken by various disciplines has contributed to numerous definitions of shamanism. Every period seems to offer a certain type of definition because it reflects the particular concern of each era. What I can notice from some of these definitions is

that they try to offer their specific definitions as the working one. If it is suggested that every definition is made to underline the core of something to be defined, then, the core of shamanism must have been reflected by these numerous definitions. In my understanding, the core of something must be found in its heart, its very essence or substance (Grayling 2005). Various definitions of shaman or shamanism underline some particular truth grasped from a particular approach. These definitions may not represent the very heart of the terms ‘shaman’ and ‘shamanism’. In the history of philosophy, the essence of something is to be found in the intrinsically unchangeable element of its being (Russell 2004 [1946], 58). That is what may be the heart of something. The essence of shamanism, thus, has to be found in what is common in those definitions

The fact that there have been many definitions demonstrates that the core of shamanism may only have been captured partially. It is possible that what have been grasped are probably accidental elements of it. What is accidental is attributive by nature. What is attributive is not the essential. What is not essential is changeable. Names and terms are attributive. Shaman and shamanism are terms denoting something else, which is called its meaning. To establish the fact that the many names of magico-religious healing practitioners are interchangeable is to underline that this kind of healer is universal and so is their trance state or their state of consciousness. Consequently, it might be agreeable to name the magico-religious healers found outside of the geographical *locus classicus* of shamanism using the same term ‘shaman’ because they are just types of shamans. There is a plurality of shamanism.

I agree with Holmberg (1983) who speaks about the plurality of shamanism. Behind this plurality, there must be a persistent element that is constitutive of it. It is a substance which allows this term ‘shaman’ to be applicable to its consociates from different times and places. The different elements may be understood as causes of shamanism’s variety. The unifying element in these variants of shamanism will be its core. Since the term ‘shaman’ has come to be understood first as a term internationally popularised by academics, there would be no objection to use the term and apply it to practices from other parts of the world. It is like the use of the English word ‘yes’ by villagers in the deep rainforest of Mount Merapi in Central Java to express agreement. They may not have had the word ‘yes’ before but there may have been a situation that a word of agreement had been created. Then, that term ‘yes’ comes up and they start to use it. So the term used changes but the reality reflected does not. That is its substance.

Earlier in this chapter I discussed briefly the possibility of finding the etymological and semantic meaning of the word ‘shaman’. I will expand on this as it is fundamental for knowing its substance. As I have also mentioned before, ‘shaman’ is a word which etymologically means ‘s/he who knows’. This Tungusian word itself originates from the Indo-European verb-root *sa* which also means ‘to know’, or the Russian verb *scha*, also meaning ‘to know’ (The Wanderling-the Angelfire website; Siikala and Hoppal 1992, 1; D’Anglure: 2007 [1996], 504; Ripinsky-Naxon 1993, 69) or ‘to have insight’ (Kapelrud 1967, 93).

Outsiders suspiciously term a shaman/shamaness with many titles such as medicine man/woman and witch doctor. These titles are just an impression of what they think they know about shaman based on what they can see and grasp from a distance. Other people see them as magicians, jugglers, frantic dancers, ethno-musicians and chanters of ancient wisdoms. These names are attached to them based on their concern regarding the entertaining aspects of shamanic acts. Those who engage in religious studies see shaman as mystics, prophets, priests, spiritual leaders, specialists in spiritualism, spirit mediums, diviners and trancers. Scholars whose concerns are based in politics and social studies add other labels such as charismatic leaders. As mentioned earlier, psychologists and neurologists used to think of them as individuals with mental disorders suffering from acute schizophrenia or mental derangement. However, this opinion has been revised. Neuropsychology and psychological anthropology have contributed to developing a more positive label. People from the Greenpeace movement and environmental anthropology see shamans as heroes and heroines because their roles are in favour of environmental conservation. Cultural anthropology regards shamans as custodians and guardians of local wisdoms, taboos and local values.

Apart from these many titles, regardless of what they are and what disciplines may stand behind each title used, there must be reasons to name them as such. If s/he is called a juggler, it is because s/he is known as someone who knows how to juggle. In the end, these titles are basically given to acknowledge the same reality, that is, this person is the one who knows how to do this particular role. The fact that other people cannot do what they can do shows that shamans are specialists and at the same time it provides evidence that these people do not have the knowledge or the skills compatible with shamans’ knowledge. So, they may have many names but, in fact, these names

refer to the same reality. They are indeed individuals who know how to know. For this reason, to maintain the original meaning of the word shaman is worth considering.

Because they know how to know they are called 'the one who knows'. This name implies the distinctiveness of their agility in knowing things or to gain the required information. I call it 'their agility' in the sense that their knowledge could be about many things and they are practical by nature because the knowledge is generated to respond to emerging challenges. Due to the fact that they are not individuals with academic backgrounds, the effective knowledge that they generate and decipher for the seeker of information is therefore not the fruit of a purposive learning about subjects matched with types of people's problems. How can they be so agile in producing new knowledge corresponding to various challenges addressed to them to solve?

The key to their agility of knowing is the agent who gives them the necessary information. This statement explains the nature of their shamanic practices. When they dance or jump up and down from a bench, cover their faces, wear a certain type of outfit, sing or do other acts, what are these acts for? To put everything in its context, the ultimate goal set behind these demonstrative and entertaining acts serves only to gain the information from the spirits compatible with the emerging challenges brought by the visitor in need. What matters most in this process of gaining practical knowledge from the spirits is the necessity of having an encounter with the relevant spirits. It is not very important to specify what kind of relation may happen when the encounter occurs, whether they are possessed by the spirit or not, dominated or are dominated by the spirit, are instructed by it or become a master of it.

Some discussions concentrate on the characteristics of what a real shaman should be like by debating their state of trance, whether they are possessed, which means they use to be dominated by the spirit, or they have command over it. Considering the fact that a shaman is someone in search of certain information, the importance of that debate is outweighed by the importance of gaining the answers searched for. They are searchers for practical knowledge. The ultimate end of their shamanic practices and séances is the acquisition of the required knowledge. Therefore, shamanism is not a technique of ecstasy as Eliade suggests but a technique of acquiring information from spirit(s) for very practical and immediate uses. I will not discuss the idea of spirit at great length here.

Scholars tend to argue that this word ‘spirit’ is just a term for a mystified matter. Eliade devotes a large amount of space to his cross cultural survey on this matter and appears not to problematize its reality (1972 [1951], 79-109). Like Eliade, Harvey seems to accept this position and offers another term, the ‘other-than-human person’ (2003, 9). In the *Encyclopaedia of Shamanism*, Richard Noll (2004) summarises the idea of what spirit may mean as far as discussed in the literature on shamanism. He offers a definition:

Spirits are entities or energies that act as agents of both ill and good on the person of the individual shaman and on the community. Spirits are originally external to the individual identity, physical body, and the essence of the shaman, though they can merge with it. This can happen through possession of the shaman by spirits or through the possession of spirits by shaman, thus enabling the shaman to draw upon an external power source to assist in healing and divination (Noll 2004, 235).

Instead of discussing this term, I prefer just accepting it as what practitioners offer as real, not imaginary (Wallis 2003, 46). The reason is that there is no fixed definition and very often the spirit can be the souls of the dead, including those of ancestors. So if soul has been accepted as reality, there is a reason to regard spirits as existent. Furthermore, the practice of shamanism has been done for ages and spirit is part of the essence of shamanism. Thus, to accept the reality of shamanic practices as real is to accept the reality of spirit(s) too.

The word spirit is applicable both as a single and plural term. It depends on how straightforward the shaman catches the required information. Sometimes a shaman needs to see more than one spirit. According to Richard Noll, a master shaman may have more than 100 spirits (2004, 235). If they are not possessed, they will find other spirits to make complete the knowledge to be gained. In contrast, if they are possessed there will be a succession of spirits dwelling in his individuality. The signs which follow this succession are marked by changes in their body gestures and voices. Western onlookers can view them as a ventriloquist’s trick employed to deceive and beguile visitors. If it is asked why they have to see more than one spirit, the answer must also be found in the reality of the spirit itself. The answer may depend on two variables, the complexity of the problem diagnosed and the limitation of the spirit.

The answer to this question should not be given by scholars observing but by the practitioners themselves. According to them, the spirit may give the best answer to a particular problem in accordance with its nature. However, that best answer is only for

one thing, not for everything. The concept of polytheism may be useful to mention here in order to understand their explanation of many spirits. There are many gods, such as god of fire, water, sky, salt water, fresh water, of this and that plant and animal. In short, everything that exists has its own god. If a human being is going to use something of these, s/he is obliged to gain permission from the god(s) of the required thing(s). They are, according to the people of Ojibwe, owners of the related plant or animal (Harvey 2003, 10). If in the diagnostic process a shaman finds a complex problem, s/he may need a complex solution which involves the necessity to see all the relevant spirits including those of medicinal plants, animals and the ancestors. The easiest and simplest one must be the spirit(s) of the ancestors because each of them might have faced problems and by now they know the relevant solution and willingly provide their relevant prowess. Most shamans' tutelary spirits are their own ancestors.

A further enquiry worth proposing is the necessity of being in a trance or in a state of altered consciousness. If the point of shamanism is a matter of gaining information about practical knowledge from the world of spirits through direct contact with them, then the technique itself is accidental, not essential, at least if there is another way to have contact with them. Some scholars maintain that the core of shamanism is determined by the fact that the related practitioner is in an altered state of consciousness (ASC). If ASC is the core of shamanism, then we can say that the technique applied by the shaman is the ultimate goal of shamanic practice. However, it does not seem to be the case because not all individuals who are in a trance or becomes possessed are a shaman. Therefore, it is the ultimate purpose of that practice which determines whether s/he is a shaman or not.

The reality of shamanic practice tells us something else and I am convinced that being in an altered state of consciousness is instrumental and not an absolute necessity because it only serves something else, that is to enter into another world and to have a direct encounter or communication with the required spirit(s). This encounter is still instrumental since the purpose of that desired encounter is to gain necessary information. Hence, ASC itself is not the most fundamental determinant of the core of shaman and shamanism. Thus, the substance of shamanism, in my opinion, is a matter of gaining useful and practical knowledge from spirits through a direct encounter and communication with them, either by using trance or not. Here we can see that there are a layering of different purposes, primary, secondary and even tertiary ones. The technique

needed to reach that altered state of consciousness itself shows great variety. Their acts of dancing, drumming, chanting, and using hallucinogenic substances or wearing a particular outfit or mask are not central. This may explain why there is no unity in the external manifestation of shamanic acts, even within the classic domain of shamanism itself. However, we should ask how this plurality occurs.

To answer this question, we should ascertain what the shamans themselves have to say about their practices. Some researchers, such as Michael Harner (2001 [1981]), have managed to write and publish work based on first hand data after (in this instance) he himself went native. By involving and making themselves part of the participatory observation, they understood that shamans' custom of wearing different outfits or various masks are not about showing their artistic taste or a preference for displaying a unique appearance. Instead, it is a question of observing what the spirits who have become his or her tutelary want him/her to dress as or to be known by them. A shaman in action is someone who lets the spirit who is in favour of him/her to work with the shaman and sometimes within the shaman. That outfit and mask are therefore the ones demanded by the spirit guide. Different spirits demand different requirements, not just in the matter of what is worn but also in terms of the kinds of movements or sounds used. Again the individual is called a shaman, insofar as s/he makes a movement, and does not dance to entertain the "audience". Shamanic performance is not an entertainment business. Seen from the shaman's own perspective, these are things to be done in terms of following what the embodied spirit wants the shaman to do. So it is incorrect to regard shamanism or the shamanic act as an object of entertainment.

2.4 Varieties and classification of shamanism

Varieties of spirits beget varieties of shamans. That is the internal factor which shapes the diversity of shamanism. The external factor which contributes to this diversity is the local culture. As shamanism has been acknowledged to be universal, its types are as many as the number of nations in the world. The encyclopaedic book *Shamanism* classifies them into ten regional categories. Each region consists of smaller regional or local names of shamanism. There are 20 areas included in the region of North America, 20 in Central and South America, 11 in Europe, 8 in Korea and Japan, 7 in China and Sino-Asia, 11 in South Asia and The Himalayas and Tibet, 11 in Southeast Asia, 6 in Australasia-Oceania and 17 in Africa (Walter and Fridman 2004, vi-vii). From these

geographical domains, we are familiar with names such Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Siberian, Russian, Finnish, Australian, Amazonian, and other shamanisms.

Graham Harvey mentions some local names, such as Malaysian *bomoh*, Daur Mongol *yadyan*, Korean *mudang* (Northern) or *dan-ngol* (South-West) or *sim-bang* (Southern end) or *myung-du* (Southern), Inuit *angakok*, and Amazonian *paye* (2003, 1-3). Mihaly Hoppal and Otto J. von Sadovszky also find other names like the Nepalese *jhakri*, and the Lapp *noita* (1989, 9, 14). In Japan, it is called *itako* (Chilson and Knecht 2003, 16), and *txiv neeb* among the Hmong of Laos and a Sami *noaide* (Dubois 2009, 5). Ruth-Inge Heinze lists other names like Yoruba of West Africa's *babalawo*, the Mongols' *kami*, the Haitian *houngan*, the Zulu *sangoma*, the Hawaiian *kahuna*, the Garwali *bakia*, the Singaporean *tang-ki* and the Thai *ma khi* (1991, 9). Many more local names of shaman are only examples that each locality contributes uniqueness to it.

There have been attempts to categorise shaman. The term 'classical shaman' is a common one. It distinguishes the practice of shamanism in Siberia and Northern Asia from practitioners outside these *locus classicus* of shamanism, the non-classical shamans. It is questionable why it is termed 'classical shaman' and why others are not. If it is a matter of time periodization, as in the history of music, that term may be useful. In fact there has been no research on the historical periodization of shamanism. Stephen Hugh-Jones (1996) suggests a classification called 'dual shamanism' and introduces two technical terms called 'vertical shamanism' (VS) and 'horizontal shamanism' (HS). He finds that this technique is useful in understanding the *paye*, representing the HS, and the *kubu* types of shamanism, representing the VS. Hugh-Jones writes:

In many Amazonian societies, HS occurs on its own. It [is] associated with more egalitarian, forest-oriented societies with an ideological emphasis on warfare and hunting.... Shamans are morally ambiguous and may have relatively low status and prestige. Shamanism....involves widespread use of hallucinogenic substances, and is peripherally involved in the ritual reproduction of society.

In the Bororo, the Arawakan and Tukanoan groups in northwest Amazonia, HS occurs together with VS. Sometimes a single person combines aspects of both types...VS appears...with more complex, ranked societies, characterised by an Amazonian version of descent, and with less emphasis on warfare and hunting. Secular and ritual powers are often merged and limited to a few powerful men, often shamans of the VS type, who are morally unambiguous, enjoy high prestige and status, and play a key role in social reproduction through elaborate ancestor-oriented life crisis rituals involving bullroarers or sacred flutes and trumpets. Their knowledge is relatively closed and is founded on an elaborate, dogmatic mythological canon. No trance or possession is involved, and where hallucinogens

are used, the shamans typically give them to others rather than using them themselves (Hugh-Jones 1996, 33).

This classification is based on aspects of the local societies' social and cultural stratification. To make clearer the distinction, using the HS and VS categorisation, Hugh-Jones observes in greater detail the *paye* and the *kubu* by analysing five variables: training process, technique of curing, attributes attached to each of them, and their roles, duties and social status that they earn from their roles (1996, 37). This classification is more helpful for a mode of analysis than the one suggested by Hoppal and von Sadovszky, who introduce three terms: charismatic shaman, hereditary shaman and hereditary-charismatic shaman (Hoppal and von Sadovszky 1989, 14). Hugh-Jones's bipolarisation is useful for understanding the pluralities of shamanism. It underlines that even within the same region there is a diversity of shamanism. This binary categorisation is useful for including additional practices outside the *locus classicus* of shamanism in the category of shaman or shamanism. By doing so, it suggests that shamanism has enough reasons to back up its claim for its universality. It is only one in reality, but it has many names.

In a different way, agreeing with the classification suggested by Hultzkranz, Alby Stone repeats Hultzkranz's types of shamanism. They are ecstatic, imitative and demonstrative shamanism. "The first is much like 'classical' Siberian shamanism. Imitative shamanism occurs where the shaman does not undergo a spirit journey but enacts a kind of ritual pantomime of an otherworld journey and soul-retrieval. Demonstrative shamanism is an 'intermediary form' in which 'the shaman proves his success in curing the sick by holding up for all to see the disease object that he has extracted or the soul he has restored'" (Stone 2003, 32). Carl Olson suggests three types of shaman: the one with hereditary transmission, spontaneous vocation, and as a result of personal quest (2011, 233). These classifications add more varieties to the possibility of delineating plurality in the world of shamanism. Plurality of shamanism is not only a question of differences in terms of cultural and geographical shamanic practices but also of modes of classification.

The last categorisation is Core shamanism and Neo-shamanism. These are types of new shamanic spirituality inspired by traditional shamanism. Joan B. Townsend comments that they emerge as a result of people's quest for transcendence and healing, either self-healing or for others (Townsend cited in Walter and Friedman 2004, 49).

Jane M. Atkinson sees both of them as “the romanticisation of shamanism by its current Euroamerican promoters” (1992, 323). They are often included in the category of New Age and Neo-paganism movements, which, according to her, are forms of spiritual alternatives for Westerners estranged from Western religious traditions because of their search for a more democratic religious outlook (322). However, they are different from each other in many ways, including in their beliefs system and concepts of knowledge and how to generate practical knowledge.

Townsend classifies shamanism into traditional shamanism, Core shamanism and Neo-shamanism and distinguishes them from Neo-paganism and New Age movement (Townsend cited in Walter and Friedman 2004, 50-52). According to him, Core shamanism was born with its main motif to “salvage shamanic knowledge before it disappears, and where possible assist existing shamans in the preservation of their tradition” (2004, 51). It takes the essence of traditional shamanism and applies it to modern people without losing the uniqueness of its roots. Neo-shamanism has been welcomed differently. Atkinson says: “Neo-shamanism shares a serious concern about precedent and symbolic content, and some defensiveness about charges of ‘playing Indian’” (1992, 322). This charge is not without reason. Neo-shamanism adopts shamanic symbols and rituals including the use of hallucinogens, and suggests that practitioners perform pilgrimages in order to attain states which have become the domain of shamans (Townsend 2004, 52).

Alby Stone, one of many supporters of shamanism who wants the use of the word shaman to be restricted only to those understood as constituting classical shamanism, reemphasises the need to avoid calling other shamanic practices shamanic. He stresses that the word ‘shaman’ must be understood in accord with the aboriginal practitioner and Neo-shamanism should not be compared with a form of indigenous shamanism. Having said this, he reminds the practitioners of Neo-shamanism that what they are practicing involves taking other cultures’ shamanism as their own and Neo-shamanism could be in danger of becoming neo-colonialist (2003, 10).

2.5 Summary

The attempt to establish a classification system is to fulfil the need to provide a complete map for a diverse subject matter such as shamanism. Classifications suggested

by scholars represent characteristics of certain types of shamanism found in different places. Each classification thus bears particularity. That attempt and its results may signal the fact that there is a need to classify it. Such a response shows that the phenomena itself has been interpreted, revisited, adapted and adopted in many ways according to different interests and using different approaches. At the same time, it shows that the subject itself has been proven resilient. The recognition of these varieties underlines the importance of returning to basics and establishing the claim to an indigenoussness. Such a trend is not thoroughly welcome, especially when scholars start to explore the universality of shamanism. This study shows that the encounter with the word 'shaman' happened during the time of trading and traveling mixed together with the conducting missionary work. As a term, this word belongs to the Northern Asian and Subarctic areas. However, this study has proved that the practice of shamanism is universal since the phenomenon itself has been understood as – in its very essence – shamanism is a matter of gaining practical knowledge directly or indirectly from the world of spirits, either through being in a trance understood as being in an altered state of consciousness, or without it. With this understanding, practices of shamanism outside the *locus classicus* add to the varieties of shamanism. Thus, this universal phenomenon has many names but is one phenomenon in essence. As seen from this statement, there must be a practice of shamanism in Java too. This will be explored in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

The Connectivity between *Wong Pinter* and Shaman

In Chapter 2, I have identified some fundamental themes in the study of shamanism which are relevant to our discussion on the connectivity and distinctions between a shaman and a *wong pinter*, a theme that is explored in this chapter. Some of the findings demonstrate that shamanism can be an umbrella term for local practitioners such as medicine men and women, folk healers, seers, priests and spirit specialists (Vitebsky 1995, 10). These different agents may undertake different tasks but they are shamanic because the very nature of their works requires both direct and indirect contact with spirits. Placed within this understanding, the essential elements of classical shamanism are found to be widespread in the islands of Indonesia including Java though there are varieties of roles (Forth 2004, 812-813; Pemberton 1994, 297-301). Not all of them are focused on being in a state of trance. Reducing shamanism to an altered state of consciousness (ASC), like what Eliade has done (2004 [1964]), diminishes the possibilities of the shamanistic phenomenon. It ignores the diversity of its reality and its open roles in a wider context. Shamanism is a fluid concept (Vitebsky 1996, 184). It represents modes of thinking about different societies with distinct histories regarding their cultural, social, religious, political and economic settings.

In order to focus on finding the connection between the practice of wongpintership and the practice of shamanism, this chapter aims to establish a foundation to the claim that there are practices of shamanism in Java and that *wong pinter* (meaning ‘clever person’) is just a type or species of shamanism practised in Java and secondly to present a systematic characterisation of *wong pinter*. To undertake this task, I propose two questions: Is there any practice of shamanism in Java; what foundation is needed to validate the claim that wongpintership is a type of shamanism in Java and that it also partakes in a wider shamanism? The first question will be answered by examining the state of academic discussions on Javanese shamanism because this academic research must consider existing sources which have dealt with the subject. Written sources outside of the academic literature on this theme are numerous, ranging from story books, myths, legends, Javanese literature, popular magazines and films. I will not use them here. Instead, I will refer only to academic sources, although they are very limited. In addition, I will utilise information acquired through direct encounters

with some shamans and *wong pinters* during the period of fieldwork. Based on the existing academic sources about Javanese shamanism, I will deal with the second research question of this chapter in Section 3.3. Regarding the claim that wongpintership is a form of shamanism practised in Java and that it is part of the wider practice of shamanism four premises are proposed here. The last point is to argue that there is a connection between shaman and *wong pinter*. This task is undertaken by examining the similarities between both. Then I will demonstrate that there are also differences. This discussion will include a list of *wong pinters*' characteristics and their common variants will also be delineated. However, before examining these essential issues I should discuss the fact that within Javanese society itself there is, as in the world of shamanism, a terminological problem concerning *wong pinters*.

3.1 Terminological problems

There are two agents that contribute to this terminological confusion. They are non-practitioners and practitioners. These non-practitioners use two terms, *wong pinter* and *dhukun*. The term *dhukun* refers to magico-religious healers, sorcerers or someone with magical prowess. Both terms have been attached to practitioners as a social label. Although these are popular among the people of Java,³ the term *wong pinter* is more preferable than the latter to the ears of the practitioners themselves because its connotation is less negative than the word *dhukun*. While we find two terms coined by outsiders, some terms are also found among practitioners. In West Java, there are two terms: *janma linuwih* (person of spiritual maturity and wisdom) and an Islamic term, *insan kamil* (person who has achieved spiritual perfection). In Central Java, there are more terms suggested by practitioners. They are 'the wise man' (*wong sepuh*), 'someone who knows' (*wong ngerti*), 'someone who has the experience' (*wong pengalaman*), 'someone who gives help to others' (*wong tetulung*) and 'someone who is guided by the helping spirits' (*wong tinuntun*). The last term 'the helping spirits' is not specified though those who suggest this term implicitly refer to those spirits and other superior beings, including God, who guide their works and services. In East Java, the

³ I have received just over 200 separate pieces of feedback from the questionnaire circulated among the non-practitioners. Of these 196 of them gave descriptions of who a *wong pinter* is which, in my opinion, are very close to my own understanding of what I mean by *wong pinter*. Thus, I conclude that among the Javanese, the term *wong pinter* is well known. The data shows that 96% of questionnaires returned from non-practitioners use the term *wong pinter* to point to a role undertaken by a certain social type in Javanese society.

words *wong sepuh* and *wong pengalaman* are used. Instead of accepting the term *wong pinter*, one of the participants suggests another term, ‘someone who is made by the non-human agent to knowing things required to know’ (*wong kang dipinterake*). Because of this variation, I suggest the term *wong pinter* constitutes a technical and umbrella term summarising the numerous titles suggested by practitioners themselves.

On the basis of the existing written sources, I discuss the terminological complexity surrounding the term *wong pinter*. Though its literal meaning refers to ‘someone with a great intelligence’, the Javanese word ‘*wong*’ (person/s) *pinter* (clever) is applicable only to a specific group. Students with good academic achievements are called *bocah/murid* (pupil) *pinter*, not a *wong pinter*. Muhaimin explains the English translation of that word as a term that refers to “knowledgeable people in general in either religious or secular knowledge” (1995, 21). He gives a new aspect to the phrase ‘*wong pinter*’ but does not explain what is meant by being knowledgeable in religious and secular terms and how a *wong pinter* generates their knowledge. The *OED* defines the meaning of the word knowledgeable as intelligent and well informed. The word ‘clever’ denotes someone who is quick to understand, learn, and devise or apply ideas, synonymous with the English word ‘intelligent’. The main emphasis of the words ‘clever’ and ‘intelligent’ is placed on the capacity to use logic. With that faculty, someone can understand information and synthesize opinions from written sources. The knowledge produced thus comes from literal readings and logical reflection on them. However, the fact is that *wong pinters*’ source of knowledge is different from the production of any text-based form of knowledge. Many of them cannot read. Their knowledge is generated through insights they receive in their prayer and meditation, through dreams and the wishes of the spirits embodied in mystical stones, heirlooms or other instruments, and from revelation. It is other agents outside of this agency who give the knowledge. Furthermore, that knowledge is granted to anyone in need or who is deserving of it. Without debating their claims, it can be said that their knowledge is not a type of knowledge which is to be retained as a theory but a to-be-used form of knowledge, responding to every demand brought by their guests. It is a practical one.

Taking the literal meaning of the word ‘*pinter*’ Suryo Negoro (1999) equates the term *wong pinter* with the English phrase ‘clever man/woman’. However, differing from Muhaimin, he adds another possible meaning and states that it refers to a different Javanese term *piyayi sepuh*, meaning ‘wise man’. Andrew Beatty argues that the term

wong tuwek, a low Javanese phrase for *piyayi sepuh*, is another name for *dhukun* (1999, 52). Inez Mahony (2002) studies the role of *dhukun* in contemporary East Java in a case study based on *dhukuns* in Banyuwangi. She does not distinguish between both terms. Mulder believes that they are different. To him a *wong sepuh* is more a mystical master rather than a practitioner of Javanese esoterism (1998, 50). The word *wong pinter* refers to the role of an elder and is to be understood in the context of Javanese mysticism. Therefore, to provide an operational definition, I will say that a *wong pinter* is a knowledgeable person whose wise and practical knowledge is gained, not from books or other common sources of information, but from mystical process, revelation, and wishes of the spirits when they are in contact with, or contacted by, them. This establishes the foundation of the connective field of the operating definition of who a shaman is. Like the term shaman, the term *wong pinter*, then, means ‘the one who knows’.

3.2 Academic discussion on Javanese shamanism

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the study of shamanism has become a serious concern for many disciplines in the last three decades. However, not all practices of shamanisms have been explored as widely and deeply as those found in Siberia and South America. This is also the case with the practice of shamanism in Java. There is only one short article in a book entitled *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices and Culture*, which discusses the phenomenon by straightforwardly using the academic term ‘Javanese shamanism’. This article is written by the British anthropologist Andrew Beatty. Though he is the only one who describes ‘Javanese shamanism’, there was also a Dutch ethnographer who applied the term ‘shaman’ to the Javanese spiritualists and magico-religious healers in 1887. This article does not discuss shamanism in Java specifically. Other scholars who have mentioned the existence of shamans in the land of Java are Mircea Eliade, Jane Monnig Atkinson and Robert Wessing. They have used the word shaman for practitioners whom I consider perfectly matched with the characteristics of a *wong pinter* though this latter term has not been used at all. I will discuss each of these writers’ work in the following paragraphs.

Beatty writes that in Java the figure of shaman understood as “an embodier and master of spirits, a voyager on soul journeys, hardly exist as a distinct social type” (2004, 815). In consequence, he states that a distinct shamanic worldview does not exist there, but there are features such as “spirit possession, mediumship, the ritual use of

trance, curing based upon soul recovery... and the parade of spirits in dubious public entertainments are widely found in rural and urban settings”. Then in the same article, when he discussed about the social role of these shamanic figures, he states that people including “generals and presidents, merchant and peasants have occasional recourse to the spirit world through the service of a specialist” (Beatty 2004, 815). Beatty’s statement consists of several elements. He detects the phenomenon of shamanism in Java by using the category of the ‘classical notion’ of what a shaman may be like.

He proposes two characters: firstly, that shaman in a classical sense is a distinct social type and secondly a shaman is an embodier and master of spirits, and a voyager on soul journeys. In the light of these understandings, he concludes that shamanism in Java hardly exists as a social type and so does not display a particular shamanic view of the cosmos. Furthermore, according to him, shamanistic related practices which can be found in urban and rural areas in Java are just features of shamanism and the actors are just specialists in spirits. These features are no more than syncretic practices and beliefs wrapped in shamanistic ritual formulations (816). However, if we put his statement under the light of the operational definition of shamanism, there has been a significant number of spirit specialists spread across the island of Java.

I would suggest that a study of Javanese shamanism should deal with *wong pinters* and *dhukun* as they are also spirit specialists who rely on the role of spirits whether they are their tutelary spirits or not, just like shamans from other parts of the world. The uses of heirlooms, amulets and dreams require contacts with those spirits embodied in them are essential as it is widely believed that these instruments are the dwelling places of certain familiar spirit or spirits (Heine-Geldern 1956; Moertono 1963; Epton 1974; Choy 1976). In addition to this, such activities such as house and village cleansing, diverting the course of rain, dispelling *santét* (sorcery) and healing, are examples of activities in which the specialists have to deal with spirits in many different ways for many different purposes. Having said this I would underline that the practice or the idea of having direct contact with spirits is not a strange practice in Javanese society. In another words, there is such a practice of shamanism in Java.

I agree with Beatty when he says that just like shamanic practices in different societies, “shamanic voices [in Java] must compete with Islam, Sufi-and Indian-influence mysticism, Indian mythological heroes and village cults” (2004, 815). However, when he could not find a shaman figure, such as the embodier and master of

spirits, in Banyuwangi where he did his fieldwork, it does not mean that shamanism in this sense does not exist in Java. His example of the *dhukun*'s practice shows that there is someone who has a full command over the spirits and thus, in reality it could have been there. Of course, the Javanese do not know the word 'shaman' and what it means. The absence of that word does not mean that its reality is also absent. The growing numbers of local mysticism groups exhibit the increasing number of those who intentionally declare themselves to be masters of spirits. Some of them are embodiments of spirits and they can testify to their understanding of Javanese cosmology which shares many similarities with a shamanic cosmological world view. If they are not embodiments of spirits, they have a quite uniform reason why they do not embody them. Most participants argued that to become a spirit embodiment is unnecessary. These hints demonstrate that more of these spirit enthusiasts can be recognised as a social type insofar as it is defined as "a familiar group or social category whose individuals share similar values, behaviour, style, and habits" (Almog 1998, 1). Beatty has limited the classical category of shamanism to just three narrow acts and uses them as categories to include or exclude practices found outside the *locus classicus* of shamanism. He is concerned more with the *dhukuns* who he found to be mediums, healers and diviners, but does not include them within the category of shamanism. His writings conclude that shamanism in its classical sense does not exist in Java, though there are some shamanic features evident. However, the Javanese shamanism may be well described by using the 'vertical shaman' category whose features are close to those of the *wong pinter*. Thus, any study on Javanese shamanism must also be a study of *dhukun* and *wong pinter*.

Clifford Geertz (1976 [1960]) writes extensively about types of *dhukun* and its associated rituals and practices including sorcery. His remarks on a *wong pinter*'s skills and knowledge are matched by what I observed during fieldwork. What I mean by a *wong pinter* is evident in a straightforward way in his term *dhukun biyasa* – or just *dhukun* without a qualifier (1976, 87&89). Niel Mulders (1998; 1983 [1978]; 1970) concentrates on *kebatinan* as a formal and non-formal institution producing a trained *wong pinter*. Hardjamaradjaja (1962) provides information about the process of becoming a master of spirit. Attempting to prove that the practice cannot be adapted to Christianity, he comments that this people ascribing to *kebatinan* are no more than individuals boastful of their superstitious knowledge and local wisdoms. However he quotes from G.W.J. Drewes about the initiation of a novice by a Javanese guru (11-13).

Despite his remarks on the essence of *kebatinan*, I agree with his comment that there are no standardised rites of initiation among groups of *kebatinan*.

Andrew Beatty (1999) describes the syncretistic religious practice of the *dhukuns* in Banyuwangi, East Java. He records how some *dhukuns* involve their village ancestors in order to solve problems brought by their guests. There are two academic lectures by Raden Supatmo, as documented by a French anthropologist Claire Holt, which present information about *dhukun* and their influence. Benedict Anderson notes that among the Javanese power may come from spirits of the supernatural world (1992 [1990], 25). This opinion is similar to John Pemberton's (1994), who examines the practice of acquiring magical power, esoteric knowledge and specific skills. He records places which he calls 'the sacred ones' as they are known to be areas visited by professionals in Javanese spiritualism, whether they are in the beginning of a formation process or re-connecting themselves to the source of their spiritual strength and magical capability. It should be acknowledged that his work is comprehensive as he managed to visit tens of sacred places and recorded some rituals practised in these areas. However, he did not explore them in the context of discussing the way of becoming a spirit specialist itself. None of these writers uses the term 'shaman' directly.

In the late nineteenth period of Dutch colonial control over the Indonesian archipelago, A. Wielken (1887) explored shamanism throughout the islands of Indonesia. His exploration produced evidence that there is such a practice in Java as in other societies throughout the world. Referring to the practice of classical shaman in Siberia, he comments that the shamans throughout the Indonesian archipelago shared social privileges as well as suffering social and religious discrimination as well as being accused of insanity. This is unsurprising as Wielken researched in a period in which shamans and the practice of shamanism were seen from a psychological perspective. In regard to the practice of shamanism in Java, he states that Javanese shamanism was similar to that of Dayak of Sarawak, especially in the way candidates pursued the shamanic supernatural power, for example by going to sacred places including deep forests, mountains, ancestral tombs, and places of pilgrimages in order to experience the benevolent spirits' revelation (Wielken 1887, 437). Despite this valuable information about the existence of shamanism in Java, he did not discuss the practice of shamanism in Java at great length when it was compared to his exploration of the shamanism practiced in Sumatra, Borneo, Sulawesi, Halmahera and Bali. Does it mean that

Javanese shamanism had disappeared by that time? Was it, as is the case with the disappearance of shamanism in Nepal (Ortner 1995), caused by its encounter with mainstream religions and a failure to compete with them? In my opinion, since shamanism in Java is associated with the practice of Javanese mysticism, the practice of shamanism there does not disappear but it is only manifested in a different form which is more subtle than the original. Continuity is found instead in the essence of shamanism itself, that is gaining practical knowledge through a direct contact with spirit(s).

The existence of shamans in Java is affirmed by other scholars of anthropology and religion, including Robert Wessing, Jane Monnig Atkinson and Mircea Eliade. They have used the phrase ‘shaman in Java’ or ‘in Java, shaman’ or just ‘shaman’. Wessing includes the term shaman in at least four of his published works. The most recent example is in his article on Javanese goddesses and spirits (2007). He discusses the role of a shaman in helping people regain peace after the chaos inflicted by angry goddesses or spirits. The figure who he identifies as a shaman is the one the Javanese call a *wong pinter*. In his work about the community of spirits in Java he uses the term shaman for *wong pinter* a number of times. He says that a tiger guarding the village “can be the incarnation of the shaman spirit of an exceptional individual who successfully crossed the frontier between the village and the forest” (2006, 83-84). A similar instance of using the term shaman for a *wong pinter* is also found in his book, *The Soul of Ambiguity: the Tiger in Southeast Asia* (1986) and his article “The Last Tiger in East Java: Symbolic Continuity in Ecological Change” (1995). He writes:

As Kopok's relation with Embah Yo shows, it is not solely with the spirits of ancestors or religious leaders that tigers are associated - they may also be linked with living shamans. There is a connection,...between shamans and the spirit world; indeed, it is a common belief in Southeast Asia that the prosperity of society depends on shamans who can contact the *dhanyang* and the souls of the dead. Throughout East Java shamanistic powers are believed to descend either from parent to child or from grandparent to grandchild [1986, 59-60,83]. A person with tiger-ilmu is said to have a menacing face, although his nature may be gentle..... The shaman is often helped by a tiger familiar, the physical manifestation of the shaman's ilmu and often the incarnation of the shaman's spirit or of the magic of his ancestors (1995, 199).

Unlike Wessing, Atkinson indirectly suggests that there is shamanism in Indonesia as she mentions it in the phrase “an Indonesian shamanic séance” (1992, 321). A similar statement referring to shamanism practised on the island of Java was offered by Mircea Eliade (2004 [1964]). He talks about shamanism in Java when he discusses the initiatory dream that a shaman has in the early stages of one’s acceptance

to take up a shamanism (Atkinson 1992, 429). In another passage, Eliade mentions that the Javanese shaman employs symbols which are meant to represent to use of horses (2004 [1964], 467-468), like the practice of shamanism among the Hmong shaman. These sources strengthen the acknowledgement that the practice of shamanism also exist in Java and confirm that it has been academically recognised internationally, although the phenomenon itself has not been explored specifically using the term 'Javanese shamanism'. The absence of studies on Javanese shamanism may have caused some difficulties. However, looking at existing sources on the study of Javanese shamanism, I maintain that the characteristics of the *wong pinter* are shared with those of shamanism. So, to study Javanese shamanism is to deal with the phenomena of *wong pinters*. Consequently, we may be able to connect this study of *wong pinter* with the study of shamanism.

3.3 Theorising the claim

To claim that it is a necessity to study *wong pinter* if we are to understand Javanese shamanism means that it is also necessary to provide a theory supporting that statement and to prove that wongpintership has a connection with the international term shamanism. In support of this I propose some premises. First, the operational meaning of the word *wong pinter* implies implicitly and explicitly the original meaning of the word 'shaman'. Second, the practice of wongpintership is shamanic by nature. Third, Javanese shamanism is a variant of shamanism in Southeast Asia. Fourth, Southeast Asian shamanism is rooted in Indochina or South China, a place physically and geographically connected to Central and North Asia. In its nature, someone is a *wong pinter* because s/he has the capability to generate knowledge through revelation and to see things that other people cannot see. It means that their knowledge is unique, untraceable, inimitable, and leaves the impression that it is only they themselves who know. The term *wong ngerti*, as suggested by the participants, underlines literally their very reality as 'someone who knows'. This reflects precisely what has been understood from the word 'shaman' itself, which means 'the one who knows'. Thus, linguistically, the nature of *wong pinter* and shaman is located in the same category. Consequently, both can be approached in a similar way. Furthermore, the operating definition for who a *wong pinter* and who a shaman is refers to the same category. It involves similar elements, including sources, usability and the technique of generating knowledge.

As for the second premise, the practice of wongpintership requires a direct contact with spirits so that it can be called shamanic, and it is shamanic because in its very essence shamanism is about having contact with a spirit for a certain practical purpose. In relation to this concern, in Table 4 I present a list of *wong pinter* activities and their methods of gaining practical information. Social activities such as house cleansing, *santet* dispelling, healing, family counselling and finding lost items including one's belongings and even an astray human being, require the involvement of the tutelary spirits. In the religious arena, I recorded that 103 out of 128 participants (80%) are masters of spirits. Other activities derived from religious, political, economic, cultural and environmental domains signify the necessity of having contact with the spirits. Their methods – including the using of heirlooms and amulets, and the employment of dreams and asceticism – show that to have contact with spirits is necessary. Heirlooms and amulets are instruments which have been associated with the embodiment of spirits. When a *wong pinter* undertakes severe ascesis, or is immersed in meditation, the aim is the same, that is to receive a message from the other world. According to many practitioners, even God's spirit in its religious meaning is just one of the many existing spirits. It means that even to pray in order to acquire enlightenment from a divine being is also shamanic. Therefore the core of shamanism can be seen in wongpintership, which is about communication with spirit(s) for practical purposes.

As for the third and the fourth premises that Javanese shamanism is a variant of Southeast Asian shamanism and it is rooted from Indo China, these can be affirmed from the history of population migration in the region, that aspects of Buddhism are embodied in local shamanic practice, and given the use of amulets. Robert Winzeler has argued for the connection between the practice of shamanism in the region and that of Inner and Northern Asian shamanism. He writes:

The evident origins of both present-day Southeast Asian populations and many Southeast Asian languages from more northern areas of Asia has given rise to the notion that shamanism in Southeast Asia is also derived from north, but this is complicated matter. It can probably be said that the forms of shamanism practiced in the far northern areas of Southeast Asia are most directly and immediately connected to those of Inner Asian peoples....The Austronesian versions of shamanism of Sumatra, Borneo, Sulawesi, and elsewhere probably do also have northern origins, in that the Austronesian peoples themselves are known to derive from the north, although the migrations concerned extend back over five thousand years or more.... Although they probably brought their own version of shamanism with them, they could have adopted or borrowed parts of it from the modern humans who had already living in Borneo and probably other areas of insular Southeast Asia for thirty or forty thousand years (2004, 834-835).

This quotation is rich with information about the origin of the Southeast Asian people and the products of their civilization, including the practice of shamanism. Though Winzeller concludes that shamanism in Southeast Asia has a strong relation with the *locus classicus* of shamanism, he is not convinced that the practices themselves show a significant element of discontinuity. However, as a foundation for thinking about the connection of Javanese shamanism with its wider practice in Southeast Asia, or even South Asian and Asian societies, evidence regarding population origin may be a good mode of reasoning. As with other historians of Indonesia, Bernard Vlekke says that historically the Indonesians are the descendants of immigrants from the Asian continent (Vlekke 1959, 7; Palmier 1965, 9-10; Peacock 1973, 9; Heine-Geldern 1984, 30; Soejono 1984, 55-59). That connection is confirmed archeologically and ethnologically by similarities in the languages used in different societies throughout the whole region, in styles of rice paddy cultivation, and in cultural practices and religious beliefs. Peter Bellwood offers a thorough exploration of different issues including archaeological information about ancestors of the inhabitants living in the entire region, early settlements ranging from hunter-gatherer society to agricultural ones, the distribution of the Polynesian and Malay languages, developments in agricultural technology, and the organisation of society (1992, 51-136). His conclusion is that all biological, linguistic and cultural variation is correlated. The connection between these areas may also signify a connection in terms of elements of cultural practices. As languages in these areas develop to their highest development, the same achievement will also occur in other practices, including shamanism. Here the discontinuity detected by Winzeler finds its explanation and can be understood in a new way.

Skinner's study on "Creolised Chinese Society in Southeast Asia" shows that "the historical migration of Chinese to Southeast Asia has yielded a wondrous array of adaptive, acculturative, and assimilative phenomena" (1996, 51). Though this happened among the Chinese migrants, these three adjectives are the key to understanding why discontinuity in maintaining cultural identity and products – including the practice of shamanism found in Southeast Asian societies – occurred. This is because Southeast Asians, including shamans, are so adaptive, acculturative and assimilative to the changing circumstances and influences, and the elements of classical shamanism have also evolved. It has been long understood that Southeast Asians are not interested in maintaining thoroughly the identity of their ancestral origin. As Janet Carsten writes:

There is no sense that [people] are anxious to maintain traditions from their diverse places of origin. The emphasis is on absorbing and blending, rather than on maintaining regional and cultural difference (324)... For when people are highly mobile, it may be more important to create new ties than to remember ancestors whose identity has become largely irrelevant (329). Differences that characterise newcomers to the island are rapidly erased, partly through an emphasis on conformity and similarity (Carsten 1995, 326).

That is what Carsten terms “an implicit politics of forgetting” (331), a phrase which is associated with Geertz’s concept of ‘cultural amnesia’ (324). It is a social product moulded from an on-going process of adaptation to the continually shifting nature of influential factors. This cultural strategy enhances the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances caused by many influences. In this changing society, people are more ready to adjust rather than to engage in strife in order to maintain their primordial identity. A successful community must be one which manages to respond to the problems raised by a highly dynamic demographic environment (Tinker 1969, 99).

Java, like other societies in Southeast Asia, has been influenced by China in the form of Confucianism and Taoism (Andaya 1982, 17-20; Reid 1996; Peacock 1973, 8-9; Vlekke 1959, 62-66; Palmier 1965, 48-51), from India through Hinduism and Buddhism (Andaya 1982, 14-17; Proudfoot 1980; Peacock 1973, 13-21; van der Kroef 1951), and shares a common way of life in regards to the internalisation of the politics of forgetting or to participation in collective amnesia. Later, the introduction of Islam from Gujerati and Persia (Johns 1980) and Christianity from Europe (Vlekke 1959, 94-120) brought new developments to the island. It is very possible that the Javanese people and society have had to deal with crises caused by the clashing of civilisations which emerged from these successive influences. Thus, it would have been easier for the society to grasp the essence of primordial practices and to keep proceeding with them, rather than maintaining whole features but having to deal with the unceasing conflict. Given this we can see that shamanism in Java shows a connection with shamanism as practiced in Southern China and finds its most unique transformation. There may be no hallucinogenic substances, drumming, dancing, singing and the wearing of other elements of shamanic performance, however the essence of shamanic practice is still there. It means that the practice of shamanism in Java has evolved and settled in the domain of mysticism in which various types of shamanism coexist with one another. The connectivity between Javanese shamanism and Central Chinese shamanism is confirmed by the sharing of an idea that rulers were shamans (Loewe and Shaughnessy 1999, 262) because the Javanese kings were also *wong pinters*.

The second element of the argument to support the statement that the shamanism practised in Java is part of the universal shamanism is the embodiment of Buddhist and Hindu cosmology, and the concept of the world of spirits, in the practice of Javanese shamanism. It has been agreed that classical shamanism has been influenced by Buddhism (Lewis 2004, 30-33). Although the practice of Buddhism in different parts of Asia has unique characteristics, some concepts do not change, for example concerning the way in which the world of spirits in Buddhism have nourished the concept of spirits in shamanism. In those locations influenced by Hinduism and Tantrism (Berglie 2004, 243-246), the concept of the spirit world accommodates Hinduism, Buddhism and those local traditions that existed before their arrival. As a result, the practices of Javanese shamanism and its worldview also demonstrate a syncretic element.

In Java, the concept of the world of spirits and cosmology are influenced by the dominant religious cultures. The book of Mahabharata consists of many Indian terms linguistically similar to the ones used by Javanese shamans, such as the Indian words *Bhuta* (Jv. Buto), *Rakhsasa* (Jv. *raseksa*) or *gandarva* for the Javanese *gendruwa*, a term referring to a type of tree or forest spirit. There are several academic publications on this issue. Wielken discusses it in his book *Het Animisme Bij de Volken van den Indischen Archipel* (1884), Geertz in *The Religion of Java* (1976), Wessing in “A Community of Spirits” (2006), Koentjaraningrat in *The Javanese Culture* (1985), Soepatmo in his two undated lectures and Subagya in his book “*Agama-agama Asli di Indonesia*” (1981). There are also publications dedicated to the delineation of the world of spirits in Java. The point is that Javanese shamanism, its cosmology and worldview has been influenced heavily by Tantrism, Hinduism and Buddhism. As stated by one scholar, “wherever Buddhism is there shamanism is more likely to exist” (Lewis 2004, 30-31), it is no surprise to see that there are many Buddhist terms used by *wong pinters*, especially by those who belong to the mysticism groups. Entering deeper into the Buddhist understanding of the cosmos and spirits, the influence of Tantrism and Hinduism are suddenly evident (Berglie 2004, 243). The practice of shamanism in Java is connected with the shamanism of the wider world through intimate encounters with Buddhism, Hinduism and Tantrism. Later still it is connected to Sufism (Sidikov 2004, 238-241) and Christian mysticism, especially with the emergence of Catholic mysticism groups (*Kebatinan Katolik*). Many aspects of classical shamanism may not be found in straight forward manner, yet the essence of the shamanic practice is still the same.

The last element to discuss is the use of amulets and heirlooms. Tik-sang Liu says that a shaman can be a giver of magical devices like the charms and amulets used by people to attract good fortune or repel dangerous spirits and sometimes they suggest his/her visitor in need to perform a pilgrimage, such as visiting ancestral graves, as part of their solution (Liu 1995, 150). These practices are common to Javanese shamans. They give their needy guests different types of charms. Each charm is made in accordance with the solution that is due for each individual. Given these similarities we can theorise that the connection between the shamanism practised in Java and that observed in South China is further maintained. Narratives about shamans of different denominations dispensing magical tools are found in the book of Mahabharata. *Bhagawan, pandita, brahmanas (chramana)* and priests are givers of amulets, heirlooms and kings's regalias.

Heine-Geldern confirms that the uses of heirlooms are common among the Indo-Chinese people of Burma, Vietnam, Siam, and Cambodia (1942, 26-27). The fieldwork data discussed here shows the same thing. Therefore, there is continuity in these practices. Mbah Broto shows his heirloom the *Batara Karang*, which in other places is called *Jenglot*, an approximately 16 centimeter amulet which looks like a miniaturised human body. I asked him what might be the difference between them. He says that they are the same. The term *Jenglot* is a Vietnamese word, whereas the word *Batara Karang* is its Javanese equivalent (Wonosobo, 8 March 2011). Despite of my failure to find this Vietnamese word *jenglot* in the dictionary and by asking about it to some Vietnamese, I suggest that if what he said is true, the fourth premise and our hypothesis that Javanese shamanism is connected to wider shamanisms finds further validation here.

To restate what I have marked before, the connection of shamanism practised in Java with the shamanism in Southeast Asia could be traced from the population aspect, development of societies, the common influence of Tantrism, Hinduism and Buddhism, and in the using of amulets in the practices of shamanism found in Asia. In addition to this explanation, I have also discussed why there is a discontinuity between shamanic practices found in the Southeast Asian societies and the one that is found in Northern Asia. I would emphasise that this discontinuity is only concerned with its incidental aspects (Lt. *accidentia*). Its substance is still there and thus the continuity of the essence of shamanism can still be maintained convincingly and found in the practice of Javanese shamanism. The main reason why such peripheral discontinuity occurs is due to the fact

that contemporary Javanese shamanism is a result of a long and still on-going process of adaptation, assimilation, transformation and acculturation. Some of the ‘material culture of shamanism’ – to borrow the term used by DuBois (2009, 176-201) – has been left behind. The necessity to do so is based on the reality that someone in a very mobile society needs to comply with existing cultural practices. To emphasise difference will result in their extinction. Willingness to adapt is thus wisdom for survival. Given this consideration, we find that shamanism in this region is more integrated with the wider constellation of the social network in a society which accepts the national policy that every citizen must have a religion to adhere to.

3.4 Similarities and distinctions between Shaman and *Wong Pinter*

Now I will discuss the connectivity of Javanese shamanism and the shamanism of wider societies, particularly in terms of the similarities and differences between both. It is not possible to make generalisations about what characteristics are constitutive of the nature of shaman and shamanism. There have been many attempts to establish this. However, there are always exceptions. Atkinson’s review of shamanism demonstrates that the characteristics of shamanism have varied from place to place, and even within the *locus classicus* of shamanism itself such generalisation does not occur (1992, 308). D’Anglure records that a classical shaman has a central position in ritual and religious practices, yet there are other spirit-based roles and activities (2007, 505). This summary of what a classical shaman is and who a shaman is has also been developed by Harvey (2003, 18), Ripinsky-Naxon (1993, 9) and Winkelman (2000, 60-63; 1990, 309.311& 318). Though there is no identical list of the basic elements of shamanism, a common line must be stressed. Winzeler mentions seven essential characteristics:

- (1) the belief in a cosmos with many spiritual beings that can help or harm human beings, some of whom can be controlled or influenced by shamans, that is humans who have been chosen, initiated, and trained;
- (2) the belief that cosmos itself consists of distinct levels that include, broadly, a spiritual Upper World, a Middle World that is experienced through the natural senses, and a spiritual Underworld that is also the realm of the dead;
- (3) the belief that humans have souls that leave the body during illness and dreams and permanently at death, but that can sometimes be overtaken and returned by the shaman with the assistance of spirit helpers;
- (4) the belief that even though shamanism may be hereditary, shamans do not seek their vocation and often resist it, but are called by the spirits who wish to form a relationship with them, one that is sometimes thought to be sexual or marital in nature, this call involving either dreams or bouts of physical or mental illness that recur and resist other attempts to cure them, phenomena that are interpreted by trained shamans as a summons that must be accepted, refusal meaning death or

permanent insanity; (5) the practice of initiation, during which shaman candidates undergo training by other shamans and participate in ceremonies through which they gain control over their familiar spirits; (6) the understanding that, although the shaman deal in ecstasy and trance and may be a medium, most importantly the shaman goes on spiritual journeys to recover lost souls, or in some instances to guide souls of the truly dead to the after world, or is able to send familiar spirits to do these things; (7) the acquirement by the shaman of various paraphernalia that are used in ritual activities, usually items of dress or adornment and other objects (Winzeler 2004, 837).

The first and the second are derived from shamanic cosmology as one of the constitutive variables. The third is based on a variable regarding the altered state of consciousness. The fourth is a matter of selection procedures. The fifth tells us about the training. The sixth and seventh are about shamans' activities and techniques. So there are six variables. Winzeler's characterisation is narrower than the one suggested by Winkelman, which comprises of eight variables: selection procedures, training process, ASC, power relationship, magico-religious activities, techniques employed, context and motive of activities, and socio-political evaluations (1990, 311-312). He classifies these variables into six categories: socio economic conditions, socio-political characteristics, selection and training, magico-religious activity, power and trance states and characteristic (316-317). Andrew Beatty narrows down the classical sense of shamanism to only two variables, an embodier and master of spirits and a voyager on soul journeys (2004, 815). Other authors may stress different aspects. My purpose in showing these categorisations is to discover the essential characteristics of shamanism as practised in general and to use the findings in order to list differences and similarities with the practice of wongpintership, the Javanese shamanism.

Beatty suggests six elements, featuring some concepts and techniques seen in Java, which he believes have shamanistic characteristics. These are: notions of divine power, belief in spiritual beings, notions of spirit double or dual presence and transformation into a wild animal, belief in possessions or affliction by spirits, techniques that facilitate contact with the spirit world and belief in the interpenetration of the visible and invisible world (2004, 817). With these elements Beatty – apart from the notion of divine power – has actually delineated the cosmological characteristics of Javanese shamanism. However, he does not cover other variables such as those mentioned by Winkelman. Employing Winkelman's data, I would configure the similarities between, and the distinctiveness of, wongpintership and shaman or other magico-religious healers by adding a column to the table as illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1: Distinctiveness and similarities between shamanic healers and *wong pinter*. It is adapted from a table in Shamanic Healers and their Characteristics (Winkelman 1990, 316-317).

Variables	Shaman	Shaman/Healer	Healer	Medium	<i>Wong Pinter</i>
Socio-economic conditions	Hunting and gathering Nomadic No/local political integration	Agricultural subsistence	Agricultural subsistence Sedentary Political integration	Agricultural subsistence Sedentary Political integration	Agricultural subsistence Sedentary and semi-modern High political and social integration
Socio-political characteristic	Charismatic leader Communal and war leader High social status Predominantly male, female secondary Part time Individual practice	No or informal political leader Moderate social status Predominantly male, female secondary Part-time Collective/Group practice Specialized role	Judicial, legislative, and economic power High socioeconomic status Predominantly male, female rare Full-time Collective/group practice Highly specialized role	No or informal political power Low socioeconomic status Predominantly female, male secondary/rare Part-time Collective/Group practice	Informal political and charismatic leader and councillor Low to middle socioeconomic status Predominantly male, female secondary Part-time Individual and group practice
Selection and training	Vision quests, visions, dreams, illness and spirit's requests Training involving trance Status recognized by clients	Vision quests, visions, dreams, illness and spirit's requests Trance and ritual training Ceremony recognizes status	Payment to other practitioners Learn rituals and techniques Ceremony recognizes status	Spontaneous possession by spirit and healing/training in trance group Ceremony recognizes status	Vision quests, visions, dreams, illness and spirit's requests Training both involving and not involving trance and rituals Status recognized by their users
Magico-religious activity	Healing and divination Hunting magic Malevolent acts	Healing and divination Agricultural and hunting magic Minor malevolent acts	Healing and divination Agricultural magic Minor or no malevolent acts Life-cycle rituals	Healing and divination Agricultural magic and propitiation No malevolent acts	Healing and divination Agricultural magic and propitiation Cultural, religious and environmental involvements No malevolent acts, people's helpers
Power	Animal spirit/allies Spirit power controlled Physical and empirical medicine, massaging and herbs	Animal spirits Impersonal power (mana) Spirit power controlled Physical and empirical medicine, massaging and herbs	Superior gods Impersonal power (mana) Spirit power independent Ritual techniques and formulas	Possessing spirits Spirit power dominates	Animal spirits/allies Personal power (<i>kasekten</i>) Spirit power mostly controlled in respectfully equal relation, some dominate; various type of relations Rituals are not compulsory, physical and empirical medicine, massaging, herbs, charms, amulet and heirlooms
Trance states and characteristic	Shamanic soul flight/journey Isolation, austerities, fasting, hallucinogens, chanting and singing, extensive drumming and percussion, frequently resulting in collapse and unconsciousness	Shamanic/mystical Isolation, austerities, fasting, hallucinogens, chanting and singing, extensive drumming and percussion, frequently resulting in collapse and unconsciousness	Limited trances Social isolation, fasting, minor, austerities, limited singing and chanting or percussion	Possession trance Spontaneous onset, tremors, convulsions, seizures, compulsive motor behaviour, amnesia, temporal lobe discharges.	Trance or spirit possession is a sign of low skill or status, thus, avoided. Austerities, fasting, social isolation Contacts with spirit using <i>batin</i> and <i>rasa</i> . Various soul journeys (<i>racut suksma</i> , <i>oneat suksma</i> , <i>ngrogo suksmo</i>), in meditation

Based on the above variables, what do shamanism and *wongpintership* have in common? Some sets of similarities and distinctions can be suggested here. The first set is based on socio-economic conditions. The second set features socio-political characteristics. The third is based on the process of selection and training. The fourth set includes their magico-religious activity. The fifth set is related to the idea of power. The sixth set of similarities and differences is derived from the aspect of trance. It must be remembered that comparing the practice of classical shamanism and *wongpintership* could be unrealistic because it can be seen as similar to comparing the civilisation of a time distant from modernity with one which is a product of the modern era.

Seen in terms of some general socio-economic conditions *wong pinter* and the shaman-healer (distinguished from the extreme shaman) exist in the context of agricultural subsistence. Their roles range from choosing the right seed, manipulating the weather, protecting crops from insects and mice or other dangers such as birds, and determining the correct time to plant and harvest. The difference in this sphere may be found in the detail of how this socio-economic involvement is carried out. If it is accepted that any cooperation with spirits working on behalf of human interests should be conducted through holding a certain ritual, then we can see that within this context both *wong pinter* and the shaman are persons who understand how the ritual must be held in accordance with the will of the spirits. In some societies their roles are contested by priests and, as is the case in Nepal, by Lamas and Buddhist monks.

As for their socio-political characteristics, *wong pinter* leaders and shaman leaders are charismatic. Although they are not formal leaders like the politicians of modern society, their informal role is still political. Both are influential on the governing leaders. Some *wong pinters* are advisors of both past and present presidents of Indonesia, provincial governors, *bupaties* or head of the districts, lower dignitaries like the *camat* (a head of the sub district) and *lurahs* (village headman). With their involvement in this sphere, both *wong pinter* and shaman are accorded a respectful status. They are considered to be elders. The difference between both may be derived from the technique of how relevant knowledge for these political agents is generated. Some *wong pinters* as well as shamans act like prophets as found in Christian scripture, some having direct involvement, and others indirectly. As mentioned in Tables 4 and 5, 57% of them are elders, 60% advisors and 37% active leaders. Xavier Blaisel, Frederic Laugrand, Jarich Oosten work together to explore the connection between shaman and

leadership. Their article ‘Shamans and Leaders: Parousial Movements among the Inuit of Northeast Canada’ (1999) reveals that some shamans are known as key figures in the messianic movements. Such a movement mushroomed in the 1960s and 1970s in Java as exemplified by *wong pinters* and indicated both in Hardjarmardjaja’s dissertation (1962) and in the writings of the Dutch researcher Justus van der Kroef (1959). What I notice from this is that the idea of a political leader who is at the same a spiritual leader can be associated with the practice of shamanism or wongpintership.⁴ The reason is that someone with knowledge of human world and the world of spirit is not only charismatic by nature but also matches people’s expectation for salvation not only in this world but also in the world to come. Moreover, a leader who has mastery in these two worlds is regarded as incontestably superior and thus his or her leadership brings more certainty. The ideological issue which has motivated the *wong pinter* is the key to the differentiation of shamans from *wong pinters*.

In regard to aspects of selection and training, both shaman and *wong pinter* share similar characteristics. Their process of becoming a practitioner involves visions, dreams, illness and fulfilment of the spirit’s requests. There is no certain or standardised length of how long this process may take. What is common here is that the process of becoming a *wong pinter* includes the experience of physical and mental isolation and austerity. Though it seems to be a common characteristic, there are exceptions. Hereditary wongpintership shows many differences, and the process is more controllable. As I look at the ancestral social domain (see Table 3), 53% of practitioners have an aristocratic family background. With the tradition that has been handed down from generation to generation, the austerity of the process is found to be less severe than

⁴ In China, the practice of shamanism is also connected with leadership. Loewe and Shaughnessy state that at some periods in China a king could be Royal Shaman. They write: “The view that the Shang (China in 1570-1045 BC) kings were shamans have frequently been advanced. It has been argued, for example, on philological grounds that the word *wang* (king), was related to words like *wang* (emaciated, crippled) and *kuang* (mad), with both of these states thought to be characteristic of shamans. The motifs on the Shang ritual bronzes have been understood as depictions of the shaman’s animal familiars; and much stress has been placed on Eastern Zhou references to the role played by shamans in the courts of early rulers, some of whom were said to have visited *Di* or *Tian*. The issues are complex and depend on the significant degree upon matters of definition. The good, bureaucratic order of the divination inscriptions, like the ‘plain Chinese’ in which they were written, does not suggest the ecstatic possession or trance voyages that anthropologists normally associate with shamanic experience. The Shang kings were undoubtedly heirs of jade objects, such as *cong* tubes. By late Shang, they had so routinized and ordered their mediations with Powers that they would have found the impromptu qualities of shamanic ecstasy and inspiration inimical to their religious and political authority” (1999, 262).

that of the one experienced by those who have no aristocratic background. Forty six (36%) participants acknowledge that they are just common people and distinguishable from *wong pinters* with aristocratic backgrounds or those known to be the descendants of prominent religious leaders (10%). Most of these *wong pinters* have experienced a near death challenge and acute social isolation, and have dealt with this without the help of spiritual mentors. It is the nature and spirit of their ancestors that directs and trains them. For these *wong pinters*, wongpintership is not something that they dream of. It is very much about following the will of the spirit guide. Different from this type of *wong pinter* are those who come from families with an aristocratic background and those who undertake a certain period of time practising discipline under their spiritual mentors. To them, wongpintership is very much associated with a constructed training. It is no wonder that most *wong pinters* with this background engage very well with mysticism. It is another element that distinguishes some shamans from some *wong pinters*.

Looking at their magico-religious activity, both shaman and *wong pinter* perform healing and divination. They can become involved in malevolent acts if they want to and are capable of doing so magically. However, with the increasing awareness about the significance of public law and issues of criminality, the concern to become purely useful helpers is stronger than the desire to become a powerful sorcerer. On top of this consideration, it is clear that most *wong pinters* and shamans are not full time practitioners. In total 73% of them are part timers, and 36% are full time practitioners. It means that they have other sources of income. In the case of *wong pinter*, I have listed twenty eight activities which take for granted the acquisition of magico-religious mastery. As seen in Table 4, village cleansing, finding medical herbs, rain diversion, finding fountains, transferring heirlooms or amulets from their invisible abodes or from someone's body are only few examples of magico-religious activities performed by *wong pinters*. These have been witnessed also by a Singaporean ambassador, Lee Khoon Choy (1976), who was engaged in close observation of Javanese magico-religious practices. His report about Java, from chapter 6 to 13, reflects the same experience which I have had. It means that there is continuity of practice in this magico-religious practitioner among the Javanese. A similar report is also produced by Nina Epton in her book *Magic and Mystics of Java* (1974). Therefore, the difference between shaman and *wong pinter* in this sphere is concerned with the varieties of activities in the areas that they may become involved in.

Looking at the application of power, some similarities and differences can be analysed here. Both shaman and *wong pinter* are familiar with animal spirits, and the spirit of tigers are the most common. They have spirit allies, many of them with the names of figures that we can find in Javanese shadow puppetry (*wayang*), which is interpreted by Tim Byard-Jones as a communion with ancestors (2004, 833). As Winkelman has argued, the shaman controls the spirit and its power (1990, 316). Some others acquire impersonal power (*mana*), a term which in Sanskrit is equivalent to the word *cakti* or *sakti*. *Wong pinter* may also have both spirit power and impersonal power which is called *kasekten* (from the Sanskrit *cakti*). This power is transferable through direct or indirect contact and infusible with medicine and physical treatment like massaging, herbs and it permeates into the water given as a remedy for the illnesses that they are presented with. The possession of *kasekten* helps a *wong pinter* have an equal relationship with the spirit. In the case of shamanism, the spirit could dominate these magico-religious practitioners. Some *wong pinters* seem to be dominated by spirits; some others have a great control over them. The rest may show that they neither dominate nor are they dominated by spirits. Instead, both *wong pinter* and the spirits are acknowledged to work together recognising each other equally. What is obvious from their relationship with the spirits is that there are many possible types of relations developed between *wong pinters* and their spirit helpers including relationships as a husband-wife, child-parent, master-servant or just a co-working agents. *Wong pinters* from certain backgrounds – such as those having a mastery of *kasekten* through Javanese martial arts or achieving a high level of mystic ability – are in control of the spirits of animals and other lower spiritual beings. They are respected both by the spirits of ancestors and of animals. Those whose religion is Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist or Confucian, consider themselves as agents of the sovereign deity or God both in Islamic and Christian terms. According to some *wong pinters*, such as Joko Kijeng (West Jakarta, 26 January 2011) Jesus is the supreme *wong pinter*, then Mary and Joseph. Such recognition strengthens the observation offered by Barbara Wilhelmi (2004, 37-39) and M.J. Field (1958, 14) whose study on Christianity and shamanism shows that Jesus was one of the many shamans who had lived on this earth.

As for an altered state of consciousness, both shaman and *wong pinter* can be in a state of trance. In classical shamanism trance is known as the most important element. In *wongpintership* being in a trance is one of many possible ways to be in contact with spirits. As in the shamanism practised among the Hmong people of Laos and others

areas in Central and North Asia, entering into an ASC among *wong pinter* can be enhanced by the continuous hitting of the Javanese *kenong* (small gong) or *kendang* (Javanese drum), and chanting certain mantras or *tembang* (a type of Javanese song). However, this practice is not performed at any time as in the case of a Hmong shaman who, after nearly four hours in trance and with the help of his assistants who hit the drums and cymbals, tells the lady, who needed his help to understand why she felt unwell, that her soul had been pulled into different directions by spirits. The spiritual journey this Hmong shaman had just made was not only to find information from the ancestors regarding what had made her unwell but also to block up seven holes which had opened up when her soul had been pulled asunder. *Wong pinters* employ the idea of soul voyage in their performance of *racut suksma* (the soul leaves the body and travels), *ngrogo suksma* (the soul enters someone else's body), and *oncat suksma* (the soul is ejected from the body). *Wong pinters* do not always employ these practices to diagnose and provide solutions. Instead of having unceasing drumming or chanting, a state of trance can be induced through the using of cigarette smoke, the fragrance of incense or perfume, and the scent of certain flowers. However, being in an altered state of consciousness is not strongly encouraged, as Beatty also remarks (2004, 817). It is no secret among the *wong pinters* that being in trance or possessed by spirits is a sign that someone's mastery over the *elmu* (secret knowledge) is not strong enough.

Stephen Hugh-Jones offers five variables: training, curing, attributes, duties and social status (1996, 37). There are many other variables which can be added to this list. With these variables, similarities and distinctions can be established. With this framework, wongpintership can also be compared to other practices of shamanism that exist outside Siberia or Northern and Central Asia. Hugh-Jones's two categories of shamanism, horizontal and vertical shamanism, suggests that some *wong pinters* could be classified in the category of horizontal shamans and some others – especially those with an aristocratic or Javanese mysticism background – as vertical shamans. Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 show how much they actually engage with mysticism and Javanese religious or traditional teachings. Some others display characteristics found within both types.

To say that some *wong pinters* share the characteristics of horizontal shamans is to underline that *wong pinters* in this category are more egalitarian, morally ambiguous and are associated with low status and prestige. Their practice depends “less on ‘saying’ than on “doing” and involves the more classical shamanistic features of trance and

possession” (Hugh-Jones 1996, 33). To associate some *wong pinters* with Hugh-Jones’s idea of vertical shamanism underlines that the *wong pinters* belonging to this category devote more attention to esoteric knowledge. They hold traditional teachings and thus embody high prestige and status as knowledge of Javanese teachings and wisdom are symbols of nobility. Included in the conservation of Javanese teachings and values is a common awareness of partaking in a divine mission. Wongpintership maintains that life in the world means to carry out a certain divine mission which most kings of Java (seen by practitioners as *wong pinters* too) and *wong pinter* ancestors have formulated this in their ideological concept of: *mamayu hayuning buwana*, that is to enhance the beauty (well-being) of the earth. Thus, to take up the way of the *wong pinter* is to continue that mission and to partake in this religious and political ideology.

3.5 Characteristics and varieties of *wong pinters*

After exploring the differences and similarities between shaman and other magico-religious healing practitioners, we come to examine the varieties of *wong pinters* closely. Just as in the world of shamanism whose varieties are so open, generalisation is not possible in the world of *wong pinter*. As I have mentioned before at the start of this chapter, unlike in Central Java the term *wong pinter* is not avoided as much in West Java and East Java. The term *orang pintar* (the Indonesian translation of *wong pinter*) is used though its connotation with the *dhukun* (traditional healers, fortune tellers, etc.) and the paranormal is also strong. However, some participants from West Java suggest using the terms *janma linuwih* (‘a human being with extraordinary prowess’ or ‘those who have acquired qualities which others may have not yet’) and *insan kamil* (‘the ones who have reached spiritual perfection’). The key concept behind these terms resides in the ongoing process of achieving the highest levels of the complete stages set in order to become a *janma linuwih*, to use one term of many.

According to Handaka (12 January 2011), a *janma linuwih* is someone whose life displays a mastery in the practice of wisdom (*waskita*), prudence (*wicaksana*), vigilance (*waspada*) and the capability of overcoming every on-going and upcoming challenge (*sembada*). In the point of view of Hariadi Usman (20 September 2010), an *Insan Kamil* is the one who has managed to move upward beyond the sixth level of the personal development process. Both participants mentioned the existence of a curriculum in the process of wongpintership that needed to be completed. They also

mention that this curriculum was entrusted to the chosen person differently through a visionary spiritual experience and should be memorised by heart. In this context, I conclude that the road to wongpintership involves divine election and personal strife. Does it mean that wongpintership cannot be created or cultivated, for example via a formal institution? Considering the fact that there are many groups of *kebatinan* (school of mysticism) I would argue that – to some degree – wongpintership can be achieved through formal training but it would only fulfil some of the requirements for achieving a certain level of mastery in the areas mentioned above. It can be learned. Wongpintership is about practical skill and experiential knowledge. However, its quality is different from the one received from a divine election.

In Central Java, the term *wong pinter* is ridiculed. Most participants suggest using other terms instead. The reason why they wish to avoid the phrase is because it is against the virtue of humility. To acknowledge that someone is knowledgeable is seen as boasting and a form of self-exaltation. That term will only create enemies and family destruction. “Once someone is known to be a *wong pinter*, other people will challenge him [or her]”, said Mr and Mrs Tamtu (24 October 2010), a couple who suffered from unceasing attacks from other *wong pinters*. Therefore, it is better to avoid being known than to proclaim oneself as a *wong pinter*. The term used in one village may not be identical to that used in others, although some areas may also employ the same one. To summarise, there are five terms that are commonly used: someone who is regarded as an elder in the society (*wong sepuh*), someone who knows the solutions to every difficulty or the answers to all questions (*wong ngerti*), someone who has experience in many aspects of life (*wong pengalaman*), someone who is guided by divine agents, whether they are spirit guides, ancestors and even the god or gods (*wong tinuntun*), and someone who helps others (*wong tetulung*).

Some of those terms (*wong sepuh*, *wong tinuntun*, and *wong ngerti*) are found in East Java. The terms found in East Java have the same connotation as those in Central Java because the practitioners originate from Central Java. This is to do with the spreading of *wong pinters* after the fall of the Javanese nobility system caused by the encroachments of colonial power. What differences do these terms imply? What do they signify? Before explaining each of them, the following tabulation of the varieties and characteristics of *wong pinter* may give a quick idea about who they are.

Table 2: Varieties of *wong pinter* and their characteristics.

	Janna Linuwih	Insan Kamil	Wong Sepuh	Wong Ngeri	Wong Pengalaman	Wong Tinuntun	Wong Tetutung
Meaning	A man/woman who has surpassed the ordinariness of humanity after the mastery of four constitutive requirements	A person who has achieved the highest level of perfection in spiritual life	A person who shows or possesses words of wisdom and traditional teachings	A person who knows the answers and solution for any problems brought.	A person who is rich with experiences about the aspects of life in its wholeness.	A person who is guided by supernatural being (spirits, ancestors, gods)	A person who is in a disposition to give help to anyone with the guidance of spirits
Main concerns	-Bringing about social harmony in society. -esoteric teachings -mysticism and theosophy	-Reaching the highest state of holiness. -moral teachings -Sufism	-maintaining inner peace -local wisdoms -Javanese mysticism	-solving all sorts of problems brought by the guests in need	-learning about things surrounding which bear practical wisdom -reading the signs of nature	-following what the spirits or spiritual agents want this person to do	-following what spirits or spiritual agents directs the person to act
Social network	-institutional -having group of people with the same interests -political as well as cultural and religious -Interreligious dialogue -high political integration	-non institutional -independent -political, cultural and religious -religious relativism -neutral	-individual -Independent -cultural and environmental -village elders	-individual -independent -cultural, environmental -integrated with society	-communal -a group with restricted number of member -cultural -Integrated with society	-individual -independent -cultural and religious -integrated with society	-individual -independent -cultural, no religious attachment -integrated with society
Methods	-revelation -trawangan or clairvoyance -dream	-revelation -visionary -what religious teachings say	-trawangan -wisik (clairaudience) -employing teachings of local tradition	-insight, intuition, vision, -trawangan, wisik	-trawangan, -wisik -personal experience -niteni or perceptive	-wisik -trawangan -visionary	-personal experience -spirit guidance -visionary -wisik
World view	-theosophical -philosophical -there are layers of cosmos	-theosophical -mystical -there are layers of cosmos	-participating in the local view about the world -layers of cosmos	-represent the Javanese view about the world -t layers of cosmos	-high reference to the Javanese primbon -Javanese world view -layers of cosmos	-Layers of cosmos -Javanese cosmology -Less religion more local wisdom	-layers of cosmos -Javanese cosmology -Less religion more local wisdom
Relation with spirits	-co-worker -equally independent	-co-worker -equally independent	-co-worker and sometimes as medium and as master of spirits	-master of spirit	-master of spirit	-co-worker and sometimes servants of the ancestral spirits	-co-worker -Sometimes as adopted daughter, son, partner of spirits
Magico-religious activity	-healing, giving counsel, explaining someone's ancestral root, telling what is going to happen, and others (almost open to anything)	-prophesizing, healing, giving counsel, and other (almost open to anything)	-giving counsel, -open to any thing	-healing, giving the counsel, finding the lost things, etc. -open to anything	-healing, giving counsel, etc. -open to anything	-healing, giving counsel, etc. -open to anything	-healing, finding the loss, drawing the heirlooms and mystical stones from their unseen abode, etc. -open to anything

The term *wong sepuh* literally means an elderly person. It belongs to a higher level of reference if compared with its ordinary term *tuek*, meaning old. We can at least identify that it is a respectable title. The use of this term is based on social reasons and acknowledges certain practitioners' recognisable role in society. In daily use, the word *wong sepuh* refers to parents. Seen in this context, we can interpret that someone's preference for this term serves to underline his or her consciousness about his or her place in the social constellation. Society may be seen as consisting of: the young, the adult, and the elderly. To adopt this title is to place him- or herself as a person categorised as no longer young and more than a mere adult. This consciousness signifies not only that their concerns are different from other generations but also that their acquisition of wisdom, experience and knowledge is more complete. However, in daily practice, a *wong sepuh* is not necessarily someone whose age is beyond seventy years. Due to this understanding, a *wong sepuh* is also a *wong ngerti* (the one who knows) and a *wong pengalaman* (the one who has the experience). The former places more emphasis on the acquisition of practical knowledge about all aspects of the social, religious, political and cultural dimensions of life. The latter is more about the authority of their wisdom and knowledge. It is authoritative because of being based on life experience, generated from life experience and from the reality of life itself. However, these three terms do not represent their very reality because they acknowledge that to become a *wong pinter* they have to be 'made' as such by someone else. There is another agent or agents behind them. The term *wong tinuntun*, thus, is more representative and closer to the concern of this research than others. It indicates a practitioner's way of becoming a person of that kind, the ultimate source of their skills and knowledge, and also their commitment to do only what they are supposed to do (*saderma nglampahi*).

The term *wong tinuntun* was introduced by two *wong pinters* from Central Java and by two others from East Java. Soedjarwadi, a scholarly *wong pinter* from the District of Jember-East Java, highlights the key role of a *wong pinter* as a mediator of the will of spirit guide(s), who constitute the source of every shamanic act (26 September 2010). This concept resembles perfectly the idea of prophetic commission like the one found in Christian scripture and which reads: "For no prophecy ever came from human initiative. When people spoke for God it was the Holy Spirit that moved them" (2 Ptr. 1:21). A mediator will work when there is something to be mediated and when he is asked to mediate it. His work does not derive from his own initiative.

In the case of the biblical prophets, it is the Holy Spirit who is basically understood by the Christian as God's own entity. The process of a prophetic election itself varies from prophet to prophet, for example the mission of Moses (Ex. 3:1-20), Samuel (1 Sam. 3:-4:1), Elijah (1 Kings 17:1-6), Elisha (2 Kings 2:1-18), Nehemiah (Neh. 1:1-2:10), Isaiah (Is. 6:1-13), Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4-19) and so forth. However, the core of carrying out the call to become a prophet is still the same, which is to empty one's agency and take the individuality of the one who sends him or her. Any attempt to escape from the prophetic task or to do something which one is supposed not to do will result in the infliction of disasters on the prophet himself (1 Kings 13:11-34; John 1:1-16). This description of what a prophet may be like has also been studied in the context of shamanism by Arvid S. Kapelrud (1967, 90-96). He is not the only scholar interested in this theme. There are two others: R.P Carroll in his article 'The Elijah-Elisha Sagas: Some Remarks on Prophetic Succession in Ancient Israel' (1969) and M.J. Field in 'Ashanti and Hebrew Shamanism' (1958). I would argue that the use of the term *wong tinuntun* may accommodate the phenomenon of wongpintership in the milieu of 'prophetism' which is another international term like shamanism. This encounter shows that – directly or indirectly – some characteristics of shamanism contain an element of universality.

Another *wong pinter* from the District of Gresik-East Java Mustafa underlines that the truth of wongpintership is based on the fact that someone is a *wong pinter* because of being made as such by *Gusti Allah* (Allah the Lord) (Gresik, 10 October 2010). Therefore, basically there is no such thing as the term *wong pinter*, insofar as it is translated as "the knowledgeable person", except in the academic world. The point that he wants to make here is that it is an utter embarrassment to claim oneself as a *wong pinter* because in actual fact a *wong pinter* himself is just a mouthpiece of somebody else. His knowledge and information as relevant to the practice of wongpintership are made available to him once he is in contact with those other agent(s) from the upper world. Mustafa tends to use the term "he who is from above" for the other agent. It seems to me that when he says "he who is from above", he may mean that it is the God or Gods of religions. The reason is that this phrase reflects people's daily practice. Most Javanese tend to use the similar term "someone who is there" while his or her finger is pointed towards the sky. That practice is different from their Christian or Muslim counterparts who show great confidence when calling on the name of their God.

Marsono from Ngaglik-Jogyakarta and Guno from Jogjakarta court suggest the use of *wong tinuntun* instead of *wong pinter*. The word *tinuntun* is a passive form of *menuntun* which means to guide. So, *wong tinuntun* means a person who is guided. Our question is who may have become his guide. According to Guno, who is descended from Javanese nobility and is a former national comedy competition champion, there are many educated and knowledgeable persons (*wong pinter*) who are very clever, but rather fewer people who are *tinuntun*, guided. This statement needs further explanation. As far as his stories go, I would say that a *wong pinter* must not be the one whose practical knowledge is based on reading books but the one whose practical knowledge is revealed by spirit guides or by ancestors. It may be a common truth as this statement is representative not only of Guno's own experience, but also that of many others. To reference the term that many Christians are used to applying, I would suggest that divine providence is the most appropriate phrase to deploy here.

Marsono underlines what has been stated by Guno. According to him the term *wong tinuntun* is the most suitable term for a number of reasons. It shows that it is more honest and understanding of the process of its becoming, and rightly situates the position of the elected person for wongpintership in their precise position in the cosmic constellation (15 February 2011). Does a *wong tinuntun* need a guru? Unlike Hamid from the District of Magelang-Central Java (20 October 2010), he says that a guru is necessary for someone initiated to make *khatam* or to complete the basic practical lessons and skills needed to deal with common challenges. For particular cases, he will turn himself to his guide(s).

Last but not least is another term called *wong tetulung*, a phrase suggested by some participants with whom I have participated in their works over four months. The word *tetulung* literally means "to give help". Someone who bears that title proves himself (most of them are male *wong pinters*) always available to help others without reservation, expectation or receiving reward. Basically, a *wong tetulung* regards his work as total call to help others in need such as drawing *pusakas* from their unseen abode, withdrawing money from the other world, finding medicine, locating lost people or belongings, inserting a *susuk* (any sort of valuable materials inserted into someone's body for a certain purpose, such as making someone more attractive, charismatic, etc.), and even providing a winning number for the weekly lottery draw. This category of the *wong pinter* is always at risk of being abused or misused by users. However, s/he is

well-equipped with tactics to deal with potential misusers. One of them is a young man named Hamid from the village of Pingit. He has been recognised as being able to draw the *pusakas*, mystical stones, and withdraw money from the other world. He grants the demands of his guests in need by emphasising in advance the nature of the help that he can give. According to him, not all people deserve this help. Only those with genuine intentions might receive what they are looking for. If they do not deserve, in the case of withdrawing money from the unseen world, the money may appear but then it will turn into leaves. It sounds so mythical. However, the practice is still going on, even up to the moment when this thesis is written, and I am not the only one to have experienced this. Two foreign researchers and writers, Nina Epton who was a British traveller and Lee Khoon Choy who was a Singaporean ambassador to Indonesia at the dawn of a new regime, the New Order (*Orde Baru*) in 1976, have explored this involving-the spirit-practice, and recounted it in their work. Due to the high risk of being manipulated, the role of a third party is sometimes useful when declining the demand.

There are other self-conceptions maintained by most *wong pinters*. They provide different answers to the question of who a *wong pinter* is. Answers which refer to a description about one's personal character are very common.⁵ Soedjarwadi describes fluently twenty five qualities that constitute wongpintership (26 September 2010). Each of them can be established as a different name for *wong pinter*. Handaka and members of the inner group of the MSC suggest some traits that make someone acknowledged as a *wong pinter* or a *janma linuwih* (Bintaro, 12 January 2011). Hariadi Usman, an adviser to the current Governor of Jakarta, also offers a similar opinion (Jakarta, 20 September 2010). Therefore, according to these *wong pinters*, wongpintership is very

⁵ An example of answers has been provided by a prominent participant, Ki Joko Kijeng. He says that there have been *wong pinters* drawn from both from the Javanese nobility (*kalangan bangsawan atau ningrat atau priyayi*) and from the common people over centuries in Java. Some of them were medicine men/women (*dukuns* and *tabib*), Islamic missionaries (*wali*), prophets (*nabi*), heirloom makers (*empu*), clairvoyants (*cenayang*), mystical helpers (*aulia*), ascetics (*pertapa*), masters of wisdom (*begawan*), paranormals, fortune tellers (*peramal*) and half human-god beings (*manusia setengah dewa*). They can be asked even now for any information regarding Java and its formation as a society. Their names are different because their given missions are different from each other. However, once they have become a *wong pinter*, they are no longer common persons in terms of their social class. Besides their different missions, their difference in roles and specialities also implies the degree of mystical knowledge and power (*kasekten*) they have acquired (Anderson 1990, 20). The closer they are to the source of this type of knowledge and power, the higher they are on the social scale of the *wong pinter*. Consequently, based on these differences, there is a hierarchy among the *wong pinter* themselves since their specialities and associated importance reflect different values, and "to adopt values", according to Louis Dumont, "is to introduce hierarchy" (1970, 20).

much about the extraordinary quality of someone's personality. Does it have relevance to the spirit guide then? The answer is more likely to be a yes. As they witness, there is a major change of personality after they took up wongpintership, especially when they are in trance. Their personalities resemble those of the spirit guide(s) who have become embodied in them. However, being in trance is not the sole element of wongpintership. Many of them see that being in a trance is a sign of a low level or status. Regardless of whether they employ the in-trance state or not, the key is the same: there is somebody else embodied in their being. Such a view is relevant to the idea of reincarnation.

An understanding that a *wong pinter* is a reincarnation (*titisan*) of someone from the past is quite widespread among *wong pinters*. Considering this is a widespread phenomenon, it is worth questioning whether or not there is a way to prove this belief. Without intending to answer this, I would suggest some questions which may be useful for further research. Why is that tendency possessed by almost all *wong pinters*? Moreover, why are most spirit guides associated largely with great personalities from the past and, frequently, with sagas, local heroes and nobles from ancient Javanese kingdoms, even with mythical figures from the world of *wayang* or shadow puppet theatre like Bima, Arjuna, and Semar? On some trance occasions why are these prominent persons from the past present to the chosen *wong pinter* and do they make him display the behaviour of mythical creatures like the *naga* (dragon) and tiger? These are questions whose answers may bring us to a more intimate connection with them.

To highlight the main point of this discussion, I have to say that the term *wong pinter* is a term stigmatised by users, onlookers and outsiders rather than by practitioners. The variety of terms suggested by the practitioners could possibly be regarded as types of wongpintership or even as variants of Javanese shamanism. I, therefore, would suggest that the term *wong pinter* can be treated as an umbrella term for the phrases suggested by practitioners. Each term has a different emphasis, ranging from a concern with showing modesty to honesty. This definitely enriches the study itself and reveals the various aspects of the phenomenon. To connect this discussion to the study of Javanese shamanism, I am convinced that the characteristics of the *wong pinter* has an intimate relationship with those of shamanism. As a consequence, we may find a foundation for connecting the study on *wong pinter* with the study on shamanism. To make this statement clearer, I would say that to undertake a study on Javanese shamanism is to deal with the phenomena of *wong pinters*.

3.6 Summary

Like the term shaman, the phrase *wong pinter* could be treated as an umbrella title for different types of magico-religious practitioners in Java. While outlining that shamanism is a universal phenomenon, I have proven that *wong pinter* is a type of Javanese shaman and wongpintership participates in a universal shamanism and demonstrated how it is connected to wider shamanism. It displays a close affinity to shamanism because of sharing a similar history of development and the essential characteristics of shamanism's general nature as well as its various problems. Seen in terms of its possible origin, Javanese shamanism has a connection with the practice of shamanism in Southeast Asia, and even with the *locus classicus* of shamanism which is geographically and historically linked. The evidence found in the history of migration from South China suggests that the practice of wongpintership could be seen as a variation of the practice of shamanism in the region. Distinctions and uniqueness may be caused by mobile and fluid circumstances in a region such as Southeast Asia and to which practitioners have to adapt. In this type of society, to display one's uniqueness is to invite conflict. So, these practitioners, including *wong pinter*, have adapted, acculturated and assimilated to local practices and mainstream religions. Such a degree of influences may not be found in areas such as Siberia in which population mobility is very limited. Thus, I would say that Javanese shamanism has evolved so uniquely that it looks distinctive relative to its origin. Yet it contains a certain continuity in terms of its essence. Scrutinised relative to the essence of shamanism itself, there is no doubt that in its very nature wongpintership is an art of gaining practical knowledge from – and through – a direct or indirect contact with the world of the spirit. Its difference from classical shamanism is only in terms of its material culture, not its nature.

As is the case with shaman and shamanism, *wong pinter* and wongpintership is a term attached by the outsider to those practitioners who have their own understanding of their practices. They have different conceptions about who they are. Differences in terms indicate the fact that each *wong pinter* has a personal as well as a social history that provides a backdrop to the nature of their calling and formation. That is why there are many types of *wong pinters*. Here the term *wong pinter* itself could be treated as an umbrella term for their variety. This diversity implies the unique roles of different *wong pinter* within their particular internal spheres. The next chapter will deal with the idea of how the nature of *wong pinter* is to be understood in its domestic sphere and network.

Chapter 4

Formation, Types, Roles and Social Standing of *Wong Pinter*

In Chapter 3 we discussed the characteristics of *wong pinters*, their connection to and distinction from the world of shaman and shamanism. *Wong pinter* is a form of Javanese shaman whose wongpintership shares the characteristics of the wider world of shamanism. Although the material cultures of Javanese shamanism do not share similar elements with those of the shamanism found in its *locus classicus*, there is continuity in terms of its essence (Ripinsky-Naxon 1993, 205). The continuity of the core of shamanism with the practice of wongpintership matters more than the elements of its material cultures which are unique from place to place due to the unceasing process of adaptation. As a result wongpintership's practice strips away the contingent aspects of shamanism and develops only its core, that is the practice of gaining practical knowledge from the world of spirits for the people in need through a direct or indirect contact either with the spirit helpers or other spirits. This chapter focuses on the reality of the *wong pinters* as recognised from their internal preoccupations and services to their surrounding communities. Why is it important to explore this concern? What is its significance for the wider reflection? The first issue will be delineated in 4.1 and 4.2. Aspects of this will be further developed in the next four sub-chapters, 4.3–4.6. From there, this chapter reflects on why *wong pinters* have to redefine their social standing constantly and why they are both respected and despised.

Based on the lexical meanings of the word 'internal' and 'preoccupation'⁶, the phrase "*wong pinters*' internal preoccupation" refers to those activities and affairs within their milieu which absorb and dominate their thoughts or attention and are regarded as essential. Therefore, *wong pinters*' internal world is about intimate issues relevant to the reality of their everyday pursuit of life and activities within their community. Then, to explicate what intimate issues relevant to *wong pinters*' internal preoccupations may consist of, I will extract suggestions from the study of shamanism concerning issues incorporated in the discussion about shamans' internal preoccupations

⁶ One of the definitions for the word 'preoccupation' is "a thing that dominates a person's thought." (*SOED.*, preoccupation 5). Whereas the word 'internal' refers to the affairs of one's own individuality [any types of it including one's social types, nation and institutional domains] (*SOED.*, Internal:A.3). The word 'affair' means things (ordinary pursuit) that one has to do (*SOED.*, affair: 1.2).

within their surrounding communities and from the scholarship on the phenomenon of *wong pinters* or their consociate names.

4.1 The discourse on shamans' internal preoccupations

Most studies on shamanism do not use a term such as the 'internal preoccupation' of shamans. However, a standard delineation about the phenomena of shamans and shamanism tends to include the preparative state of the shamans or their formation state, their technique of shamanising, activities, assistants and avatars (spirit guides), material cultures and the people they serve (Ripinsky 1993, 205; Winkelman 2000, 78&93; Dubois 2009, 176; Vitebsky 1995, 96-124). Among the writers on shaman and shamanism, Eliade, Ake-Hulkrantz, Ripinsky-Naxon, Halifax, Winkelman, Krippner, Siikala and Vitebsky are only some of the most celebrated ones. As this point is to provide an overview, I compile and summarise the findings of these contributors and construct a general picture of shamans' domestic sphere, which will become a mirror for studying the preoccupations of *wong pinters* within their closed community.

In her study on Siberian and Inner Asian shamanism, Anne-Leena Siikala systematically records her observations about the shaman in the community, their shamanic initiation, belief tradition, activities and techniques of ecstasy. According to her, the type of community which a shaman serves provides a unique setting which influences the construction of shamans' status and role within the community and also shapes the creation of a small group of local shamans when it is necessary. Further development of the study on shamanism shows that in some societies a certain cultural setting creates a hierarchy of shaman or categories of shamans. As she argues "the shaman's nature and rank are determined by the spirits initiating him ... A shaman could rise to a higher category as his knowledge increased" (1998, 5). The categories of shamans imply various types of initiation which also explain their roles and their social significance within the community they belong to. Joan Halifax writes that "the shaman's work entails maintaining balance in the human community as well as in the relationships between the community and the gods or divine forces that direct the life of the culture" (1979, 21). George Heyne as well as Vitebsky (2001, 110) give another example of shaman's social significance. According to his study on Evenki shaman, a shaman is the protector and healer of a clan or group, two important tasks and functions for the community (Heyne 2003, 45). A shaman gains social significance within his or

her community not because of something that s/he does and is valued for but because his or her shamanic acts are performed on behalf of the community and its members.

A community's recognition of shaman's social roles illustrates not only its acknowledgement of the shamans' significance for that group but also of their knowledge and skills or techniques (Siikala 1998, 9). A community's acceptance denotes that the people whom shamans serve do not question what technique they use or where their power and ability may come from. The effectiveness of their works is the justification for their claim of mastering spiritual knowledge. From the point of view of the shamans themselves, an appropriate welcome from the community may compensate for the severity of their initiation process (Eliade 2004 [1964], 33-64; Vitebsky 2001, 59, 74, 85; Siikala 1998, 5-7; Winkelman 200, 78-84; Ripinsky-Naxon 1993, 71-91). Mutual symbiosis between shaman and the community is very significant, as reflected in shaman-catered communities' lack of conflict involving religious ideology, such as among the hunting and gathering communities or some agricultural societies. In these types of communities, shamans enjoy a secure social standing. Most discussions that try to explain the diminishing of shamanism mention the role (intrusion) of missionaries from different religions (Knecht 2003, 22-23; Ortnor 1995; Dubois 2009, 221-233). Among missionized societies, the social position of shamans is divided into two categories: accepted or rejected. A rejection of the presence of shamanic practices in some countries may be initiated by political authorities and the religious establishment. Such a policy was applied by Christian missionaries working together with the state army regarding the Tlingit shaman (Kan 1991, 363). Viewed from the other side, the ending of a repressive ideology, including that of religions, and a political system toward the practice of shamanism may enhance the arrangement to accept shamans as an integral part of the wider society. A report from the 27th International Conference on Shamanism held in 2010 in San Raphael, California demonstrated instances of medical doctors working together with shamans. Thus, shamanism is acknowledged as an integral part of society which can contribute to the public health care system.

In some places, shamanic practices increase due to positive reaction from the community. The reasons for this are multi-layered. In her study on Wana shamanism (Indonesian shamanism practiced on the island of Sulawesi) Atkinson (1987) hypothesised that a shaman with a great reputation is one who manages to develop renown in his or her own community by fostering the dependence of the community's

well-being on his or her knowledge and ability (Atkinson 1987, 345). The effectiveness of a shaman, moulded to identification with a mythical hero, can be the key for a shaman to gain a good reputation in his or her community. By becoming meaningful to the community, a shaman's social role is confirmed and sustained. Among the Vaupes of Columbia shamanic practices are seen as ancient practices that have contributed to the wealth of the people and to a nation's high culture and civilisation. As a result, the government mobilises people to conserve this longstanding shamanic tradition and a national project has been promulgated to promote an ethno-education in which a shaman workshop is facilitated (Jackson 1995, 305-309). The increasing number of shamans is also due to external factors. Frank Kressing (2003) reports his findings about why shamanism among the Ladakhis of Northwest India has increased. He writes:

The growing number of lha-mos and lha-pas might be conceived as an indicator of social disruptions, psychic stress, and mental imbalance which is prevalent among the Ladakhi population. It is not too far-fetched to consider the increase in "shamanic activity" to be a coping strategy in times of general cultural and social disruption [caused by modernity and rapid cultural changes]. In this way, a formerly marginal religious or spiritual practice seems to be turning into a mass phenomenon. With the proliferation of oracles, a specific form of healing-one that might eventually lead to increased competition with the traditional am-chi system as well as with other religiously bound healing specialists like monks, ong-pos, and Muslim sheikhs-is spreading (2003, 16).

Kressing does not only try to find an explanation for why the practice of shamanism among the Ladakhis is increasing. He also suggests that there is a possibility that the lack of readiness of the local people to deal with the phenomenon of modernity may result in the growth of competition among practitioners themselves which may become a serious drawback. However, regardless of this contradiction, it seems that the development of people's awareness toward their local tradition and cultural roots may be the main factor behind its new appreciation and the revival of archaic practices such as shamanism, a tendency that may occur in many other societies. Knecht says that people will acknowledge that shamanism contributed to the fundamental basis of their worldview and religious expression, not others (2003, 1). Considering these critical opinions, I would underline that the sustaining and continuing existence of shamanic practices or shamans in a given society is more likely to be determined by both internal and external factors. Internal factors refer to something to do with the practitioners themselves. Their willingness to take up shamanship, whether it is inherited from their family or is, instead, a sudden shamanic call, is crucial. As Kressing has noted, the younger generation of Ladakhi society tends to see the practice of shamanism as

contrary to the spirit of modernity. The external factors refer to such issues such as an appropriate welcome from the community, a decline in the authority of a repressive regime or authoritative religious bodies, soaring demands for medical treatment, the psychological impact of modernity and the need to revive traditional values, all of which may be behind the revival and increase of shamanism.

To summarise, I argue that the discourse on shamans' internal preoccupations should cover: issues concerning their preparative and formative states; their technique during shamanising activities; assistants and avatars (spirit guides); material cultures and the people they serve; the shamanic initiation and belief tradition; their social significance and recognition; their techniques of ecstasy and hierarchy; social role and significance; protector of the community where s/he lives in; pressures and challenges such as conflicts with established formal religions; and fluctuations in the practice of shamanism. Now we must look at those elements of *wong pinters'* internal preoccupations which have been discussed by scholars.

4.2 Scholarly observations on *wong pinters'* internal preoccupations

Some scholars have discussed some elements of *wong pinters'* internal preoccupation in studies on the *dhukun*. These scholars include the anthropologists Clifford Geertz, Koentjaraningrat and Roy E. Jordaan who provide an elaborate explanation of who is a *dhukun*. Geertz discusses it under the heading of 'Curing, Sorcery, and Magic' in his book *The Religion of Java* (1976, 86-111). His delineation of the matter includes detailing how someone may become a *dhukun*, how s/he may carry out that role and what technique they may employ, what activities they may become involved in, and how some people either disbelieve in them or benefit from their services. He introduces three categories of *dhukuns*: the *priyayi*, *santri* and *abangan dhukun*. Koentjaraningrat discusses this issue as part of his chapter on Javanese religion under subtitle 'Javanese magic, sorcery and numerology' (1985, 410-422), in which he adds information which complements Geertz's work. He suggests that there are four categories of *dhukun*: a *dhukun* who uses either productive, protective or destructive magic, and a fourth *dhukun* specialising in divination and numerology. In Chapter 6 of his doctoral thesis, Roy E. Jordaan (1985) discusses the role of *dhukuns* and *kiyayi*, both of whom he categorises as magico-medical specialists. Some *dhukuns* are a *kiyayi* and vice versa. Like Geertz, he mentions the process of becoming a *dhukun*, how a *dhukunship* may start, whether this

is an inherited role or a question of personal pursuit or divine election, how it is developed and sustained, what may cause it to come to an end, and types of *dhukun* and their activities and specialisations.

Andrew Beatty describes two *dhukuns* conducting a *slametan* ritual (communal prayer) and mediating a message from the other world to the one in need (2004, 816; 1999, 94-98). Nina Epton reports the practice of black magic in Java by varieties of *dhukuns* (1974, 180-182). As also mentioned by other writer Raden Supatmo (lecture 2, 3-6; lecture 3, 1-2), she notes that there are various activities. Most of them are situational and done as a part time service. So, because of their situational nature, their activities can be about and for anything, as various as the demands. On top of these sources, there are three publications relevant to *wong pinters*' roles, social standing and significance: 1) *Health Care in Java: Past and Present* (Boomgaard, Sciortino and Smyth (1998 [1996])); 2) *The Real and Imagined Role of Culture in Development: Case Studies from Indonesia* (Dove 1988); and 3) *Traditional Healing Practice* (Setyonegoro and Roan 1983). In the first book, Ina E. Slamet-Velsink discusses the position and role of traditional healers, their techniques of healing and diagnosis, the attempt to conjoin their role in healing with the government's health care system, and various responses to their roles ranging from impostors to an acknowledgement of them as genuine healers (1998 [1996], 75-77).

In the second book, Adrian S. Rienks and Purwanta Iskandar explain the system of indigenous medicine, cosmology or indigenous concept of health and illness, techniques of diagnosis, and types of folk healers in their article 'Shamans and Cadres in Rural Java' (1988, 75-81). They see the *tiyang saged* as an indigenous healer. To show that there is a hierarchy among traditional healers, they distinguish the *tiyang saged* into three categories: *tukang* (specialist in something); *dhukun* (paid advisors and healers); and non-paid advisors as well as healers called *kasepuhan* (80). Although the title of their article consists of the term 'shaman', there is no mention of its use in the body of their writing. They just try to use an all-encapsulating term for traditional healers and regard the *tiyang saged* to be shaman. The third book is a collection of articles produced as a result of a collaborative research project on traditional healers conducted by 56 scholars in the 1980s and sponsored by the Ministry of Health Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in collaboration with the WHO. I will deal with some contributions from this book as they provide relevant information.

Pariaman offers information about the domestic sphere of the traditional healers (*dhukun*). In his second article he discussed the *dhukun*, their technique when providing medical treatment and their concept of illness and health (1983b, 156-159). In his first article he quite extensively examines traditional healers, their process of becoming, service, methods of diagnosis and healing, and the types of traditional healers as based on their specialties and how they work. He mentions four types: a religious healer who relies only on prayer and the invocation of Allah's mercy; a faith healer who involves both Allah and holy mediators, such as Mohammad and saints in the process of healing; the *kebatinan* practitioners whom he considers as a type of religio-magico healer claiming to have direct contact with Allah and spirits; and healers who involve not only God but other spirits including Satan and devils (1983a, 152-155). Despite this there is a confusing delineation about who a *dhukun* is, as described in the first article, and who s/he is in his second article. However, he has illuminated some fundamental elements of *dhukuns'* internal affairs. Such a view is shared by other contributors in the same publication such as Suyono Yahya, who focuses on the traditional health system, herbal medication and diagnostic and healing approaches (1983, 207-229), three writers Sarwoko, Subodro and Ruslan Adji, who in their conclusion acknowledge that there are many hidden things about traditional healers which need to be explored and analysed (1983, 230-233). In turn Bonokamsi concentrates only on Javanese traditional healers whose practices and concepts of sickness are integral with their cultural beliefs and cosmological worldviews and are influenced by Javanese *kebatinan* spiritual groups (1983, 253-257). Darnawi has also dealt with the process of becoming as seen from a socio-cultural perspective (1983, 258-261), among other contributors.⁷

To comment on the work of the researchers mentioned in the previous paragraphs, I would say that when they discuss traditional healers they are referring to

⁷ These include: Zarkasi, who employs Islamic psychological concepts of human nature, sickness remedies and techniques of healing or therapy (270-289); Hidayat, who is concerned with seven types of traditional healing techniques as performed by seven types of traditional healers found in East Java (349-352); Abidin, who prefers exploring the phenomena of people's belief and disbelief (and some other sets of contradictions) in traditional healing techniques and the reality of traditional healers themselves (418-421); Lufti, who reports on three traditional healers in Central Java who decline any payment given by their visitors for the healing treatment they have received (422-425); Notosoedirdjo, who describes four types of traditional healers comprising herbalists, traditional midwives, bone setters and magic-religious healers (426-427); Muzaham, who delineates information about people benefitting from the role of traditional healers (406-417); and the trio Pranowo, Santoso and Sumitro who pay more attention to the role of Javanese mysticism as a type of school which produces many magico-religious healers and spirit experts (428-432).

the work of *dhukuns*. To perform healing is one of many possible activities. Although they mention these practitioners' social realities, none of them mentions their religious backgrounds or the role of other groups such as *pondok pesantren* and the martial art groups which contribute to the continuing tradition of traditional healers. Considering their findings, I would say that wongpintership is a product of social, cultural, religious, economic and political pursuits. The fact is that *wong pinters'* existence is only meaningful because people need them. It is not an independent reality. It is a complex range of embodied influences. To understand this one must see it in its totality. In consequence, *wong pinters'* roles, activities, skills and knowledge may be shaped and generated from many possible sources which constitute their formative backgrounds. Table 3 below shows some backgrounds constitutive of wongpintership. It tells how a *wong pinter* and his wongpintership could be a product of many factors and they present a very particular web of knowledge. Moreover, the content of this knowledge may also be shaped by these basic backgrounds. In turn, their practices give them a particular identity. This data may provide more information about *wong pinters'* socio-cultural-religious backgrounds, activities and involvements.

Table 3: Six variables in the formation of wongpintership.

Wong pinter	Types	Ancestral domain	Religious background							Process of Becoming							Gender	Domain						
			Christianity	Hinduism	Buddhism	Islam	Local belief	Others (New Age)	Starting time	Spiritual mentor		Internal and external factors						Male	Female	city	Village	Central Jv. Origin		
45 West Java	Part timer	More common people	34	2	5	13	26	4	28	9	8	29	14	21	6	41	7	3	30	32	13	45	0	33
60 Cent. Java	18	28	27	1	2	28	57	1	36	18	6	48	17	39	19	57	10	7	57	55	6	22	38	59
23 East Java	6	10	8	0	0	10	21	0	14	8	1	20	4	6	13	2	4	4	23	21	2	16	7	9
total	93	46	69	3	7	51	104	5	78	35	15	97	35	66	101	19	14	110	108	21	83	45	101	
																								73
%	73	36	53	48	2	5	40	81	61	27	12	76	27	51	79	15	12	86	83	17	65	35	79	
																								73

As far as the table is concerned, there are factors to be considered if we are to understand *wong pinters* and their knowledge. First of all, the formative factors listed

here show that 86% of them undertake the discipline required or severe asceticism, 79% inherited their wongpintership from the clan, 64% are prepared by gurus and 76% claim that their knowledge is generated by nature itself, and 61% suggested that it started early on in their lives. This data illustrates that their knowledge and skills could have been learned from their gurus, their natural surroundings and personal experiences. Other variables which directly influence them are whether they are part timers (73%) or full timers (27%), their gender (83% male and 17% female) and their location, that is whether they lived in cities (65%) or villages (35%). The full timers display more variety of information in quantitative terms than part timers do. The female *wong pinters* specialize more in a particular area than their male counterparts, who can perform more dangerous tasks or undergo long trips at any time. The village *wong pinters* demonstrate fewer attempts to make what they do sound scientific, unlike their urban counterparts.

Secondly, looking at their religious background, local belief system (81%) seems to contribute most to their knowledge of wongpintership, especially in the using of particular prayers before, during, and after the service. This practice is illustrated in Table 4 in this chapter. This data shows that 94% of them use prayers. Very few of these *wong pinters* have either Hindu (2% of 128 participants) and Buddhist (5%) backgrounds. It does not prove that these religions forbid their adherents from engaging with *wong pinters'* service as some Pentecostal churches and the Islamic group Muhammadiyah do. These institutions forbid their followers from dealing with traditional practices and customs because they might prove harmful to their faith, defiling and illegal (*musrik*), meaning potentially detaching their believers' concern with Allah. According to their religious ideology, *wong pinters* are contrary to divine revelation and modernity and thus categorised as heathen (*kafir*). I will discuss this further in Chapter 6. Some Catholic practitioners outside of the charismatic movements welcome all wongpintership practices. Those who join the charismatic movements challenge this practice of wongpintership and categorise it as against the Catholic faith. Such a position is similar to that of the modernist Muslim. However, poverty and the difficulty of accessing public health facilities encourages people to take advantage of the *wong pinters'* services at the expense of their religious outlook.

Wongpintership indicates that it is more vocational than professional. A vocational wongpintership is different from a professional one. When it is described as

a type of profession, the level of commitment relates closely to the agreed payment. Though there might be a philosophical principle behind it, such as partaking in the ideological endeavour to enhance the beauty of the earth (*memayu hayuning bawana*), it may not become a personally internalised world view. A vocational wongpintership supposes a personal worldview as expressed in the common saying: “I only mediate what is to be mediated. I will do anything if I am asked to do so and if there is sign to do it” (*kula punika mung saderma nglampahi*). The commitment required here is determined by how that value is innately integrated into the *wong pinter* philosophy of life. A vocation is more about a way of living which may never be measured by financial reward. It harbours a very sustainable mission.

In some cases, it is beyond the usual consideration of normality, especially when we see that the related subject gives up everything for the sake of the value embodied in the mission. Wongpintership is a way of life guided by spirit(s). This is evident in Hardjana’s experience. He was a successful lawyer but the call to take up wongpintership led his life in a completely different direction, from living with many amenities to a form of life without certainty (9 August 2009). Moreover, he has to be ready constantly to move to other places when the signs to leave are given. He finds that he has no choice. He becomes a person who is empty of self-interest. This is the point where we can find the reason why a *wong pinter* tends to deny that the success of his healing performance or provision of enlightening advice is based on his own prowess.

Kasiran and Hariadi Usman share a similar experience. Both were suddenly aware of mantras and local wisdoms formulated in a high Javanese language, though they never imagined speaking in such a beautiful language before. Kasiran, concluding the sharing of his experience, said: “Things you should do and know including mantras, skills in uttering them and delivering words of wisdom will come out by themselves once the embodiment between myself and the *qadam* (spirit infused in a heirloom) is achieved. There is no need to memorize” (7 February 2011). So, his wisdom is not his own as is his knowledge of healing, medical treatment and the medicinal herbs he suggests to clients. This is the way most *wong pinter* live. It is not his “I” anymore but that of the one who has commissioned him. However, while some *wong pinters* show a total submission to the tutelary spirits, others have reasons to negotiate.

Their submission, although different in degrees, refers to an observance of a common ideological belief. The concept of working to enhance the beauty of the world

(*memayu hayuning bawana*) has become a general paradigm. This philosophical ideal has been familiar to most *wong pinters* through Javanese cultural traditions and is understood as their religious paradigm. It originated from traditional teachings reserved for courtiers and associated with the idea of divine kingship. This underlines that wongpintership may have a strong connection to kingly leadership. In the past, a king was a political leader as well as the head of a religion (Heine-Geldern 1956, 6). In a less sophisticated society, village headmen are used to being religious leaders (Slamet-Velsink 1998, 45-47). The most virtuous life is reached by the one who bears the title *satriya-pinandita*, someone who acquires the quality of a leader and at the same time is a master of the spirit world.

Based on this short survey, I would argue that *wong pinters'* commitment to their vocation should be understood in this context. The field data supports this position. In total 53% of the *wong pinters* interviewed acknowledge having a direct relationship with the Javanese court, either the Mataram, Majapahit or Sundanese kingdoms such as the Padjadjaran and Galuh. Meanwhile 11% of them are descendants of religious leaders. Of these 36% are commoners, by which I mean those who do not want to say anything about their family tree, though during the conversations there were some indications that they had a strong connection with the Javanese nobility. This inclination is also strengthened by the information that 79% of their wongpintership was received as a genetic inheritance, that is from their ancestors. It means that some of them tried to deny their relationship with the Javanese court or their noble origin. As Sartono Kartodirjo (1998, 28) has argued, this is more likely to be a result of the demise of the traditional Javanese aristocracy.

Therefore, a discussion on the internal preoccupations of a *wong pinter* may include the process of becoming a *wong pinter*, their ongoing formation, knowledge and skills, how they are generated and applied in their habitat, their social standing, and the ways they maintain their existence. Combined with elements of shamans' internal concerns, these matters are grouped into four major discourses: firstly, the process of becoming, factors behind their election and the characteristics of its ongoing formation. In the next section, they are summed up by the subtitle 'formation aspect', which will delineate the process of the formation of *wong pinter* (4.3); secondly, on the knowledge and skill of the *wong pinters*, their sources and technology, and how they apply them to the people surrounding. On this issue, which I call 'profession and skill aspects' (4.4), I

will demonstrate that – with their experiential knowledge and practical skills – they have a respectable place in society. However, due to the lack of certainty in both their skills and practical knowledge, the world may insist that *wong pinters* empirically and repeatedly prove these, therefore their fate often falls prey to public taunts and doubts. This is discussed in point three under a sub-title ‘social standing aspect’ (4.5).

I would argue here that to ask for certainty and predictability from the practitioners may be unreasonable as their works are the work of spirits and no one knows their movements or will; and fourthly, on how to maintain their existence by connecting themselves to a network of *wong pinters* and to include themselves in the Javanese aristocratic social class (*priyayi*). I call this the ‘survival strategy aspect’ (4.6). This point discusses how practitioners may react in response to the ways in which non-practitioners have treated them. Here I will look at two important issues, how they create a network of *wong pinters* in order to sustain their wongpintership and how they integrate themselves in the closed social structure of their village and neighbourhood. It should be noted that I will frequently use information collected from participants, although I am aware of Krippner’s critique of writings about shamanism based on interviews, eyewitness observation and phenomenological accounts (Krippner 2011).

4.3 Formation aspect

As seen in Table 3, a *wong pinter*’s formative background shows that a persona of *wong pinter* is established on the basis of personal, social, religious, and cultural factors. Thus, their process of becoming is not simple and depends on the response of their surroundings. Like in the world of shamanism (Vitebsky 2001 [1995], 7), wongpintership is meaningful insofar as it is in a correct relationship with its social sphere. Alby Stone remarks: “Isolated shamans do not exist; each and every shaman is an integral part of a community they live and work in” (2003, 46). To fulfil the need to sustain and maintain one’s existence, a shaman should continually make his or her service contextual and apply compatible methods. Thus, taking up wongpintership always entails an on-going formation process which includes the necessity to take into account social, religious and cultural values. To detail this argument I will discuss three issues in the formation sphere: the process of becoming, factors of election, and the necessity to be involved in an ongoing process of becoming.

4.3.1 On becoming a *wong pinter*

As far as the process of becoming a *wong pinter* is concerned, there is no singular curriculum because each *wong pinter* has his or her own. Though each has a unique preparative experience, some elements of their journey to wongpintership appear to demonstrate a common pattern, in particular demonstrating potential similarity with that of others, especially one's mentor. Basically there are three ways to wongpintership. The first is the infusorial (Lt. *infusa*) wongpintership, known among the Javanese as *wong pinter tiban* (translated by Geertz as "fallen as a wonder from the skies" (1976, 100). The second is the acquisitive (Lt. *acquisita*), or "the learned one" (Jv. *wong pinter sinaon*). In some cases, there is a mixture of both modes. The third type can be named as a "mixed" (Lt. *mixta*) wongpintership (Jv. *wong pinter campuran*). The second and the third terms are unfamiliar to the ears of the Javanese. Seen in terms of the scholarly literature on shamanism, the *infusa* wongpintership may be equivalent to Eliade's 'spontaneous election', a term applied to a shaman whose shamanship is not based on hereditary factors or personal desire (Eliade 2004, 13).

While the *acquisita* wongpintership assumes an innate aptitude transmitted as a genetic inheritance and involves an on-going commitment, long training and learning, the *infusa* wongpintership does not. It is about an unprecedented election by the potential spirit guide(s). Being infused by the spirit, the actor suddenly changes and possesses surprising skills and knowledge out of nowhere, not from his parents nor from any gurus. A hard-core or organic *wong pinter* may come from this type. There is a high degree of unpredictability about what s/he is going to do or say. This can be compared to the call of St. Paul in the Act of the Apostles when, after a mystical encounter on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians, Saul suddenly became the teacher of the people outside of the Jewish nation (Act. Ch.8). It may match with what Jesus, if seen as a shaman (Field 1958, 14), argued that the spirit will tell the embodiers what they would say and do (Jh. Ch.14). Clifford Geertz discusses this within his treatment of the *dhukun* [*wong pinter*] *tiban* (Geertz 1976, 103).

In most cases of an *infusa* wongpintership the actor does not know what is going on. Once they recognise that there is something strange beyond their awareness, some of them try to escape and free themselves until a moment of enlightenment opens up him or her to understanding. Hariadi Usman from West Java tried to leave his knowledge behind as he found himself unworthy as he was not a Javanese but a

Sundanese (20 September 2010). However, his father-in-law, General Soedjono Oemardhani, who was the main spiritual adviser of the second president of Indonesia, Soeharto, received a message that none of his descendants was fit to inherit his mystical knowledge. Instead it was to be continued by his Sundanese son-in-law who was from the line of Fatahillah or the Sunan Gunung Jati, a political and religious leader of the people of Sunda in seventeenth century Cirebon. Therefore, he himself did not know or intend to master that mystical knowledge constitutive for his wongpintership. Such unawareness is also witnessed by other practitioners.

On many occasions Kasiran, from the village Nnode of Magelang (7 February 2011), as well as Mrs Irene from Sleman-Jogjakarta (24 October 2010), attempted to commit suicide because of the acute poverty that they had suffered. However, later on their poverty was seen to be part of the formative curriculum. Riyanto from Lawang, a small town in the District of Malang-East Java, decided to destroy the *batu merah delima* (a pomegranate seed-like stone) which supernaturally appeared and wanted to follow him. After understanding the call, they came to an agreement that the spirit guide who wanted to be with them would not disturb their family (3 January 2011). Then they were ready to work. Some *infusa wong pinters* include those who longed for deliverance from many kinds of sorrows caused by acute poverty or the taunts of their neighbours. Kasiran and Eddy are only two other examples for this. Eddy intentionally looked for relief (8 February 2011) whereas Kasiran wanted to end his own life. There would be too many narratives about *wong pinters*' early stages of training for their role if they were all recounted here. It is enough to underline the point that most *infusa wong pinters* are not aware of their early formation process and their election does not depend on whether their ancestors were *wong pinters* or not. In addition to this, it should be mentioned here that they do not have a manual as presumed in the *acquisita wongpintership*.

The second category, the *acquisita wong pinter*, comprises those who have received a formal training and institutional initiation. They may be both individuals who inherited wongpintership from their forbears and those who have a great interest in the matter. Their process of becoming a *wong pinter* demonstrates a certain kind of pattern as compared to the *tiban wongpintership*. At an early stage, s/he may be asked whether s/he has a convincing reason and why s/he feels fit for wongpintership. The answers can be one of two responses: a narrative based on spiritual experiences, either meaningful

dreams or mystical experiences, and a sign that s/he is descendant of a *wong pinter*. This is the introductory stage. Deeper than that is the initiation. The candidate will be initiated by the mentor. In many cases, s/he is privately trained. The most common rite of initiation is the ritual of bathing in a certain river or fountain and visiting sacred sites of remarkable mystic kings and individuals. This rite of bathing is not only a symbol of purification but also of self-giving and introduction to the power of the cosmos as flown down from the mountain. This act is also meant to tap into the cosmic energy beneficial for undertaking the new path of spiritual life. At the same time, it also underlines that his or her commitment includes a general commitment to give aid to anyone in need (*tetulung*) without reservation, to protect and conserve human life, the environment and natural sources for the benefit of many people.

As his life is now going to be a spiritual one, to undergo this path requires a *restu* or permission (blessing) from a *wong pinter's* family ancestors and the ancestors of the island of Java. This necessity is manifested in a pilgrimage. The initiated person visits the tombs of their relevant ancestors for an unlimited number of days until s/he will have received the *dhawuh* (words spoken by the honoured subject to the honouring one) or *wisik* (clairaudience or revelational message whispered by the spirit helpers to the candidate). This act is common among practitioners. The reason behind this practice is simple. Everything that exists is a continuation of the past and will continue to exist. It means that the wisdom of past life can be regained through direct contact with agents from the past. The death of someone is not the end of one's existence. This view implies an understanding that even those who have died years ago are still contactable. Fasting and praying are a means to become more spiritual, a mental state required to enter the world of spirits or to have access to spiritual beings such as ancestors. The moment of experiencing the apparition of an ancestor is sought after as a moment of knowledge transmission. Here, it can be said that knowledge from the past is still applicable to the present. This continuing practice justifies their belief in the important role of ancestors.

The content of the *dhawuh* and *wisik* could be instructions or secret teachings. In the case of Guno (23 February 2011), it included mantras for various usages. Such an opinion resembles the point made by the other *wong pinter*, Soedjarwadi from Jember, East Java, who is known to be a master of the mantras (26 September 2010). This act should be done through fasting, a type of discipline which is believed in and practiced throughout the island as a way to become more spiritual. This state of spirituality is a

requirement for access to the world of spirits and to be receptive to the voice of their guidance (Hardjamardjaja 1962, 7). This view is derived from the understanding that the world of spirits is subtle, and thus the subtle aspects of human nature are the only faculties suitable for approaching it. Once s/he gets that spiritual experience, the *wong pinter* acquires the authority to work in accordance with the concerns of the ideology of the ancestors who have inspired and provided him with the same ability.

There are four institutional domains in which someone may benefit from their curricula or to be prepared for wongpintership: family; *pondok pesantren* (Islamic private school); Javanese mysticism groups (*kelompok kebatinan*); and traditional martial arts groups (*perguruan bela diri*). These institutional domains have a manual for members of the group to be initiated, although others do not. Because of illiteracy and the importance of maintaining the secrecy and sacredness of the teachings, they do not transcribe them into written documents. Consequently, the ability to memorise is preferable and a *criterium* to see whether the candidate is talented and qualified for the virtues required for the group's ideal or not. An eagerness to memorise itself is a sign of steadfastness, strong will, persistence, resilience, single-mindedness, diligence, total acceptance or submission to their seniors or mentors and demonstrates patience in undertaking the process (Koentjraningrat 1985, 403; Hardjamardjaja 1962, 8).

As far as the data in Table 3 is concerned, 79% of the participants acknowledge that they possess their wongpintership as a family inheritance (WJv. 41 out of 45, CJv. 57 out of 60, EJv. 13 out 23). Of this number, 82 people developed their wongpintership with the help of gurus (64%), 35 via their own relatives (27%), and 76% participants (97 numerically) did so organically. These figures show that some *wong pinters* are educated purely by nature (35), some solely by their relatives (3), and others by learning from a guru (19). Some are a combination of nature and relatives (4), nature and guru (35), relative and guru (5), while some are conditioned for the role by three formative agents: nature, guru and close relatives (23). When it is said that they are taught purely by nature, they mean that their skill and knowledge are results of their learning from nature, either by being directed by their spirit guides or receiving a divine guidance. Their induction into wongpintership remains hidden, more secret than other *wong pinters'* initiation methods, the latter who prepare themselves together with others in a more established community like the *pondok pesantren* and *kebatinan* groups. Of 128 participants, 14 of them acknowledge that they were educated in *pondok pesantren* (3 in

WJv, 7 in CJv, 4 in EJv), 19 in martial art groups (7 in WJv, 10 in CJv, 2 in EJv), and 66 in *kebatinan* groups (21 in WJv, 39 in CJv, 6 in EJv). I will discuss further *wong pinter* with *kebatinan* as their shaping milieu.

The recruitment process does not rely on the quality of the candidate. It welcomes everyone regardless of their social background or religious inclination although most members of an *aliran kebatinan* are homogenous socially and culturally. The most important thing is that the candidate, according to Mulder, has the passion to learn the way to gain enlightenment through meditation and mysticism. He writes:

The follower of kebatinan has to bring his self-surrender to perfection and to exercise his *rasa* (olah rasa; latihan) in order to advance on his way to God. He has to be careful not to be led astray in the vast realm of supernature that he penetrates by the practice of *kebatinan* ... People need to be guided by a guru who has already advanced far along the path, who has come close to God, and who knows the way ... who have become one with God, or at least to have received a personal revelation (*wahju*), revealing the nature of and the way to achieve unity with God ... These leaders are thought to be in a process of permanent surrender to God, speaking the right words and performing the right actions (Mulder 1970, 108).

In the practice of *kebatinan* there is no time limit or graduations as in formal education established by the government, although achievement of a higher and more advanced experience may distinguish one from the newly initiated. Not all students are successful. However, those who manage to achieve the expected skills and knowledge offered by the group's manual are ready to go public and to mentor others. It should be noted that, at the end, both types of the *acquisita wong pinter* acknowledge that formal learning is to be continued by the trainee. The formal path of the learned types of *wong pinter* only provides standard skills and knowledge. Once the initiated person accomplishes the curriculum, as stated by Hardjamardjaja (1962, 9), s/he is supposed to develop his or her wongpintership and find its completion in accordance with the experiences and life challenges that s/he has to face.

According to Mulder (1998, 46) and Epton (1974, 203), wongpintership skills, such as the acquirement of clairvoyance, clairaudience, telekinesis and the ability to mediate healing for the sick, are never the ultimate goals. They are additional by nature. What matters most for the *kebatinan* practitioners is peace of mind, wisdom and insight as generated from direct access to Allah the Source of Life. To be one (*manunggal*) with the creator is the ultimate end, and giving aid (*tetulong*) to those in need and showing compassion are obligatory for those who have achieved the state of *manunggal* with the *Hyang Suksma Kawekas* (The Primeval and Originating Soul). This union is usually

called *manunggaling kawula lan Gusti*, or to use Mulder's translation, "oneness of the servant and the master" or a *unio mystica* (1970, 106), the merging of the two (Moertono 1963, 15). This relation is about conformation. The intimacy and closeness of the human being to the *Hyang Suksma Kawekas* or the *Sang Hyang Wenang* (The Omnipotent) merges the mortal wholly with the supernatural Creator, *Sang Hyang Tunggal* (The Only One Master).

The obligation to give aid to those in need is principally part of the *kebatinan* ethic code to enhance the beauty of the world, *mangayu hayuning bawana* (Mulder 1998, 60; 1983, 37). It is an ideal derived from king's divine mission (Epton 1974, 142) who is a container, transmitter and maintainer of the divine forces of heavens and earth (Heine-Geldern 1956, 1&9) or a medium linking the micro-cosmos of man with the macro-cosmos of the gods (Moertono 1963, 35), and an agent who guards the order and tranquillity of the state (*kang ndjaga tata-tentreming praja* [38]). This ethical principle has been translated in various ways. However, I would suggest that it should be translated in terms of enhancing the beauty (well-being and harmony among the livings with the universe and society, between the *jagad cilik* or microcosm and the *jagad gedhe* or macrocosm) of the earth in order to ensure that it becomes a good place to live in. It is a world with *tata tentrem karta raharja* (order, peace, prosperity, good fortune), as Anderson has it (1990, 33). Wongpintership shows a strong connection with the character of kingship.

In ancient Java, wongpintership was associated with kingship because a good king should possess eight qualities, each of which represent the virtues of certain high gods. According to Moertono they are:

- 1) Unlimited *dana*, 'beneficence', attributed to Batara Endra, master of all lesser gods; 2) The ability to repress all evil, attributed to the deity of death, Jama; 3) Kindly persuasiveness and wise conduct, attributed to the sun-god, Surja; 4) Lovingness, attributed to Batara Tjandra; 5) Keen awareness and deep insight, attributed to the god of the winds, Baju; 6) Generosity with material wealth and recreation, attributed to the god of worldly fortune, Kuwera; 7) Sharp and ruthless intelligence in facing difficulties of any kind, attributed to the god of the seas, Baruna; and 8) Fiery courage and spirited determination in opposing any enemy, attributed to the fire-god, Brama (Moertono 1963, 43-44).

For this reason, Joko Kijeng who owns more than four thousand *kerises* of Javanese kings, heroes and saints, transcribes the names of kings, religious teachers (like the *para wali* or Islamic saints in older times Java who owned many *kerises*) when he has to answer an interview question about who a *wong pinter* is from the point of

view of a practitioner. To him, as is the case with the prominent figures mentioned above, *wong pinters*' qualities are reflected by the number of *kerises* and personal heirlooms that they hold because each heirloom is believed to be able to boost a certain supernatural quality as embodied in its holder (26 January 2011). By owning these kings' heirlooms, *wong pinters* are nourished with kingly qualities, which are also godly too. Such an understanding is shared among *wong pinters*, though there are several who maintain that possessing heirlooms is not a necessity. Their remark on the importance of heirlooms is not to deny the significance of these objects. According to them, if a direct access to the divinity is achieved other things, like heirlooms and even rituals, are unnecessary. This position explains implicitly the existing hostility between some practitioners of mainstream religions and practitioners of *wongpintership*.

4.3.2 Gender and other election factors

This research involved direct encounters with 108 practitioners. In addition, some information about 20 other practitioners was gained from a published book by Masruri and Rochim Dakas (1997). Although it may not be sufficient to draw a conclusive conclusion, the data gained is useful in providing a preliminary observation regarding the role of gender factors in the process of formation. In total 83% of the participants interviewed are male *wong pinters*, out of which, 32 are participants interviewed in West Java, 55 in Central Java, and 21 in East Java. It means that 17% are female (13 in WJv, 5 in CJv, 2 in EJv). This figure might be in contrast with the general perception of worldwide shamanism which claims that most shamans are female. Yet this research, quantitatively speaking, may not be conclusively representative, I will explain why the number of male Javanese shamans exceeds that of female ones. This is derived both from Javanese culture itself, which is very Islamised, and also in terms of political ideology and the practical consequences of becoming a *wong pinter*.

In her study on gender, women's rights and the moral hierarchy in Java, Clarissa Adamson finds that woman's subordinate role is a result of Islamic indoctrination and Javanese moral teaching. Referring to a passage in the Quran, she mentions that the Islamic teaching found in the Surah An'Nisa 34 discourages a woman from playing a leading role both in the family and society. This text has been interpreted and taught by the Islamic leaders as inferring that a woman must be led by a man and that her natural role is as a mother and care giver. This religious view, according her, meets perfectly

with the Javanese cultural view which has placed woman as no more than a friend to do family work (*konco wingking*) and envisages that observance of one's natural role will maintain harmony within both the family and the nation (Adamson 2007, 9-19). Indeed, Adamson's article is not intended to explain the fact that there are less female *wong pinters* in Java. However, her reflection corresponds with the need to provide a gender explanation. To become a *wong pinter* is to undertake a service for others.

Patriarchal Javanese society maintains that a man is the head of the family, meaning the one who produces livestock and generates income for the whole family. It is alright to become a traditional midwife (*dhukun anak* or *paraji*) or bridal designer (*dhukun paes*). However, to become a female *wong pinter*, who has to leave the house for a long time and to travel long distances, may disturb the family. Moreover, the services of *wong pinters* are not mostly recognisable as a public performance. They come mostly to see the person or family who need them. The forests and unfriendly environments may not be safe places for a female *wong pinter* to travel to. Whereas the activities that requires the role of a *wong pinter* are beyond the familial sphere. This practical consideration coincides with the Javanese principles which admonishes that a woman, a mother, should stay and do her activities around the house. Thus, male *wong pinters* are deemed more suitable. Placed within this cultural context, it could help to explain why female *wong pinters* are fewer in number than male *wong pinters*.

However, when we look at the *infusa* type, the statistical figure changes. According to Geertz and Spiro, most female *dhukun tiban* – in other words *infusa wong pinters* – are post-menstrual and economically poor women in distress (Geertz 1976, 100; Spiro 1992, 231). The reason why such a pattern occurs is that a post-menstrual woman, according to Spiro's study of Southeast Asian societies, is at her most susceptible state to spirit possession. The theory is that during her post-menopause life a woman suffers her strongest levels of sexual and social frustration (Spiro 1967, 223). That internal situation is ideal for the spirit guide because the chosen woman is not struggling to decline the call to have a spiritual marriage. He may be correct but not all female *infusa wong pinters* are in a marital relationship with the spirit guide.

Deborah E. Tooker maintains that such powerful people enjoying the prestigious position like the Thai shamanic priest called the *dzoma* are seen as channels through which the potency of life (*gylan*) flows (1996, 328). Someone becomes a *dzoma* or an appropriate medium in order to channel the cosmic life force because his/her propriety

is matched with the character of the *gylan* itself. A *dzoma* must be someone who “is not interested in hunting, trading and other pursuits that take him [or her] from the [centre of the] village” (Tooker 1996, 332). If contrasted with the rough, chaotic and active periphery which is masculine in its nature, this character represents the calmness, stillness, undisturbed, gentle and subtle centre which is feminine (Keeler 1990, 130-131). Therefore the appropriate character is apt to be based on the life force which must be feminine as the life force itself is feminine. Seen from this perspective, the reason for the election of women by spirit guides is based on women’s propriety relative to the character of the spirits as the manifestation of the cosmic life force. For this reason, both in Thailand and Java, a female creature represented by a goddess is always a symbol of fertility, subtleness of manner and compassion. Mulder states: “The earth on which we depend for our living, the rice that feeds us, the water that sustains life, and the guardian angel that protects the young child are all represented as female” (1992, 15). Therefore, female shamans are mostly *infusa wong pinter* because of their relationship to the characteristics of the life force, whereas most of the *acquisita wong pinters* are men because of the Javanese cultural reality that a man has a patriarchal role in the family and the wider society, a task which supposes the acquisition of life potency. On account of this the *infusa wong pinters* have to train themselves to gain these qualities.

In the context of Javanese society, the Thai term for life force, *gylan*, is called “*kasekten*”, rooted from a Sanskrit word *sakti*, meaning power. According to Anderson, *kasekten*, or cosmic power tapped from the external world of spirits (1990, 28), dwells perfectly in a person with a refined character or *halus*, a character which displays the quality of “not being disturbed, spotted, uneven or discoloured, and is a complex of elegance, beauty, politeness and sensitivity” (50). The antithesis of *halus* is *kasar*, a character which is identical to manliness. Because being *halus* is a natural characteristic of femininity, a woman does not need to maintain a constant effort to practise austere discipline to gain *kasekten* or to be its appropriate container. A man, however, has to train himself to achieve that characteristic.

The completion of becoming *halus* is facilitated by someone’s increase in age and their ability to control their biological needs. In short, a post-menopausal woman is seen to be in this state of being. In other words, she has achieved a balanced growth of both aspects of her masculinity and femininity. That balance in both personality aspects is seen as a sign of personal maturity which becomes a requisite condition for someone

considered to be an apt vessel of the life force. In the study of life force, spirits are seen as both its essence and also its transmitters. The manifestation of the domesticated and embodied life force is seen in the accumulation of that effective power useful for healing, promoting growth and restoring someone's well-being. Some people who become the most suitable container of the life force may have been prepared genetically as well as by divine election. Ockey's study on gender image in Thailand implies the same thing. According to her, a *jao mae* (a godmother) is a powerful female leader whose power and goodness derive from a godmother spirit (Ockey 1999, 1037). Most *jao maes* are women in their fifties. It may be true to say that post-menopausal women are prominent in spirit propitiation and the most appropriate container of life force.

Geertz may be right in saying that most *infusa wong pinters* are women. However, it is not easy to just straightforwardly agree with his statement for in fact there are a significant number of male *wong pinters* whose wongpintership is infusorial in nature. The data in Table 3 shows that 97 participants (76%) claim that they are prepared by nature as they acknowledge that they do not have gurus or spiritual mentors. The data may imply that they are *infusa wong pinters*. On top of this, the data also suggest that 61% of them started their wongpintership when they were very young, 27% in middle age and 12% later. Considering these findings, the election to become a *wong pinter* can be possible for anyone, regardless of their gender and age. Such a random selection has also become a characteristic of shamanic elections (Stone 2003, 48). There is no age limitation to become an *infusa wong pinter*.

When this research was conducted there was a *tiban wong pinter* who was just eight years old. A little boy called Ponari from a very poor family from the District of Jombang-East Java has surprised the whole nation because of the healing sessions he has performed at his home. By using his newly received mystical stone he was featured nationally by the mass media. Nevertheless, for legal reasons, he and his family were moved by the government from their village to Jakarta. According to the rumour spread among the people, the reason of his moving to Jakarta was to secure him from being exploited as an object of tourism and to stop him becoming a victim of religious refutation. However, later on in 2012, another reason was revealed. Ponari had to stop practising his skill because the threat that he received from some groups of the fundamentalist Islam coming from the neighbourhood areas.

4.3.3 Always in an ongoing process of formation

Clifford Geertz writes about the end of a *dhukun tiban* which by chance occurred during his field study. To summarise what he recorded, it began with the suffering of a woman stricken by severe poverty because of her debt-ridden husband who had no land or income. She had tried to find her lost ring for three days. When she was unsuccessful in finding it and thus failed to solve her economic problems, she experienced a dream in which she saw a great beam of light which came down and struck the floor. The spot where the light fell left the floor broken and her lost ring was seen lying there. She suddenly received insight that if she dipped the ring in home-made medicine or water she could heal the sick. Within a week her fame had spread throughout Modjokuto and its neighbouring towns. Hundreds of people came to her house and mass healing sessions were held week after week. During that time when her power was at its peak many people were reported to have benefitted from this new folk healer. Geertz described her as an extremely hyperactive woman who healed all sorts of sicknesses. Toward the middle of the second month, she found that her power decreased steadily to a state described as having left her. However, from the gifts she received from her clients, the economic condition of her family recovered thoroughly (1976, 100-102).

What we can say from Geertz's report is that the healing power embodied within the receiver seems to come and go as it pleases. But, what did actually make her feel that her power had gone? I would say that the crisis she faced was due to the phenomenon that fewer and fewer people came to her. It is not because she found herself without power anymore. There is another reason why people stopped flocking around her house. The reason must be in the minds of her visitors. It is the outsiders who leave with the impression that she is without that healing power. This view may stem from the fact that less people came to her. However, if we look at the surrounding context, the decreasing number of people who came to her was, perhaps, caused by the rumour spreading together with her sudden fame of acquiring an unprecedented healing ability. Moreover, another typical accusation was proffered by certain religious people who fervently proclaim that the healing power possessed by that female *dhukun tiban* came from the power of the devil and that people of religion should never benefit from it (Geertz 1976, 100). To do so means committing a sin, trespassing what is forbidden by religious doctrine. Such an opinion, even in the history of European witchcraft practice and worldwide shamanism, has been very common.

Sherry B. Ortner finds that the cause behind the disappearance of shamanistic practice in Tibet was pressure emanating from the religious establishment (1995, 356). Her conclusion seems to be applicable to the case of the female *wong pinter tiban* mentioned above and the current young *wong pinter tiban* from Jombang who was forbidden to practise his gift of healing by local religious authorities. The main reason is that healing that comes from the devil is temporary, unreliable and sinful whereas healing that comes from God is durable. Though there have been arguments in favour of this poor woman, such as the one which questions the efficacy of the religious leaders why they could not alleviate people's suffering, this religious establishment still won the game. That was the end of that *wong pinter tiban*. Does it mean that it is outsiders who made the *wong pinter tiban* lack confidence and determined the existence and disappearance of that kind of power? Can that power stand independent of the subject or the public and remain a permanent feature during the life of the subject? Why did it leave the previous bearer? Why is an *acquisita* wongpintership inheritable and more long lasting than the *tiban* one?

Benedict Anderson has studied the concept of power in Java and how power in Java is maintained. According to him, such power seeks a proper container or host (1990, 51). Thus, an inappropriate container will make the power leave and vice versa. To become an appropriate container, someone must acquire qualities matched with the character of power in order to always be a suitable vessel for it. The fundamental character of the power is so subtle but powerful. Thus, an apt container must be the one who has the smoothness, stillness of spirit, appearance, mind and deed (50). These qualities are made perfect through a continual self-training to remain absent from hidden interests (*sepi ing pamrih*). Given the fact that power comes and goes in accordance to its own will, there must be a reason for each preference. When it comes, it indicates that the individual is in a state of accessibility for the power and otherwise. Seen from this perspective, in the case of the female *wong pinter* mentioned above, the change in her mental state happened after her economic problems were solved and moved her to a different state of being which meant that she was no longer suitable to be a host for that healing power. Using Anderson's terms, she might have fallen into a slackness and a lack of vigilance regarding the temptation of *pamrih* (1990, 35). However, it will not happen if she knew how to maintain her previous state of being and if she would have had access to more experienced *wong pinters* and learned from them. Nevertheless, that is not the case since most *wong pinters* have no relationalism.

When she was poor, hopeless and becoming an object of ridicule, she was in a state of what many practitioners call *kosong ing pamrih* (undeserving) and total surrender (*pasrah sumarah*). These are states of being which the learned *wong pinters* have trained themselves to achieve. It means that if the female *tiban wong pinter* mentioned by Geertz was aware of that condition, she might not lose her healing power or lack of confidence when she knew that less people would come to her for healing. In other words, though the religious establishment forbade people to visit her for help, her wongpintership would endure if she trained herself to maintain her previous mental state. Here is the point which distinguishes and at the same time explains why wongpintership among the learned *wong pinters* tends to endure. An unceasing self-training seems to be the key of being constantly ready to host embedded cosmic and magical power. Thus, to become a *wong pinter* is to be always in a state of becoming. Awareness that someone is in this position will encourage him to train himself so that the perfection of stillness of mind and deed is enhanced. The logic of why learned wongpintership is transferable to heirs is based on the fact that individual potential for wongpintership adopts and cultivates the culture of maintaining the stillness of inner being. It means that the maintenance of wongpintership is a cultural matter. It therefore is a process of taming the infused power. In the practice of *kebatinan*, the term for performing a continual act of self-discipline for the sake of maintaining intimacy with the embodied supernatural power, is *nglakoni*, a phrase which means to keep developing the continual act of self-discipline through all sorts of ascetical practices.

Among the practitioners of *kebatinan*, there has been a tradition of adjusting someone's consciousness to the commandments and restrictions (*angger-angger lan wewaler*). These are moral codes which tell practitioners what should be done and what should not. Obedience to these codes helps them to continue to be in the right state to be accessible for the magical power. To trespass against them is to start a way of becoming an inadequate container. Most *wong pinters* based on *kebatinan* practitioners maintain that there are generally shared *wewalers* set for those ready for *kebatinan*: first, to abstain from *mo-limo*, a word which stands for five words containing the *ma* syllable. They are *madat* (addicted to hallucinogenic substances), *mabuk* (drunkenness), *madon* (playful with women), *main* (gambling), and *maling* (stealing); and second, to be aware of the great three temptations that make someone's heart impure and to focus instead on spiritual matters. They are, according to Krisnadi (Jember, 26 September 2010: 1) not to be attracted by the brilliance of valuables (*kudu ora sulap dening cumloroting kencana*);

2) not to be tempted by money (*dening gemerincinge ringgit*), and 3) by the flashing of woman's legs (*lan dening sumilaking jarit*), a term referring to sexual indulgence. These are believed to be scandals which defile the bearers of the *kasekten* and lead someone to become a person full of *pamrih* and inadequate for the supernatural power.

Wong pinters are concerned with morality like prophets in religious terms. Some anthropologists, such as Hugh-Jones (1996) and Wielken (1887), have used the term 'prophet' for shamanic practitioners including the practitioners of wongpintership as they are always aware of the moral virtue of righteousness. However, some *wong pinters* underline that it would be a disaster to have that kind of self-conception because it is only the established religions which have doctrinal standards regarding who is a prophet, what their roles are and when their period of existence was. The Muslims maintain that the last prophet was Muhammad. Thus there is no place for such a claim.

4.4 Knowledge, skills and aspects of the professional

This following point focuses on the knowledge and skill of the *wong pinter*, the sources of their knowledge and spiritual technology, and how they apply them. Their knowledge may comprise of information about medicinal herbs, medical treatments, the cosmos, spirits, animals, local teachings and wisdoms needed to improve the quality of life of the people who need their presence. Their knowledge and skill can be about everything that touches on any element of people's lives. The problem that they may face is whether or not an answer to each question brought by a client, or the knowledge that they produce in turn, is applicable for others who deal with the same problem. If we are to know the sources of their knowledge and skill, how they acquire that wisdom and information, and how they apply them during their service, will their methods be used by others so that a certainty in their knowledge may be ensured? There is a significant degree of subjectivity here which may later invite endless scepticism. The hints at solutions that they offer sometimes end up in open suggestions as to whether we should believe in them or not. Nevertheless, whatever disposition we have it will not influence the efficiency of their work. Furthermore, it often happens that their clients do not know why they should do this and that as suggested by their *wong pinters*. Can their answers or advice be considered as knowledge and valid for common use? Should we see it as a mere form of belief or at least a justified true belief?

4.4.1 Knowledge and skill

Below is a table detailing *wong pinters* skills and knowledge (classified into six areas of activity) and how they generate them.

Table 4: Areas of *wong pinters*' knowledge, skills and ways of generating practical knowledge.

Instruments of generating practical knowledge	Heirloom	Stones	32	13	19	25	29	23
		<i>Kerises</i>	45	17	28	35	38	34
		Mediumship	36	10	26	28	22	31
	Revelation	Prayer-meditation	121	44	77	94	98	92
		Mantras	53	22	31	41	49	37
		Asceticism/discipline	114	44	70	89	98	84
		Dream/vision	85	28	57	66	62	69
Skills and Knowledge according to their Main Areas of Involvement	Ecological and Environmental activities	Medicinal herbs	62	24	38	48	53	46
		Village cleansing	33	15	18	26	33	22
		Rain diverting	10	3	7	7	7	8
		Fountain finding	30	7	23	23	16	28
	Cultural activities	Jv. Teachings	95	37	58	74	82	70
		Jv. Wayang/art	86	34	52	67	76	63
		Jv. numerology	87	35	52	68	78	63
		Conserve. heirloom	87	35	52	68	78	63
		Jv. Trad. practices	97	39	58	76	87	70
	Religious activities	Pilgrimage	62	27	35	48	60	42
		Ritual expert	71	27	44	55	60	53
		Spiritual mentor	100	34	66	78	76	79
		mysticism	83	33	50	65	73	60
		Master of spirits	103	38	65	80	84	78
	Political roles	elders	73	24	49	57	53	59
		Advisor/councilor	77	23	54	60	51	65
		leaders	48	13	35	37	29	42
	Economic activities	<i>Penglaris</i> /luck enhancer	49	18	31	38	40	37
		Agricultural	66	31	35	51	69	42
		Finding suitable type and place of work	38	17	21	30	38	25
	Social activities	others	90	33	57	70	73	69
		Predicting future	76	25	51	59	56	62
		<i>Nyarati</i> or divination	95	35	60	74	78	72
		Finding the lost	42	18	24	33	40	29
		Family counseling	106	37	69	82	82	83
		Healing	104	37	67	81	82	81
		<i>Santet</i> dispeller	71	24	47	55	53	57
		House cleansing	62	24	38	48	53	46
NB: 108 participants are directly interviewed. 20 others are extracted from a book.			All (128)	Village (45)	Urban (83)	All	Village	Urban
			Total			Percentage		

In Table 4 the skills and knowledge of *wong pinters* include matters related to the social sphere, politics, economics, culture, religion and the environment. There are 28 types of activities generated from these six spheres. In total 45 participants, out of 128, demonstrate a mastery of more than 20 areas of expertise. Of these, 29 have been involved in more than 24 types of activities. Meanwhile, 6 of them are well known for their effective knowledge of 28 different activities. This information shows that – in terms of the areas of involvement – there are ranks of mastery and thus, a hierarchy of knowledge as well as a hierarchy of *wong pinter*. Performing healing (81%), giving family counselling (82%), equipping clients with instruments of luck (74%), mastery over spirits (80%), becoming a spiritual mentor, maintaining Javanese traditional practices and holding Javanese religious teaching lessons are activities which most *wong pinters* do. Their involvement in the conservation of local culture is a common practice. This is equivalent to their involvement in religious and social areas. There are few who commit themselves to the environmental enterprise, although 48% deal with medicinal herbs. In the field of politics, 57% of them are elders, 60% advisors and 37% leaders. The question is: how do they get their knowledge in these areas? This question is based on the fact that many of them do not have formal educational training. How can they become advisors of politicians, including previous presidents of Indonesia, ministers, *bupatis* (heads of the district regions), and people in high positions in the army and police department, sportsmen and celebrities, medical doctors, professors, religious leaders and many others?

4.4.2 Sources of knowledge, spiritual technology and problems of justification

There are certain common acts performed by *wong pinters* to provide answers for the client. Faming, Pringgo, Eddy, Manto, Ripto and Supanto are only some of many others who go to tombs to find the required information. They share similar explanations of this. According to them, the problems that people experience nowadays are not substantially new. It means that the answers for their problems can be found in the past. “There are many people in the cemetery. Many of them must have had problems in their lifetime. There must be at least one of them who faced the same problem as my client. S/he must know of the answer to my client’s problems. I must fervently meditate there”, said Manto (Klaten, 12 February 2011). When he was a senior high school pupil Pringgo, from the village of Seketi having found that he could not do anything with his

prowess when he was a striker and needed to strengthen his school football team, left school with embarrassment and for days sat in front of his grandfather's tomb to get an answer as to why he could not use it anymore. An answer was finally acquired from his grandfather who was unhappy with his misconduct (6 February 2011). Supanto has a different story of this kind. He was called to visit ancient tombs where he received information about his family tree as a result of which he could explain his ancestral line and the life of his forbearers (16 February 2011). As recorded by Chambert-Loir and Reid (2002), communication with ancestors and with those who have died, fasting and immersion in special physical meditation at tombs, are common practices used to gain insights and understandings in order to solve the problems of life.

Insofar as the data in Table 4 is concerned, beside lessons from experience and knowledge received from teachers or forbearers, there are two other instruments for acquiring information. The first is revelation through prayer, meditation, mantras, discipline and dreams. The second is the use of heirlooms. In total 94% of the participants apply prayers to generate relevant answers and 89% through the practising of disciplines. 66% of participants get information through dreams. Sutiman, Rinanto, Mbah Broto, Eddy, Kasiran and Sunjoto are only six among many others who use heirlooms including *kerises* (35%) and stones (25%) in order to provide answers to the challenges that they face. Equivalent to this practice is to acquire insights through mediumship (28%). These practices are not absolute. There are other ways to gain practical insights for needs that emerge. Some *wong pinters* have spirit guide(s) which are also found in shamanism from other parts of the world (Vitebsky 2001, 66; Nelson 2008, 156; Eliade 1992 [1964], 79-95). According to them, it is the spirit helpers who provide answers, hints and guidance as to what the clients and the shamans should do. The difference from the practice of *wong pinters* is in the way they communicate with these spirit helpers. *Wong pinters* do not necessarily enter into a state of trance. Considering their methods and technology, we can ask whether their sources of knowledge and methods of generating knowledge are acceptable and justifiable.

That question is not different from the issue of whether the knowledge of the *wong pinters* and their cultural practices are valid or not. If the methods and the sources of their knowledge are not justifiable or acceptable, so are their products. Nevertheless, it is unfair to say that their knowledge is just a nonsense product because it is extra-theoretical. In fact the people who hold the problematized knowledge and practices have

been in their locales there from generation to generation as an essential part of their ongoing history. To disregard their knowledge is to disregard their practices, to ignore their existence. To deal with this, Henrietta L. Moore's questions regarding whose knowledge, what sort of knowledge, and who are the producers of that knowledge (1996, 1-2), are relevant here. If the universality of their local knowledge, its applicability and the methods of its production become the main criticisms of an ethnographical work, there is no way of proceeding to the social scientific process of understanding local practices for the benefit of any studies (Crandall 2008, 39-40).

Under the principles of science, the notion of spirits, souls and communication with the dead can be vague. However, Europe is not the only part of the world which has an established culture and history, especially in the realm of science and technology. All intellectual enterprise has been dedicated to the exploration of both. Asiatic societies, in Scheler's conception, are very much concerned with the pursuit of other values. In consequence they cultivate other forms of knowledge. In that enterprise, they find and establish methods of knowledge production. If Scheler's statement that Asiatic societies pursue more spiritual values than material ones is accepted (Scheler cited in Manheim 1972 [1952], 16), then it must be acknowledged that Asian societies also have a certain technology in place to reproduce their knowledge. Moreover, in the matter of the pursuit of knowledge, "Europe and Asia have tackled the possible tasks of human acquisitions of knowledge from radically different directions. Europe was going from matter to soul, Asia from soul to matter" (17). Therefore, the methods and sources of *wong pinters'* knowledge should be justified, not by the materialistic principles of science, but by the people who own the culture; people who belong to it and benefit from *wong pinters'* knowledge. They are its owners and producers.

4.4.3 Applying the knowledge and skills

As we have seen earlier, the knowledge of the *wong pinters* contains social, cultural, political, religious and environmental characteristics. Such characteristics are derived from these spheres where they apply their wongpintership. To consider their range is like surveying items on a landscape. There are varieties of knowledge and skills that constitute the landscape of wongpintership. It is easy to become conscious of how varied their knowledge and skills are. According to their viewpoint, all relevant inspirational words in their minds are just coming out as if there is another agent(s) in

themselves who work(s) for him or her. Perhaps the best explanation for this is what Jesus said to his disciples in his farewell speech when he remarked that the Spirit will tell the disciples what they should say and do (Jh 16:13; Lk 12:12). Almost all *wong pinters* share a similar opinion. The things that they have to say or do just come up automatically. As every *wong pinter* is involved in different areas, their knowledge, therefore, is varied. Even in one single activity we can find information about the application of their knowledge and skills. Participatory observation activities and interviews generated narratives detailing this. They sketch the landscape of *wong pinter*'s knowledge, their skill, methods of producing insights and understanding. One of them will be analysed here.

It was my third visit to Tamtu's family. At this occasion, I accompanied Sigit to finalise his account. Coming with Latief his fellow taxi driver, he picked me up. On the way to Karang Tanjung, Sigit told me his experience about doing a three day fast as suggested by Mr and Mrs Tamtu. On the second day, he had a dream that his mother came to him, asking for help, saying: "My son, Nugroho, only you who are able to free me". In his dream, he saw his mother was under a big heavy black rock. We reached Tamtu's house at eight in the morning. While waiting for the right time to go to the Kuncen cemetery where Sigit's mother had been buried two years beforehand, Latief took advantage of that moment. He asked whether Mr and Mrs Tamtu could help him solve his problem. He asked why he always found himself unhappy with his work and his life. Mr and Mrs Tamtu invited him to pray in accordance with his own way. The case was not easy one, according this couple, since Latief was loaded with magical knowledge. So, Mrs Irene asked me to help. Mrs Tamtu then had a vision of Latief's current reality. She saw him wrapped up like a dead body, wrapped with white cloth and tied with a black cord, like a *pocong*. Using her rosary as a sword, Mrs Tamtu swang it as if she had cut something. Out of nowhere, I saw small black stuff falling around Latief's body. She said: "I have cut the cord". Then, Tamtu cleaned Latief's body and from his back, a metal cord was taken away and it left a mark forming the letter K. He wanted to know who had sorcerised him. Mrs Tamtu prayed for a while then she spoke in a state of trance: "It is done by your fellow taxi driver. No need to find him. The cause of your problem is in your own house. There is something buried there, right in the middle of the house. Excavate and *larung* it (throw it away) into flowing water. You had so many gurus. If you want to have peace, learn from me. Meet me in the small old mosque close to your house at seven in the evening. Then, wash yourself at the Lake of Peace. I am Maulana Syekh Malik Ibrahim." I have read information about this Islamic saint and by chance I have visited his tomb in Gresik. When they started to question who was speaking to Latief, I had something to offer to them. At last, we were ready to go to the Kuncen cemetery for Sigit account at 9.15 am.

At the tomb Sigit's sister was also present. So we were six altogether. It was 10.00am. We prayed. Sigit, his sister and Latief using Islamic prayer and Tamtu and his wife using Catholic prayer. Mrs Tamtu knelt down with great respect first before the tomb. Then, she moved to the left side of the tomb, uttering unclear words while her rosary was directed at a tomb marker. Suddenly she threw it on the tomb ground around 30 centimetres from the marker. She instructed her husband to cover the rosary with his palms. Then, she asked Sigit to kneel down at the edge of

his mother's tomb as if he held his mother's feet. Before doing it, she asked him to scatter the petals of white roses around the rosary. While he was praying, Mrs. Tamtu stood behind him and placed her palms on Sigit's back and pushed them on it. Then she said: "*Pa*, grab the rosary and the petals now!" Tamtu did it. But he started sweating heavily. Knowing that situation, Mrs Tamtu said to him: "Hurry up. Give it to Sigit." Sigit received it from Tamtu and when he opened it, he found a plastic tube, around five centimetres long with two small sharp things like *kerises*. When we looked at them closely, the ones that we saw were actually a certain type of fur. We were wondering what it was. But none of us knew. So, Tamtu closed his eyes and proceeded to *menayuh* the heirloom. To *menayuh* means to asking the *qadam* of the heirloom for more information about itself. Then he said to us: "It is called the *Buluh Perindu*. It came from Kalimantan, and was used to make someone of interest to fall in love". Then he said to Sigit: "It has demanded the lives of three brothers. Yours is to be the fourth to take." Latief who was also there was very curious and wanted to have that heirloom. Mrs Tamtu said: "We cannot do anything to this heirloom before we know what we should do". So she shut her eyes and said: "It must not be given to anyone. It must be *dilarung*". All this was done in twenty six minutes. That was 10.26am, the time when Mount Merapi exploded for the second time. On the way home right at the front of the cemetery gate, Mrs Tamtu laid down on the grass and slept. Ten minutes later, she woke up and said to Sigit: "Your mother was so grateful. I saw her passing through a white area and then a green pasture". We continued the journey to find a big river where the *Buluh perindu* could be thrown away (Kuncen, 1 November 2010).

Some issues exhibiting elements of *wong pinter*'s landscape of knowledge and skills are apparent in this report. The story involves a mission to liberate the life of a woman (Sigit's mother) who died from an uncommon cause. It was part of the diagnosis of Sigit's problems in work and lack of energy to fight for his right to the wealth which he believed was his due. The solution that they suggested included the role of his dead mother who was the main contributor to his problem. As Mr and Mrs Tamtu saw in their meditation, Sigit's mother suffered so much for her own deeds that they advised Sigit not to pursue his right at that moment. Instead, he is to forgive her mother and concentrate on helping her free of her suffering. Once this part is done, he may gain the necessary insight and courage that he needs later if he wants to proceed with his concerns. The role of Mr and Mrs Tamtu in helping Sigit (and Latief) to find the root of their problems includes a shamanic role as a psychopomp, an expert in charms and heirlooms, a soul traveller, negotiator of spirits, medium and a spiritual knight. The methods that they apply in their service involve the use of rosaries, prayer, trance and spirit possession. Their entrance to the unseen world supposes a shamanic cosmological understanding that the world consists of the underworld, the world and the upperworld. Each is populated with different inhabitants and has a connection to the world of living human beings. Life disturbances are caused by an incorrect relationship with individuals in the past. Solutions are available when reconciliation takes place. In the case of

Latief's problem, the report shows that any unwanted heirlooms or charms may become the source of annoyance in a dwelling place, impugning the surroundings and potentially causing an imbalance. Another element that can be seen from this report is the ritual of *nglarung*. To detail another part of the *wong pinter*'s knowledge and skill landscape, I would add another story without analysing it.

Hamid is a young *wong pinter* with great skill who took me to see *wong pinters* within his network and let me participate in some of his activities including performing healing, cleansing houses of spirit disturbances and drawing heirlooms from their invisible abode. In response to his generosity, I invited him to come to my father's house for a break. However, knowing that Hamid is a *wong pinter*, my friend Greg asked him whether he could make Greg's works fruitful and for him to be loved by his master. Hamid mentioned to him the things that were required, consisting of five *bunga kantils* and a package of *kembang telon*. Then he gave Greg instructions, saying: "Put the *kembang telon* into a basin with water in it and bring it to me." He did as asked. Together with my brother, Hamid, Greg and I, we went to the front room to perform a ritual. Hamid uttered a prayer over the water container filled with flowers, covered it with a white cloth, and stretched his right hand over it. He asked Greg: "Now, take the cloth away. Wash your face with the water and the flower's petals." Then, he dipped his hand into the basin and took out three charm metals: the *Payung Tunggul Nogo* and a pair of green and red *cecak*, home lizards. Greg, my brother and I had no ideas where these amulets came from. The *Payung Tunggul Nogo* is a protective amulet whose shape looks like an umbrella, whereas the green and red lizards are symbols of the single-mindedness of a husband and wife to work together for family prosperity and keep focused towards all possible sources of wealth. Possessing those amulets will help the holder be diligent in finding works and catching every emerging opportunity just like a lizard stretches out its tongue when a prey comes within its reach (Ngrejo, 1 January 2011).

There are other such event-based stories from other *wong pinters*. In their writings on Javanese magico-religious healers, Geertz (1976, 95-99), Jordaan (1985, 174-194) and Kontjaraningrat (1985, 413-421) document similar narratives, therefore, there is no need to transcribe them here. These narratives are numerous as their activities are open to new challenges. There are three other publications which provide a quasi-academic report on *wong pinters*' activities: *Traditional Healing Practices* (Setyonegoro and Roan 1983), *20 Provil Paranormal dan Keunikan Daya Linuwihnya* (Masruri and Rochimdakas 1997) and *Saatnya Dukun Berbicara* (Pranoto 2000). Almost *wong pinter* interviewed has more than just one interesting story to offer.

4.5 Aspects of *wong pinters*' social standing

As in the history of shamanism, the social position of the *wong pinter* has also been marked with both rejection and acceptance. As detailed in *STT* (2001), shamanism

throughout the centuries has had to deal with challenges: 1). from the academic world on account of its incredulity, subjectivity, and lack of scientific justification; 2). from mainstream religions regarding its superstitious character, moral errors and allegedly uncivilised practices; and 3) from their own neighbours and society concerning accusations of fraudulence and bewitchment. Most of these themes have been delineated in Chapter 2 in its discussion of the shift of attitudes and approaches towards shamans and shamanism. As for the study of *wong pinter* and wongpintership, besides these three categories of challenges, challenge coming from practitioners themselves can be added to the list. Those who welcome or disregard *wong pinters* include scholars, people of religion, and neighbours. Competition and even rivalry among *wong pinters* themselves sometimes are unavoidable.

A Catholic scholar, Hardjamardjaja, was only one of those who ridiculed these practitioners' concepts of human nature, worldview, god or gods and their world of creation, health and illness. According to him, when they claim that they have a direct access to God it only means that they do not have a proper basis for their opinions and esoteric doctrines, and thus they try to find justification in terms of direct revelation. He concluded that the practice of *ngelmu* is mere superstition, intended for the unintelligent mind (1962, 11). I believe that his position is a justification of what he has taken from P.J. Veth's comments on these *gurus-ngelmu*. Veth says that these gurus' teachings are "a form of inextricable abracadabra to the sober-minded thinker" (1962, 10). This opinion is a typical missionary assessment of shamanic practitioners.

However, I argue that *wong pinters* are local thinkers or philosophers who have tried to make sense of their surroundings while trying to offer solutions to those problems faced by their contemporaries. If they are just sober-minded thinkers, we can ask why as a researcher Hardjamardjaja does not explain the phenomena of why many people from different social backgrounds, including university professors, tradesmen, civil servants, religious leaders, politicians and ordinary peasants who have benefited from their wisdom and knowledge, keep consulting on issues that concern them. Mulder regards them as charismatic leaders in a Weberian sense (1970, 113). Secondly, I think that Hardjamardjaja's comment is intended to justify his ready-made conclusion that their practices and worldview contradicts Christian values. Without directly encountering wongpintership he uses theology as his formal approach to this cultural phenomena and fails to capture *wong pinters'* messianic worldview as the material

object of his study as the latter is loaded with his ideological presumptions. His scientific opinion is not free from the Church's missionary ideals. It means that even a scientific approach may be biased when based on a certain ideology.

Other scholars disqualify shaman and shamanic practices as appropriate subjects for scientific study. Geertz, as mentioned in Atkinson's article 'Shamanism Today', devalues the increasing interest from other disciplines outside anthropology on shamanism and relativizes its significance in social and religious studies (1992, 307). While Atkinson problematizes Geertz's dismissal of shamanism as a material object of social-anthropological study, Edith Turner reacts to Geertz's scientific approach of relativizing the object studied. Turner sees his position as unfair because in fact Geertz himself who suggests that a researcher must be open "to listen, interact, participate, write down what people said, but [also] distance themselves from them", thus experiences this directly by adopting the beliefs of the people that he studies, and therefore he does not distance himself from them (2003, 150). Turner, as well as Michael Harner, who breaks the boundary between a researcher and the researched by "going native", totally gives himself over to the people's beliefs and religious practices in order to understand the reality of spirits, an unseen agent essential to the practice of shamanism. Other scholars, such as Julian Silverman (1967), convince themselves that shamans are merely performers with acute schizophrenic problems. This reductionism has invited reactions from opponents of psychological perspectives. Richard Noll (1983), Michael Harner (Turner 2003, 147), Barbara Lex (1984), Vitebsky (1995), and Winkelman (2000 and 1990) view shamans as healthy personalities and assert that shamanism is a valid object for social, religious, cultural, folklore, philosophical and anthropological studies. The most recent book on shamanism written by Adam J. Rock and Stanley Krippner stands in favour of shamanism although it suggests that there is a need to demystify it if it is to be scrutinised using a scientific approach (2011, xi).

Unlike the advancement of scholarly studies of the world of shamanism, an academic conversation on wongpintership has not raised any scientific debates. Most writers, including Geertz, Koentjaraningrat and Jordaan, do not problematize, theorise or analyse the practitioners' state of mind as compared to scholars of shamanism. The debate about *wong pinters*, their practice and standing is derived mostly from people of religion. As also happened to the practice of shamanism, the disappearance and reappearance of wongpintership practice among the people of Java is due to the

establishment of Islam and Christianity in the region. Looking at shamanism's revival, Frank Kressing studies its proliferation among the Ladakhis in the western Trans-Himalayan region. He argues that the main cause behind the increase of shamans is the infiltration of modernity and Islamic influence from Kashmir-India, which displaces people's traditional beliefs and their way of life (2003, 2.9-11). Such cultural penetrations replace people's tradition of respecting the *lhas* (deities, gods and goddesses). Because of this interference people do not respect these Buddhist deities anymore. By doing so, they make themselves susceptible to foreign diseases which modern medical doctors fail to heal. Their failings open up people to the effectiveness of their *lha-pas* and *lha-mos* who know the key to understanding the ancient oracles containing the power of healing (Ibid.7).

In contrast to Kressing's work, Sherry B. Ortner investigates the decrease or even disappearance of shamans among the Sherpas of Nepal. She notes that the main cause of their disappearance is pressure from the religious establishment represented by Buddhist monks and Lamas (1995, 356). This finding echoes the causes that lie behind the decrease of shamans in other parts of the world. Therefore, the religious establishment, whether represented by Christianity (Narby and Huxley 2001: Chs.1-4, 11-22; Kan 1991, 363-365; Oak 2010, 94), Islam (Kressing 2003), or Buddhism (Ortner 1995) is the main reason for the diminishing of that ancient practice. Although my concern is not with disappearance or proliferation of *wong pinters*, but with their social stance, the conclusion is pertinent to explaining how *wong pinters* find themselves in an ambiguous place in Javanese society because of the prevailing religious outlooks.

Among the adherents of the modern Islamic community, there is no single response to shamanic practice. They are divided. Some of them are strongly against the practice of wongpintership, some welcome it and others are indifferent. In an Islamic community where the Muhammadiyah stream influences people's worldview, the practice of wongpintership is utterly discouraged. This variant of Indonesian Islam is a modern one. It suggests that Muslims detach themselves from non-Islamic traditions in order to become true and pure Muslims. As a result, cultural practices, including the *slametan*, visiting tombs in order to venerate ancestors, contact with spirits, puppet shadow theatre, and magico-religious practices which embody pre-Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist and animistic elements, are to be omitted (Peacock 1986, 344; Palmier 1954, 358; Lukens-Bull 2001, 352).

Questionnaires circulated among Muhammadiyah adherents were returned unfilled for a single reason: “We do not deal with this practice.” Seen from this Indonesian version of Islamic modernists and purists, any contact with the local culture and tradition will defile Islam and its doctrine and thus misdirect the true believers’ attention to Allah. The NU’s, an Islamic stream which accommodates mysticism, Sufism, supernaturalism and local practices rooted from pre-Islamic religions (Geertz 1976, 160), is different to the Muhammadiyah’s viewpoint. Most Muslim *wong pinters* belong to this Islamic stream and were educated in NU’s boarding school (*pesantren*). There are at least nine television programmes broadcasting the activities of Islamic spirit masters attempts to undercover the mystery of the world of spirits.⁸ These kinds of TV programmes have been seen as a form of *dakwah* (Islamic public lecture) whose purpose is to spread the message that Islam is the most beautiful religion and that any contact with spirits is doctrinally dangerous for the uninitiated.

The hostility of people of religion towards any spiritualism-related activities, regardless of a possible connection with political manoeuvres in 1998 when the New Order regime fell, was manifested in the killing of nearly one hundred and fifty people who were alleged to be sorcerers (*dhukun santet*). Two of the anthropologists who researched this tragedy are Konstatinos Retsikas (2008, 114; 2006, 56-94) and James T. Siegel (2006). While Restikas pays more attention to the social interpretation of violence as “a form of sociality and a means for defining and structuring social relations, whether... this is ethically reprehensible or not” (2006, 59), Siegel shows that

⁸ These include:

1. *Uka-uka* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgZg6Rwko_Y&feature=related);
2. *Uji Nyali or A Dare Test* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbGXDaofniE&feature=related>);
3. *Dunia Lain or The Other World* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&v=vnm84mXSkvA&NR=1>);
4. *Dua Dunia or Two Worlds* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOUyKPC5V-M&feature=related>);
5. *Jagad Misteri or The World of Mystery* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6zVec436FY&feature=related>);
6. *Rahasia Alam Ghaib or The Secret of the Supernatural World* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AzVROM3m7U&feature=related>);
7. *Alam Lain or The the Other Sphere* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4T7I0cDLH0&feature=related>);
8. *Paranormal Menghalau Hantu or Ghostbuster* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2Hv2tX1G8o&feature=related>), and
9. *Mystery and Discovery*, a programme which failed to be broadcasted because of an internal conflict among the crew. I worked with some of the members of this group, who helped me find and meet potential participants to interview.

the killing itself is a manifestation of social frustration and “an example of the inability of socially determined thinking to comprehend certain situations” (Siegel 2006, 1).

Regardless of these anthropological and political interpretations, the tension among the common people itself underlines a remarkable religious message which says that there is no place for those whose worldview is suspected to be against the teachings of religions, that it is primitive and contrary to modernity. Viewed as a naked reality, the ubiquitous killing itself conveys a serious warning that the practice of wongpintership was, is and will be severely scrutinized by religions. Such an unfavourable atmosphere reminds the whole society of the killings of criminals, ex-prisoners, recidivists and gangsters, which took place in the 1980s and is known as *petrus*, an acronym for *penembak misterius* or “mysterious sharp shooter”. This allegedly military operation was observed by the international community as an ultimate example of the infringement of human rights (van der Kroef 1985, 745). Placed in this perspective, the murder of *wong pinters* may have been interpreted by public opinion in terms that these practitioners were heretics and outside of normal society.

The enmity between practitioners of wongpintership and some people of religion is echoed in the religious campaigns of some converts. There have been numerous publications on the matter which aim to show the adherents of religions that spiritualist practices are acts of fraudulence. They fool the susceptible and divert innocent God-worshippers to lower values. Some of these publications are the writings of Daud Tony. Publishing more than 30 books by 2010, he revisits issues central to the practice of spiritualism which is quite identical with the practice of wongpintership and proves to his mostly Christian readers that Christianity is superior to this traditional practice because all secrets of wongpintership can be matched and tackled using biblical verses. In contrast to Daud Tony, Herman Utomo, a practitioner who has published many works, argues that wongpintership is a category of theosophy or universal spirituality. According to him, it needs to be understood in the context of theosophy, not in the context of institutional religions (2008, 7-9). We see here that among practitioners themselves there are divisions and disagreements when they discuss the same matters. However, such a theosophical viewpoint may represent the current tendency to place the practice of wongpintership in the context of mysticism and I find that most mystics are theosophists or at least have a theosophical perspective.

In Central Java, two Catholic dioceses have accommodated these traditional practitioners. This ecclesial response is due to the demand that more people feel the urgency to take up the teachings of traditional wisdoms as instrumental to the internalisation of Christian teachings without being alienated from their own cultural roots. As a result of this warm welcome the practice of *wongpintership* is less suspected. It does not mean that every member of the Catholic Church in these two dioceses welcomes them. An antagonistic welcome is evident especially from the Catholic charismatic movement and the conservatives who maintain that there is nothing worth conserving from the local practices since the wisdom of Christ is superior. There is a certain degree of doubt whether they have to reject them completely or to suspend judgement until the church authority issues a formal statement. This situation mirrors the similar response of their neighbours who prefer having the service of *wong pinters* outside the village to those from within their own village.

The social standing of *wong pinters* among their neighbours may be discerned through narratives concerning their encounters with them. Each *wong pinter* has a distinct experience of this and so do their neighbours. Instead of detailing these narratives, I would agree with what Geertz has written. He describes that neighbours of a newly emerging *wong pinter* (a *dhukun tiban* he interviewed) were divided in what they had to say about her. Some of them acknowledged the effectiveness of her service, some others were sceptical, and others showed a bitter dislike. This looks like a simple fact. However, I suggest that using a closer approach, this simple fact contains a complex attitude loaded with various interests: jealousy, open-heartedness, honesty, hypocrisy, distrust and social exclusion. This has been seen everywhere, even in the case of shamanism, in that a *wong pinter* gets a warm welcome and is respected by people from neighbouring villages rather than by their own neighbours. Their direct neighbours who benefit from their role may regard them as a *wong sepuh* or other names for *wong pinters*. Those who doubt them offer differing explanations, such as accusations of insanity or mental disorder. Those who dislike them use religion as their starting point to disregard their service. To the practitioners themselves, these various reactions become a continuous irritant and they become excluded socially and are less involved in social activities. In its extreme form, some of them have been asked to leave the village as happened to the husband and wife *wong pinters* Mr and Mrs Tamtu. There was no legal protection or legal procedure to prove the accusation. This final resolution may reflect the inability of the local authorities to advocate on their behalf or offer a

wise approach towards the suspected and those who suspect. As access to communication is blocked by prejudice and suspicion, a newcomer must leave for the sake of conserving social harmony in the village. I consider that the lack of a systematised division of labour is at the core of this problem. It causes the failure of these newcomers to integrate themselves into the organic centre of the village community.

Challenges from other practitioners themselves, which create the richness of *wong pinter's* social picture, may be best explained by reference to the narratives attached to their daily lives. Of course they must not be treated as common patterns because in fact every *wong pinter* has had a unique experience. However, despite the difference in the detail of their experiences, we can acknowledge the reality that these practitioners are in contact with other practitioners in two ways: in a mutual relationship, which is discussed in the next section of this chapter, and in a competitive one. The second aspect may be manifested in active enmity and competition. The latter is the seed for the former or, in other words, the former is an extreme form of the latter. The following narratives may offer some hints about possible relations among practitioners. The first narrative came from a participant who lives in Jember, East Java. It is chosen because it involves the same family mentioned in the previous paragraph.

A Catholic Junior High School in Jember asked a spirit expert Soedjarwadi to cast magical mantras to protect the school area from disturbances caused by spirits. It was done as asked. However, the school owner found other spirit experts, a husband and wife. So, this couple was invited to enact their expertise. What happened next was disastrous to this couple because what they did was in contrast against the magical principle applied by Soedjarwadi. The danger was overcome when the owner of the school regretted, apologised and pleaded with him to interfere again (Jember, 9 December 2010).

This narrative figures out that there is a hierarchy among the *wong pinters* based on the advancement of their mastery on wongpintership secret knowledge. The disaster itself is very much about the trespassing of local ethical codes operating among the *wong pinters* within the area. It seems that there is an unwritten rule which emphasises that an experienced *wong pinter* will know the importance of showing courtesy when s/he serves outside his/her own community. There are hierarchies of knowledge and mastery in wongpintership. Ignorance in this matter may cause a fatal result.

The second story was collected from an encounter with Agustinus, a practitioner who lives in Pakem, Jogjakarta. He wanted to know the name of another practitioner

whom I interviewed in Magelang. I gave the name and, looking up for a while, he said: “This man loves and always talks about money” (Ndero, 16 February 2011). What he said may be a random issue. However, it was true about this personality. We may think that it could be both the way a *wong pinter* tries to figure out someone of similar profession and a personal way of introducing oneself to his guest. This does not seem to be the case. Although it might be coincidence, I would say that a *wong pinter* has a certain way to comment on another practitioner. Their comment could be an acknowledgement of someone’s superiority but it can also be about someone’s level of mastery of, or process of acquiring, the wongpintership.

These narratives offer models of relations which are disuniting or potentially alienating. The first story reveals that the emerging tension is caused by this newcomer *wong pinter* who is seen as an unconsiderate intruder. It also shows that some *wong pinters* may be quite territorial and some others find difficulties in integrating themselves into a new environment. It also signifies the existence of a hierarchy among the *wong pinters* themselves, whether they reside in a network or not. This hierarchy is created both from the mastery of knowledge and the rank of the spirits collaborating with them. In this context, practitioners with a specific religion consider God (called by using different local names) as the highest spirit and the source of all supreme power (Errington 1984, 285). The second story may demonstrate the process of the levelling influence of the *wong pinter*. Those with interest in money, fame, and indulging themselves are seen to be of a low level. This view may be reinforced by the fact that Javanese society still sees that moral principles are derived from the mastery of the bodily passions of anger (*amarah*), gluttony (*aluamah*), sloth (*mutmainah*) and lust or *supiah* (Simuh 1988, 340). Any attachment to even one of them demonstrate that the person concerned has not yet achieved a high level of mastery in wongpintership, which is marked by the acquisition of the three pillars of perfect virtue: power (*kasekten*), insight (*kawaskitan*) and wisdom (*kawicaksanan*). Sometimes the virtue of *kasembadan* or the ability to solve any challenges is also mentioned as one of the pillars.

4.6 Aspects of *wong pinters*’ survival strategies

Given the challenges that *wong pinters* face in their internal affairs they have had to develop strategies for survival. The main way this has been achieved is through the development of mutual relationships with their fellow practitioners through joining a

network of *wong pinters* and integrating themselves into the existing social structure. I call this a ‘strategy of survival’ for a reason. By having a sense of community, or being connected to other practitioners with similar interests, their particular practice of wongpintership is not only more updated with information and open to mutual collaboration where possible, but it also gains more social recognition. In the end, this networking contributes to the religious movement which gives a place and appreciation to traditional values and beliefs. However, despite some benefits which stem from this survival strategy, some drawbacks appear to be unavoidable. In reading the given text, which is the reality of the networking process itself, I would say that the need to organise that network creates a stronger sense of hierarchy. Those with higher academic degrees or whose social background is rather aristocratic or who have a high position in the military institutions will be the elite within the network, although their elite status is not a guarantee of their mastery over wongpintership’s four pillars of perfection.

4.6.1 Connection to a network of *wong pinters*

Heidegger remarks that our being in existence is a preparation to die (Heidegger cited in Sheehan 2005, 357). To live is a movement towards death and being in relationship with an ‘other’ is an irreducible necessity (Newell 1984, 777 & 779-780). For some *wong pinters* this remark must find its truth. They discover that their daily life is like a continual attempt to escape from the danger of death, from a culture of death, a struggle similar to that found among the shamans of southwest Colombia (Taussig 1987, 4). If they are seen as a social type, death inflicted on *wong pinters* by their fellow practitioners can cause its extinction. Heidegger argues that to be connected or to consociate with others is a wise way to sustain an existence. Thomas Hobbes as well as Jean Jacques Rousseau (Hobbes cited in Rousseau 2004 [1762], 14-15) maintains that a community may be a good solution to defend oneself from death as threatened by a nasty, brutish and short life (Russell 2004 [1946], 505). This remark is relevant to *wong pinters*’ current situation. I derive from these thinkers an essential point, that is, to be connected with others affirms one’s existence. To apply this point to wongpintership’s practitioners means that they may connect themselves to their fellow practitioners in order to deal with their brutish life. Consequently, possessing and practising wongpintership is seen as a way to connect with each other and to create a community rather than as a form competition and demonstration of prowess. In this view, the

existence of other practitioners is an opportunity to realise other, higher, values. In this context, I should restate that the practice of wongpintership involves participation in the kingly task of enhancing the beauty of the world (*memayu hayuning bawana*).

The International Conference of Shamanism held in San Francisco has become a centre for connecting magico-religious healers, other shamanic practitioners and fostering a network of practitioners and researchers, including anthropologists and religious studies scholars. Within this emerging community, shamanism not only finds a respectable place before social and religious scientists but also generates recognition that their archaic practice of healing can be beneficial in terms of modern medical treatment and therapy. With this development, the existence of shaman and the practice of shamanism itself are protected from the danger of extinction. Further progress is shown in the emergence of shamanic workshops, such as the one pioneered by Michael Harner. It means that the practice of shamanism is now more open than it was previously and shaman can be reproduced in a mass mode. This may overlook divine election or election by spirit. Despite these potential objections, such an achievement has conserved the phenomenon itself and thus it is worth continuing.

A similar progress also occurs among the *wong pinters*. Besides the existence of many mysticism groups, there are two big institutions: MSC and FKPPAI. Here I will devote attention exclusively to the first group. It has two kinds of meetings, annual and monthly. The annual meeting is designed to be a big event, whereas the monthly meeting is a regular event attended by close members of the group. Within this group, there are some smaller groups. One of these groups consists of the largest number of participants I have interviewed or invited to participate in focus group discussions. This inner group consists of the founders of the MSC and whose backgrounds surprise me. Most of them are descended from aristocratic families and military generals. One of them is Sita, the daughter of Soedjono, a minister of Foreign Affairs during Soekarno's presidency. She is one of the living witnesses of the emerging Javanese shaman named Sawito and known as a reincarnation of the 'Just Prince' (*Ratu Adil*), the Javanese messianic figure who will lead Indonesia to social and political harmony. Mentioning this inner group, I would underline that this loose organisation represents a network of *wong pinters* which accommodates practitioners of wongpintership from various religious backgrounds. This network brings significance to the practitioners themselves. This group obviously dedicates itself as an agent of spiritual movement.

Justus van de Kroef explores the motives behind the proliferation of religious sects in 1960s of Java, a period when “the influence of traditional folk healers and shamans [was] in most areas as strong as ever [alongside] the spell-binding apparel of messianic super-naturalism” (1956, 147). He claims that the trends themselves were no more than the symptoms of an ongoing process of social and cultural disorganisation, a way to produce new social elite, and the collectivization of the people. Referring to Tocqueville, who said that only through association and group action can particular and individual needs be met, he argues:

Within the collectivities, as potential or actual power groups, individual acumen can still lead to personal advancement. Perhaps that is why Indonesia today abounds in economic, political, and cultural associations. Unlike the early nationalist period, with its elite of future "grand old men," recognition and fulfilment of ambition can no longer be achieved by means of one's individual strength: advancement now depends on the nature and degree of institutional affiliation and on the leadership of particular groups (Van der Kroef, 1956, 147).

This point of view is echoed again in his later writing on the increase of religious sects. He remarks that besides some efficient factors, such as changes in the social and cultural sphere, political instability, the climate of political mysticism and people’s dependence on charismatic leaders, the main motif behind the establishment of a new religious sect is to rise in the social scale. Quoting from the head of the religious sect division of the Bureau of Religious Affairs, he restates that there are four motives behind the proliferation of religious sects. They are: 1) “the desire to seek influence”, 2) “sentiment” toward one religion or another, 3) “manipulation by political parties” and 4) “seeking material profits” (Van der Kroef 1961, 25). This characterisation cannot be treated as an official statement. Although it may contain an implicit truth, that statement is personal in its nature. Furthermore, I can hardly find a *wong pinter* with a great confidence to put himself or herself in front of the public to campaign for influence. Most *wong pinters* tend to be people who work behind the scene.

Considering these different opinions I would add another possible reason why some magico-religious practitioners join the group. On the basis of Hobbes’s thoughts on community and bearing in mind the everyday danger of death, the formative motive behind the organisation of shamanism mentioned above and remembering the ambiguous place of the *wong pinter* in society, I would argue that the basic explanation for their joining a group of practitioners is the need to sustain their existence. It is a matter of their finding a way to survive. Therefore, being in a community may mean

that they are now in a network of practitioners. In consequence, their lack of confidence is very much reduced. The current recognition given by those two dioceses in Central Java which accommodate the activities of the *wong pinters* as an instrument to deepen the application of Christian faith in people's daily life may justify the fact that more established institutions stand by their side. Therefore, we should distinguish what is primary from what is secondary. The fact that they become influential and receive material profits, maintain their own religious perspectives and are used by political leaders is only an impact from the primary cause. They are secondary and unnecessary.

4.6.2 Integration into the local social structure

The second strategy of survival to maintain *wong pinters'* existence as a social type and their place in society is conducted by integrating themselves into the local social structure. It means that there has been a moment that *wong pinters'* de-integration from a particular social class has occurred. Some anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz (1976) and Koentjaraningrat (1985) have attempted to figure out how Javanese society has been socially stratified. The most recent account is structured into three layers: upper class, middle class and lower class. In the 1960s, Justus van der Kroef presented a more detailed description about the social structure found in Javanese society. They are "1) the peasantry, 2) the rural and urban proletariats, 3) the entrepreneurial class, 4) the intelligentsia and semi-intelligentsia in government service and the professions, 5) the traditional aristocracy, and 6) the hierarchy of Muslim clerics" (1956, 141). Seen in terms of this stratification, the place of the *wong pinter* may not have been clearly located or identified. In his book *The Religion of Java*, Geertz mentions that there is an *abangan dhukun* as well as a *santri* and *priyayi dhukun*. As in the case of the Geertzian classification, there may also be *wong pinter* in each layer of van der Kroef's version. However, if we start to look at the data I have generated, at least 53% of participants have confessed openly that they have a noble background, therefore I would maintain that there are many more *wong pinters* of noble roots who intentionally live a hidden life, whether as peasantry or other categories, just to deny their nobility. I attempt to explain this phenomenon in the next paragraph.

Van der Kroef has explored the impact of Dutch and Japanese colonialism in terms of changes to Java's class structures. Since the period of Western dominance over the last Javanese kingdoms until the onset of the struggle for independence, the

Japanese occupation, and then the installation of the Old Order followed by the emergence of the New Order, the concept of Javanese nobility has changed remarkably (Van der Kroef 1956, 138-139). All these changes scattered the position of the noble and changed the meaning of who may be called a true noble person. Some scholars have shown that there are possible factors behind the shifting understanding of nobility.

According to Wertheim (1955) and van der Kroef (1956), the change of the content and form of nobility in Java was caused by the changing rulers at a national level. This means that whoever comes to rule the state will create a new structure of society with its elite, middle and lower class. Those who use to be at the top of the ranks may be overturned, marginalized and degraded in class terms. For example, when Java was under localised monarchical government, the noble class consisted of those who owned land, gained the king's favour, and dedicated their life to the king and worked as state officials. Soon after the arrival of colonial power, they became a second class, even the third, and had to work for the colonial regime. The rank of nobility was structured on the basis of race and division of labour (Palmier 1960, 197). Then, the victory of Japan over the Dutch affected the colonial structures. Those from the Javanese aristocratic class were downgraded below the new nationalist intelligentsia who had originated from commoners. Later still, the emergence of the new rich whose riches exceeded that of aristocrats, eroded hereditary nobility based on land and riches, whose ownership practically ceased to exist or failed to continue its cultural hegemony (Dick 1985, 72). Nobility cannot be based on riches anymore. The awakening of Islam in Indonesia cannot be separated from the global religious crisis and the wider Islamic movement throughout the world. It has created new elites in the current class structure. Nobility by blood is in competition with Muslim clerics. These constant changes have meant that people with traditional noble backgrounds have to hide, relativize, disregard and forget their noble status. This includes *wong pinters* whose social origins was from this social class and who had been part of the political movement since the time before, during and after the national independence.

In the last decade in Java, and in response to the new government's policy on freedom of expression and religion, there has been what has become known as "the renaissance of Java". To mark this cultural revival, not only is the traditional Javanese worldview reproduced, but there are also many other elements of Javanese tradition which have been allowed to flourish, including the acquisition of Javanese noble titles.

This new freedom seems to encourage the proliferation of Javanese religious groups (*kelompok kebatinan*) and the re-establishment of organisations (*paguyuban*) in which we can find *wong pinters* heavily involved. This has allowed them to highlight their noble roots by reclaiming their noble backgrounds. As part of the organisation, *wong pinters* have significant roles as ritual experts, spiritual advisers who mediate the world of the group's ancestors within the group itself, and as masters of Javanese traditional teachings. They show a great concern with cultural education. This has become a turning point and an opportunity which has encouraged many *wong pinters* to come out of their hiding period and to reclaim their original place. This is a social act to re-integrate themselves into the existing social system to which they supposedly belong.

Interpreting the fact that they are nationalistic in their political orientation, syncretistic in religious approach and aristocratic in social status, we may detect that their inclinations to these spheres could confirm their privileged place. Most participants show their family tree book that provides evidence that their social roots are aristocratic. Not only that, the evidence of their having a connection with this social class is justified by their partaking in the divine ideology that a Javanese king should be aware of and by the mastery of wongpintership. Some of them make a special effort to come to the Jogjakarta palace every 35 days to pay homage to the sultan on his day of birth (*dino weton*) as a symbol of their fidelity to him, which also represents their fidelity to the state's ideology. Here is the explanation as to why they are nationalistic in their political orientation and aristocratic in a matter of social association.

Since the inception of Indonesia as a new nation, the last Javanese kingdom pledged to be committed to supporting the idea of the One Nation State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). This political term is rooted in the earlier Javanese kingdom of Majapahit whose territory and influence include the whole area of contemporary Indonesia and some Southeast Asian countries. This inclusive political viewpoint shapes the style of their religious perspective which accommodates the good aspects that all religions may offer. This syncretic religious outlook has generated a nationalistic name, the Pancasila religion (*agama Pancasila*). Thus, *wong pinters'* survival strategy manifested in their re-integration into the most privileged social structure is legitimised by their adoption of the kingly ideology, their concern with educating the people and the defence of the nation state, a nationalistic political orientation, and aristocratic social identification and syncretic religious outlook.

4.7 Significance of the discussion on *wong pinters*' internal concerns

Considering the exploration of *wong pinters*' internal preoccupations, we come to some questions mentioned earlier in this chapter as to why it is important to examine those intimate issues constitutive of their pursuit of everyday life and activities and the significance of this. On the one hand, the engagement between elements of what preoccupies shamans most of all within their closed community and what *wong pinters*' internal preoccupation consist of, confirms further the connectivity between both. In turn the phenomenon of *wong pinters* can be systematised through the study of shamanism. On the other hand, this exploration reveals the fact that *wong pinters*' existence depends on many factors. Here I would argue that wongpintership, whatever type it may belong to, will be perfected and made more sustainable because it is not only carried out continuously but also because all types are related to many different aspects, especially in the formative sphere which is influenced by many factors including personal, social, religious, and cultural ones. It suggests that there is a necessity for *wong pinters* to redefine their social standing at all times if they join together as a social type in order to survive in society. They are always in a state of on-going formation. Just as in the world of shamanism, the existence of a *wong pinter* is only meaningful when a positive relationship with its formative circumstances is well established. This is the reason why *wong pinters* are both respected and despised.

Respect for *wong pinters* is due to their expertise in generating information on the basis of their contact with the world of spirits which is considered by their community to have higher authority than any other practical knowledge. On top of this, the effectiveness of their knowledge, skills and services is justified by those who have benefited from them and these services may cover many concerns that touch the reality of human needs. People's access to their service is not determined by how much *money* *wong pinters* may receive but by the need to enhance the beauty of the world in its practical manifestation. Thus, they are respected because their services are accessible and the application of their skills and knowledge give answers to the people in *wong pinters*' immediate surroundings. However, this cannot deny the reality that the application of their knowledge and skill itself brings both acceptance and rejection from different people because of the different perspectives that have formed their worldview. They are despised because of their unpreparedness to meet demands for scientific justification of their knowledge and skills, allegation of the danger of religious

superstition and misleading characteristics, and connotation of fraud and criminality. Looking at the current public debates on some live TV shows, such as *Mata Njawa* (Metro TV, 13 May 2013) and *Debat* (TVOne, 18 November 2013), the dispute about their significance and who has benefited from their roles demonstrates that the public audience still considers them of relevance.

4.8 Summary

This chapter looks more closely at the reality of the *wong pinters* as seen from their internal preoccupations with their formation and maintenance of wongpintership, the application of their knowledge and skills in their closed communities, their social standing and their strategies to maintain their existence as a social type. These have been grouped into four aspects: formativeness, knowledge-skills and professionalism, social stance and survival strategies. These aspects of their domestic sphere are essential and relevant to the reality of their everyday pursuit of life and activities. It also leads to a reflection on the significance of the matter and what importance it has for their identity. By presenting patterns in the study of shamanism concerning elements of shamans' preoccupation with internal concerns and by reviewing academic research on the phenomenon of *wong pinters*, I have answered the questions set forth in the beginning of this chapter that shamans' concerns regarding their formation and services for their closed community, can also be used to analyse elements of *wong pinters'* internal preoccupations and to place them in a systematic order. This outcome reveals the answers to three questions. The answer to the first is based on the fact that *wong pinters* depend on their surroundings and therefore they have to redefine their social stance. The answer to the second and the third reveal how the world of the *wong pinter* can be full of challenges which not only potentially allow wongpintership to flourish but is also capable of leading it to extinction when a hostile reception dominates their day to day lives. However, with the emergence of networks of *wong pinters*, there is a sense of connection between practitioners and this allows them to redefine their place in society with more self-confidence and certainty. They reintegrate themselves into the existing structure from which they have been alienated to sustain their existence and maintain their social significance. The next chapter will explore how they engage with more established institutions beyond their closed community and internal preoccupation, including religious, social, cultural, environmental and political institutions.

Chapter 5

Engagement with Larger Concerns and Institutions

Having explored some aspects of *wong pinters*' preoccupation with formation, roles, application of skill and survival strategies within their closed community, it is not an exaggeration to say that their encounters with their fellow *wong pinters* and neighbours in need as well as their various ministries and activities in and around their neighbourhood are not only a matter of applying their knowledge and skills but also a unique way to conserve their existence, social role, significance and identity. Although their concern with restoring the well-being of the people is a common contribution, they consider it as only one of many small things that they can do to serve. Do they deal with greater concerns of political, social, religious, cultural and environmental issues? Are there insights from the involvement of shamans as consociates of the *wong pinters* in more established realms? Some sources show that they are involved in cultural, educational, environmental, religious and political movements. They support people who promote the national ideology. Does their involvement have a certain ideological basis and why do they engage with such matters outside their closed community and internal concerns? Are there any consequences of this expanded involvement regarding their own existence and social standing? This chapter will explore the reality of *wong pinters*' expanded involvement and argue that they do not only deal with trivial issues in their closed community but also engage with larger concerns and contribute to more established institutions as has also happened in the history of shamanism.

To answer these questions and delineate the aims of this chapter, I will explore five points. Firstly, in order to maintain the connection with the world of shamanism and to systematise *wong pinters*' involvement in larger concerns and engagement with more established institutions, insights from the study of shamanism will be explored. Secondly, I will draw on scholarly engagements with the contribution of *wong pinters* to the local establishment in Javanese society. Thirdly, I will identify the ideological motif which has driven them to engage with these spheres. Fourthly, I will look more closely at five important arenas in which they have been known to have a significant contribution. Fifthly, I will examine whether their involvement has good or bad implications for their existence and role in society.

5.1 Insights from the study of shamanism

Within the study of shamanism, there has been a general recognition that shamans from different societies and periods could be military chiefs (Golovnev and Kan 1997, 153-154), warriors (Ripinsky 1993, 62-63; Bayly 1996, 117, Vitebsky 1995, 117), kings (Bloch 1996, 133; Vitebsky 1995, 116), leaders (MacNeish 1956, 140 & 147), councillors, counsellors, teachers, mystic, priests (Hugh-Jones 1996, 32), spirit specialists (Nelson 2008, 152), and religious leaders (Golovnev and Kan 1997, 154-155). Vitebsky writes that “being a shaman is probably the oldest profession, covering the roles which in industrial societies are played separately by the doctor, psychotherapist, [lawyer], soldier, fortune-teller, priest and politician” (1995, 96). Focusing on the connection between shamans and their community, Ripinsky records that “all at once, a shaman is the community’s healer, the mystic, and the intellectual” as well as the “chief, the custodian of the sacred myths and traditions, the ‘memory’ of his people, a mythologue and a genealogist [as well as a ritual practitioner] and culture-environment overseer or a maintainer of ecological equilibrium” (1993, 64-65). These roles demonstrate that shamans have had a long history of involvement in more established spheres. Sarah M. Nelson deploys elaborate archaeological data about shaman-kings in the early Chinese states (2008, 144-163). Sasaki Kokan, analysing the relation between shaman and a king from the Shilluk of Africa, the Dalai Lama of Tibet, ancient Israel and the Japanese emperor, presents four examples of shamans with social-political functions as either kings or other political leaders (Kōkan and 佐々木宏幹 [Sasaki Kokan] 1990, 116-120). Two scholars in the history of China, Loewe and Shaughnessy, argue that in China, a king could be a royal shaman as indicated by the philological root of the word *wang* (king) which is related to two characteristics of shamans, *wang* (emaciated and crippled) and *kuang* (1999, 262).

In societies that have suffered from colonial hegemony, shamans as local leaders and protectors of communities have engaged with political affairs and the challenges posed by foreign colonial governments. The arrival of a new but dominating political power in the form of colonisation created a new order which was foreign to the local communities. This foreign power changed the structure of society in all its aspects. David Chidester summarises the encounter between shamans from different societies and the colonial authorities. According to him, the indigenous inhabitants including the shamans and their roles, found themselves marginalised, in danger of extinction,

disorientated, losing authority and become strangers in their own land (Chidester 2004, 43); and decisions over justice and truth are in the hands of the conquering state (44). Worst of all was the eradication of local ethnic identity together with its religious and cultural practices. Shamanistic practices were not an exception to this (44-47).

In this chaotic and uncertain environment, the hope for the emergence of a liberating charismatic leader imbued with supernatural powers to liberate these suffering people seems to become a common reaction towards colonial domination (Giesler 2004, 169). This hope gives rise to messianic or millenarian movements. In the context of this hope for restoring the political, religious and cultural equilibrium and re-establishing a charismatic figure, shamans from different societies have been known to becoming involved in these movements and anticolonial revolts (Chidester 2004, 47; Giesler 2004, 170). However, while the local community regards them as their heroes, the colonial power considers these magico-religious chiefs as constituting the rebel leadership, and therefore they are to be captured, tortured, exiled, and even killed (Giesler 2004, 170 & 172). The surviving shamans may be those who manage to adapt their roles to new ones such as mediators between both the supernatural and human beings and the religious worlds of the colonisers and the colonised (Chidester 2004, 42).

In the history of the institution of kingship in ancient Israel, the prophet, insofar as he was regarded as a shaman (Field 1958, 14; Wilhelmi 2004, 36-39), was known as the conscience of the nation (Caquot 1990, 42), councillors or spiritual advisors of the rulers (Hocart 1970, 192-193). In European monarchies this was a role undertaken by priests and sages, or the *pandita* in Indian kingship. Like shamans, these functionaries were ritual specialists (Hocart 1927, 121). Thus, shamans have engaged with more established political spheres in two ways: negatively, in that they were treated as competitors with monarchs, persecuted and regarded as leaders of anti-colonial rebels, and positively, as charismatic figures, kings, kings' councillors, military leaders and spiritual advisors. According to A. Marshall, during the Zhou dynasty in China (1027-1256), "shamans belonged to the Ministry of Rites, presiding over funerals, performing exorcisms and rain dances..." (2004, 71).

The history of colonization has often featured the spreading of new religions. Dominant political hegemony is followed by cultural and religious imperialism as colonialism, according to Chidester, is "not only a matter of military, political, and economic power but also a cultural project, advancing cultural idea... entailing

intercultural contacts, relations and exchanges” although this is followed by cultural dispossession and extinction of the colonised (Chidester 2004, 41). He mentions how the Chinese and Russian empires which have colonized Siberia and introduced Buddhism and Orthodox Christianity to the region, in turn shaping, influencing and displacing traditional religious practices that had been the specialisation of shamans by persecuting or insisting that they convert to new religions (42-48).

Similar issues are discussed in other articles such as ‘Buddhism and Shamanism’ (Lewis 2004, 30-34), ‘Christianity and Shamanism’ (Wilhelmi 2004, 35-41), ‘Daoism and Shamanism’ (Marshall 2004, 71-74), ‘Messianism and Shamanism’ (Giesler 2004, 169-174), ‘Sufism and Shamanism’ (Sidikov 2004, 238-242), and ‘Tantrism and Shamanism’ (Berglie 2004, 243-247). These scholarly interventions highlight that shamans from different societies have to deal with both religious institutions and authorities and the existing political power which support these religions. As it is a necessity for them to deal with newly introduced religions, the result can be predicted. Three patterns and sets of responses, as systematised by Chidester, may emerge: extinction; assimilation or creative adjustment; and resistance. In Nepal and Tibet, the practice of shamanism has disappeared because it was politically and religiously defeated by Buddhism and overshadowed by the role of the lama monks who are seen as better religious specialists (Ortner 1995, 357).

The engagement of shamans with the colonial regime, as Salomon discusses it, is also related to their reaction towards the exploration and exploitation of the human environment of the colonised for the extraction of raw materials and the economic benefit of the coloniser through the deforestation of their jungles and the establishment of mining projects (1983, 413 & 417). Their involvement in these ecological and economic spheres is unsurprising and, according to Chidester, as a consequence the shaman as protector and mediator of the community plays not only a political role but also an economic and environmental one when ecological disruption threatens their context (2004, 41). Such an engagement with ecological and economical concerns, for example by summoning rain and locating animals of a hunt among hunter-gatherer societies, continues into the post-colonial era (Wright 1992, 36). As stated by John Grim, this intimate relation with the environment confirms how shamanism is related to ecology and empirical scientific ecology because shamans demonstrate a remarkable knowledge about plants, animals, and the weather (2004, 107). Vitebsky sees their role

in environmentalism and ecological care as a consequence of their cosmologies (2003, 290). Thus, their fight for the equilibrium of their habitat manifests their concern with defending the local inhabitants' economic resources. Ecology and environmentalism are pivotal for them. In the modern era, when society does not hunt game and keep livestock and when the citizenry is under the protection of adequate public law, shamans have to connect themselves to the will of market forces. Laurel Kendall interprets the engagement of Korean shamans with the modern economic system as an adaptation of a Weberian 'spirit of capitalism' in order to make themselves become noble figures through financial and material success (1996, 514 & 518). This interpretation may be hard to accept for some because shamanism is a type of spiritual vocation.

Another insight into the involvement of shamans in established spheres is found in their engagement with the world of education. As shaman has become known as priests (Hugh-Jones 1996, 35; Kōkan and 佐々木宏幹 [Sasaki Kokan] 1990, 109; Naoko 2003, 122; Sevigny 1984, 185), and priests are known as teachers of the people, therefore, it is logical to think that a shaman may have been regarded as teachers. Robin Alexander criticises the involvement of a shaman 'William' in the teaching of art history and studio art classes in a California high school in order to bring about attitudinal change in his classroom by using cognitive dissonance. His critique emphasises that William's pedagogical techniques and the content of his teaching are too abstract and moves students away from the meaning of art and the contemporariness of art (1983, 48-57). This article is reviewed by Maurice Sevigny who states that Alexander's criticism of William's teaching methodology is "falling victim to the pitfall of negativism" (1984, 185-187). Regardless of what their criticism and evaluation of William's work at that school are, it is obvious that there has been an attempt to involve shamans in a formal educational sphere. While Wade Davis regards shamans as botanical researchers in the terminology of Western science because of their contribution to ethnobotany (2001 [1995], 286-290), Jeremy Narby confirms that shamans have collaborated with the academic world as he recorded the collaboration of a shaman with scientists from different universities who tried to obtain further biomolecular information (2001 [2000], 301-305). These collaborations signify that shamanism can be beneficial to many established institutions. Can such encounters with more established institutions be found in the world of *wong pinters*? The next section documents some relevant data regarding *wong pinters*' activities in this wider context.

5.2 Scholarly data on Javanese shamans' expanded roles

In his overview of Southeast Asian shamanism, Robert Winzeler, referring to Andrew Beatty's article 'Javanese shamanism', notes that "neither the classical shaman nor a shamanistic worldview really exists in Java, though shamanistic practices persist (2004, 200; Beatty 2004, 816-817). However, as already shown, a shaman is a spirit specialist, and we consider that the works of other spirit specialists, consociates of the shamans, are evidence for the works of existing local shamans. Beatty acknowledges that in Java "generals and presidents, merchants and peasants, all alike have occasional recourse to the spirit world through the services of a specialist" (2004, 815). These people believe that these spirit specialists are containers of the *kasekten*, which is seen by Beatty as an element of Javanese shamanism (817). Such an acknowledgement is also mentioned by other scholars. Benedict Anderson interprets the customs of having religious ceremonies conducted by *wong pinters* on behalf of the operating leaders and of visiting an ascetic *ajar* for a blessing in order to gain divine approval to carry out leadership entrusted in them as an example of this (1990, 26-28 & 64). Henri Chambert-Loir and Anthony Reid describe how Abdurrahman Wahid, the former president of Indonesia, had a "nocturnal communing with the spirit of the 'potent dead'" which became his spiritual guide (2002, xv). Theodore Friend writes that President Soeharto required a *wong pinter*, Sujono Humardani, to become his "presidential assistant and mystical guru" (2003, 162 & 260-265). Niels Mulder mentions a 'mystic and politician', Wongsonegoro, who organises national meetings for Javanese mystic groups (1983 [1978], 4-12).

In his journey to explore the practice of mysticism in Java, the Singaporean ambassador to Indonesia, Lee Khoon Choy, found out that *wong pinters* accompanied the first and the second presidents of Indonesia in order to direct them in the acquisition of blessings from a Javanese deity Semar Sang Hyang Ismaya (1976, 147, 149 & 152). A similar report can also be read in Nils Bubant's work on sorcery and corruption (2006, 422). These accounts demonstrate that *wong pinters'* involvement either directly or indirectly in the world of politics is an integral part of the nature of wongpintership. Regardless of the possible intention of these scholars in highlighting the fact that the practice of politics in Indonesia is inseparable from the application of magical power and that the roles of *wong pinters* are needed to guard the entrusted leadership, it confirms that there has been academic indications that *wong pinters* have engaged with more established realms.

Outside concerns with the world of politics, information about *wong pinters'* engagement with more established spheres is hardly mentioned by scholars. Clifford Geertz states that a *wong pinter* or a *dhukun*, without any qualifier, is an insurer of good fortune (1976, 87). Concerned with environmental education, Otto Soemarwoto analyses the role of the Javanese messianic figure called 'the just king' (*ratu adil*) who restores cosmic harmony and mediates between the world of the spirit and the human being (1981, 22). Thus, a *ratu adil* must be an expert in Javanese teachings as well as in spiritualism. Such a specialty can sometimes be displayed by a shadow play puppeteer (*dalang*). The "*dalangs* are shaman", and thus, "specialist in spirits" (Byrad-Jones, 2004, 832-834). Many of them are associated with Sufism and Islamic mysticism. The shadow play itself is loaded with Javanese mystical teachings, and these can be educational, political, social and religious, depending on the intention behind the performance. Stephen Headley's research has shown that the practice of exorcism as manifested in the rituals of village cleansing (*bersih desa*) and purification (*ruwatan*) also uses the *wayang* performance (2000, 7-10). These rituals are used to refresh the mutual relationship between the world of spirits and the villagers. Seen from this perspective, it is inevitable for a *wong pinter* to engage with established institutions because of the nature of wongpintership itself. Why do they have to engage with such greater matters beyond the border of their internal preoccupations and their daily lives?

5.3 The ideological basis of *wong pinters'* expanded involvement

This section examines the ideology that motivates wongpintership's practitioners to carry out their vocation. When participants understood that this research was aware of "the caring for culture handed down by the ancestors" (*nguri-uri budayaning leluhur*), the interviewees demonstrated an eagerness to be interviewed. The key to this cooperative response is based on the word *nguri-uri*, meaning to conserve and to promote the valuable products of culture. In using this term, their works are acknowledged as worth conserving. This term is connected to the common ideal to enhance the beauty of the world (*memayu hayuning bawana*), interpreted by Mulder (1998, 94) and Magnis-Suseno (2001, 150) as man's call to make the world meet its maximum beauty. This adage matches with the meaning of politics as a technique for procuring and enhancing life to its maximum satisfaction (Needham 1970, xxxiv). This ideal matches *wong pinters'* concerns with those of the rulers and the ruled. At the

national level it is elaborated in the preamble of the Constitution, the UUD 45, and crystallised in the ideology of *Pancasila* (five principles). It comprises of visions based on participating in the creation of the world order, building up a sensible nation, advancing the common good, and establishing social justice and material and spiritual prosperity (UUD 45 Par. 4). The demand to foster the beauty of the world corresponds with the call to enhance life. What is this to do with the role of *wong pinters*?

As far as the involvement of *wong pinters* in the world of politics is concerned, the formulation of the five principles is inspired by the work of the *wong pinter*. The term *pancasila* is derived from the seven sets of five principles originating from the wisdoms of the past. The founding fathers of Indonesia chose and summarised existing sources, that is the seven sets of the five principles of the Javanese mystical teachings named as the *Wahyu Sapta Warsita Panca Pancataning Mulya* (Revelation of the seven five-sets of teachings leading to glory).⁹ These principles delineate that the task of enhancing the beauty of the world is an enterprise involving procuring the life substance drawn and domesticated from the open and untamed cosmos, the macrocosm.

According to A.C Kruyt, the idea of life force (*zielestof*), its domestication and preservation for the benefit of the whole community, is not alien in many societies (Koentjaraningrat 1975, 62). It can be found in Java and other parts of Indonesia, as well as in Southeast Asia. It is called *shakti* in places with Indian Hindu-Buddhism influences. People call it *kasekten* in Java (Anderson 1990, 74), or *sekti* in Bali (Geertz 1980 [1972], 106), *saksit* in Tai/Lao/Isan, *lalud* and *ulun* among the Kelabit of Borneo, *mana* in Polynesian areas, *aren* in Ao Naga, *kuasa* and *semangat* among the Malay, *sumange* in Sulawesi and *semongat* in Palangkaraya (Janowski 2007, 14 & 41). Among the Akha of Thailand, it is called *gylan*, whose meaning is equivalent to the Islamic term *Baraka*, which refers to blessing, merit, charismatic influence and subtle energy present throughout the universe. This substance of life is the source of qualities that “make atoms spin out of its orbit, the seeding surge from its shell, a barren woman gives

⁹ Those seven sets of five principles are: *Pancasila* (five teachings of the nature of man in relation to the Almighty, and sources of human morality and its formation); *Panca Karya* (five references to subdue the earth by performing dignified tasks), *Panca Guna* (five teachings concerning principles to develop an integral personality useful to the well-being of the whole community), *Panca Dharma* (five teachings to help people direct the orientation of their life), *Panca Jaya* (five principles of social virtues needed to live with others in society), *Panca Daya* (five powers enabling people to live correctly as social beings and to build a materially and spiritually just, prosperous and peaceful world) and *Panca Pamanunggal* (five references to become a just leader) (Hadinagoro 2010, 1-10).

children, a man gets his virility, kings and rulers able to function well and their land remain fertile, and their subjects display obedience and loyalty” (Ravenhawk 2007).

I should discuss the term *gylan* further as its meaning is close to the understanding of politics applied by the *wong pinters*. *Gylan*’s flow protects those within its sphere from misfortune and danger (Tooker 1996, 327). Manifested in the form of crops (*khaje*), people (*bije*) and livestock (*djeje*), it disperses into the world in accordance with its own will and “one cannot own or control [it]; one can only try to tap into it or set up the right channels so that it flows in one’s own direction and not in someone else’s” (Tooker 1996, 328). A correct spatial arrangement, a suitable human channel and an auspicious location are needed for its best accumulation. The central post of the chosen location becomes the *axis mundi* where its potency is concentrated and spatialised. It becomes a *dzoma*’s dwelling place. S/he is responsible both for the channelling of fertility, conducted through the cleaning of the village’s source of clean water, and for the ritual regulation of agricultural activity (333). Like the bearers of the *lalud* and *ulun* among the Dayak Kelabit of Borneo (Janowski 2007, 105-106), a *dzoma* is responsible for choosing the best rice seed, determining the right time for hunting or planting, reading the signs of nature, delivering wisdom or communal decisions and providing resources for the community. Together with the *dzoma* responsible for internal affairs, there is a *xagma*, a headman who is responsible for external matters. A *dzoma* is a leader with a sacerdotal role equipped with the capabilities and qualities required to become a *gylan* medium (Janowski 2007, 334).

Having explored what a *gylan* is and who can be understood as an appropriate container or vessel, an explanation of the practice of politics in its original meaning can be made available. The practice of politics is the practice of every concern with human preoccupation to enhance the well being of the people and the management of life through the right person, the host of life force. Thus, life force is related to politics through leadership undertaken by the right individual. Through him it emanates its power in all living beings. A person like the *dzoma* is a medium of the life force. He is responsible for the running of internal affairs including the dispersion of fertility to the whole village, giving protection by performing ritual purification of water at the beginning of the rice plantation season and the choosing of both the seed and the land to cultivate it. This figure knows how to make an alignment with the life force’s flow. A proper alignment of the place for living and the choosing of the right person to become

the transmitter of the life force will result in its maximum effectiveness. Politics, thus, includes concerns with the management of the cosmic power, its distribution and maintenance. This system of politics is expressed in the idea of *mandala*.¹⁰

A suitable container of the life force, like a chosen king or a *dzoma* and *zagma* bears a task that is no different from that of a god or gods. In Phnom Bakheng, the God Siva embodies himself in the actual king who entitled himself as the Lord of Universe and the *axis mundi* (Miyazaki 1988, 16). In Surakarta the sultan king calls himself ‘The Nail of the World’, *Paku Buwana*. In Jogjakarta the great importance of a king is manifested in a royal title called *Hamengku Buwana*, meaning ‘putting the world on his lap’. Such an identification of kings with gods is found also in Burma and ancient Java (Heine-Geldern 1956, 6). In Hocart’s view, this deification of kings bears no significance. It is just to make them sound superior to other men and thus just politicises the practice of ancient superstition (1970, 100). Feeley-Harnik had similar comments to Hocart, including those of Frazer, Fortes and Pritchard (Hocart 1985, 274). However, the logic of deification is explicable: a cosmic energy needs a cosmic channel.

In Java, a person like the *dzoma* and *zagma* is seen to be a *wong pinter* as his or her role is to generate practical wisdoms for the sustenance of power, agricultural activities, fertility, the well-being of all and choosing a good location to live. In a simpler society, s/he is the appointed leader of the village. In a more complex society such personalities are manifested in the form of a magistrate of the state. S/he could become a king or ruler whose capacities are specialised regarding managing the flow of the life force. These roles – like those of the *dzoma* – are carried out by personalities like a priest-king (*raja-pandita*). Most of his or her roles are sacerdotal. However, as their main function is to maintain the life potency for the benefit of as many people as

¹⁰ Etymologically *mandala* is composed from *manda* which means ‘a core’ and *la* ‘a container’ (Tambiah 1976, 102). The container is the chosen place, manifested in the realm of the kingdom, miniaturised in the construction of the palace, represented by the king or the leader of the communitas. The right construction of the *kota praja*, including the placement of provinces, governors and officials, must be in imitation of the cosmological structure of the universe (Heine-Geldern 1956, 4-5). It ensures that the life energy reaches the peripheral areas in such a way that the entire kingdom is marked with order, peace, all of which create a conducive atmosphere for every part of society to function well and to create prosperity (Anderson 1990, 33). In Java, it is called *mancapat* or ‘the four-and-one system’ (Koentjaraningrat 1975, 100). During his period of office, the former President Soeharto applied this system. He employed the idea of the four ruling gods or the *Sivaite Tetrad* and one supreme god, Semar, the guardian of Java-Nusantara (Friend 2003, 162-163). The four gods are *Siva*, *Durga*, *Ganesh* and *Agastya*. Soeharto identified himself to be the god *Siva*, his wife (Tien Soeharto) *Durga*, General Ali Murtopo (the head of the military intelligence agency) *Ganesh*, and Lieutenant General Sujono Humardani as the god *Agastya*, his mystical teacher (162).

possible, their role becomes political. They are specialists in how the task of the *memayu hayuning bawana* should be carried out. Included in this venture is how to procure life and its potency by using heirlooms and regalia. In its extreme form, *wong pinters* play a political role as elders for the court *apparati*, sagas and guardians for the whole kingdom or village or city. Such a role as advisors of political leaders continues to exist in the modern Java, even at a national level. They are persons considered to be the “indigenous intelligentsia” who know how a good and harmonious life in the present society can be achieved (Anderson 1966, 100).

One element of discussions about life potency is the management and maintenance of this cosmic power. There are four ways of achieving this: using a galactic polity, harem systems, regalia and spiritual guardians. Briefly, the galactic polity is a system of politics that imitates the system of our galaxy. In this system the centre expands its power by creating a sub-centre whose political organisation of the state has the same style as that of the centre. The life force that is spread from the centre is transmitted through the harem system. The cosmic power from the chosen king must be wholly transmitted. So the existence of proper bearers of life potency is presumed. They are called the queens of the kingdom whose palaces, according to Heine-Gedern, correspond to the four cardinal points and the four intermediary directions where the four principal queens and four queens of the secondary rank dwell (1956, 4).

Among the Javanese, besides the techniques mentioned above, there is another way of maintaining the domesticated life force, that is by the involvement of a *pengamping-amping* or unseen guardian(s). To secure what has been achieved, an aristocrat or person of a high position may have *pengamping-amping*, or ‘the unseen guardians’. These guardians can be a sort of *wong pinter* similar to shamans, paranormals, *orang sakti* (people with a great *kasekten*), Javanese spiritual teachers and even *kyais*, the traditional Islamic *guru* due to their ability to know the underworld and upper-world. A famous example of this is the second president of Indonesia, General Soeharto. To secure his position he allegedly employed more than twenty *wong pinters* (Bubant 2006, 422). Chambert-Loir and Reid say that the fourth president of Indonesia, Abdurrachman Wahid, the former president of Indonesia, chose to leave an official meeting in order to visit an ancestors’ tomb because he was reminded to by his guardian spirit (2002, xv). Therefore, these *wong pinters* are to guard the leaders and to chase away all potential threats. Included in the task is to reveal ways to be in conformity with

the cosmic order. Knowing how to be in harmony with nature is necessary in order to establish harmony between the microcosm (*jagad cilik*) and macrocosm (*jagad gedhe*), between oneself and the universe (Moertono 1981, 3).

As for heirlooms and regalia, they are, by their nature, mystical containers that store the life force, a function analogous to a memory disk. Their forms can be anything. In Thailand, for example as listed by Quaritch Wales (1931, 93-115), the forms of regalia in Java range from *keris*, swords, spears, mace, musical instruments like the gamelan to types of human beings both from the visible and invisible world (Anderson 1990, 27). The more powerful the heirlooms and regalia is, the more powerful the leadership of a king or a ruler. Among the Bugis of Sulawesi, according to Heine-Geldern, these life force containers are more pivotal than the king (1956, 9). Like the loss of queens may result in the collapse of the kingdom, so the loss of court regalia or heirlooms is consequential. They must be found as quickly as possible (Ricklefs 1993, 49). The end of the queenship of Nyai Kali-Njamat was marked by the giving away of her two heirlooms, the Mendjangan-Bang (the red deer ring) and Oeloek or the *zamrud* ring (BTJ, 60). These *pusakas* support the kings who “are legally and cosmologically entitled to rule over the country” (Seloemardjan 1962, 17).

Therefore, the ideological concept of *wong pinters* is rooted in the philosophy ‘*memayu hayuning bawana*’, which is, in fact, the management of life force to foster the realisation of world’s well-being in its maximum possibility. This ideology finds its more concrete description in the other Javanese saying regarding the dreamed society: a “*tata, titi, tentrem, karta raharja, gemah ripah loh jinawi*” society. It refers to a society which is well ordered, managed and organised, peaceful, harmoniously vibrant and densely populated, easy to conduct life and have it in abundance, both materially and spiritually.¹¹ Magnis-Suseno translates those words as order, peace, prosperity and happiness (1997, 103). The beauty of the world can be created and enhanced if the political, social, economic, ecological-environmental, cultural and religious realms function well. Since the beauty of the world itself is a result of the management of the domesticated life force, thus, as with the concept of *dzoma* and *xagma*, it must be the fruit of a continual synergy between both chosen agents of life potency, the imbued-

¹¹ *Tata* means well ordered (Mardiwasita 1981, 598), *titi* carefully organised (Poerwadarminta 1980, 251), *tentrem* peaceful, *karta* or *rahajeng* or *rahayu* harmonious (Winter and Ranggawarsita 1988 [1979], 79; Poerwadarminta 1980, 223), *raharja* or *redja* vibrant and alive (206), *gemah* easy (Mardiwasito 1981, 189; Poerwadarminta 1980, 68), *ripah* multitude and abundant (213). *Loh jinawi* means materially and spiritually.

with-*kasekten* leaders and their appropriate *apparati*, and between the priest/shaman-king or rulers of different levels and their councillors.

5.4 Engagement with more established realms

By exploring activities of *wong pinters* this section will answer how and why they bear the necessity to contribute to wider institutions. Table 5 provides data about their activities as derived from areas integral to the concept of what a beautiful world is like.

Table 5: *Wong pinters*’ involvement in larger concerns and more established realms.

Issue of analysis	Scope of <i>wong pinters</i> knowledge and skill	Object of activities	Total number					
			Number of <i>wong pinters</i>			Percentage		
			All (128)	V* (45)	U* (83)	All	V*	U*
Skills and knowledge according to their main areas of involvement	Environmental concerns	Medicinal herbs	62	24	38	48	53	46
		Village cleansing	33	15	18	26	33	22
		Rain diverting	10	3	7	7	7	8
		Fountain finding	30	7	23	23	16	28
	Cultural concerns	Javanese Teachings	95	37	58	74	82	70
		Javanese <i>Wayang</i> /art	86	34	52	67	76	63
		Javanese numerology	87	35	52	68	78	63
		Heirloom conservation	87	35	52	68	78	63
		Javanese practices	97	39	58	76	87	70
	Religious concerns	pilgrimage	62	27	35	48	60	42
		Ritual expert	71	27	44	55	60	53
		Spiritual mentor	100	34	66	78	76	79
		mysticism	83	33	50	65	73	60
		Master of spirits	103	38	65	80	84	78
	Political concerns	elders	73	24	49	57	53	59
		Advisor/councilor	77	23	54	60	51	65
		leaders	48	13	35	37	29	42
	Economic concerns	<i>Penglaris</i> (luck enhancer)	49	18	31	38	40	37
		Agricultural	66	31	35	51	69	42
		Finding suitable type and places of works	38	17	21	30	38	25
	Social concerns	Others (lottery, dream, amulet, magic insertion)	90	33	57	70	73	69
		Predicting the future	76	25	51	59	56	62
		<i>Nyarati</i> /divination	95	35	60	74	78	72
		Finding the lost	42	18	24	33	40	29
		Family counseling	106	37	69	82	82	83
		Healing	104	37	67	81	82	81
		Sorcery dispeller	71	24	47	55	53	57
		House cleansing	62	24	38	48	53	46

* Note: “V” stands for *wong pinters* who live in the village, “U” for *wong pinters* who live in urban societies

5.4.1 Engagement with political concerns

Axford and Browning mention that there are numerous definitions of politics, ranging from the simple to more elaborate ones (1997, 11). Hocart's opinion regarding the reality of life may accommodate the Javanese understanding of what politics is about. According to him, as cited by Needham, "keeping alive is man's greatest preoccupation, the ultimate spring of all his actions ... The art of life is first to be alive, secondly to be alive in a satisfactory way, and thirdly to acquire an increase in satisfaction" (Needham 1970, xxxiv). Politics is an art of living. As his ethnographical research shows that the human struggle for the good life is manifested in ritual, he concludes that "ritual is an ancient technique of life saving by which fertility is procured, life preserved, life-enhancing medicines and charms for fertility provided" (Hocart 1970 [1936], 298). Thus, politics includes religious acts of procuring and managing life force in order to maximise satisfaction through different roles and areas of concern. The discussion on *wong pinter's* involvement in the world of politics will be carried out within the parameters of this understanding. According to the data illustrated in Table 5 above, 73 *wong pinters* (57%) are elders, 77 (60%) advisors of the acting politicians, and 48 (37%) leaders. I would identify them as occupying roles at village level, court and national levels.

5.4.1.1 The *wong pinter* and village politics

The structure of a village is a good instrument of analysis. It is known that the five-four principle (*mancapat*) has been found to be the most effective one at all levels of usage. As outlined by Koentjaraningrat, only five men will be considered as the key men in the village's administration, no matter how extensive a staff that a village headman (*lurah*) may have (1975, 100). Koji Miyazaki has also demonstrated this. There will be a *lurah*, *kamitua* the supervisor of social welfare, *uru-uru* or *ulu-ulu* functioning as the supervisor of irrigation, a *modin* to supervise religious affairs, and *jagabaya* to oversee village security (1988, 32). The confederation of Javanese villages is established on this principle. As noted by de Jong and Miyazaki, one of these villages is to be the mother village located in the centre and while the four others function as daughter villages (Miyazaki 1988, 178; Koentjaraningrat 1975, 100). Furthermore, the application of the *mancapat* influences the way people locate the dwelling places of a village's four guardian spirits. The village political *apparati*, thus, should comprise at least one person

who is familiar to the village's guardian spirits. Concerning this, Geertz (1976 [1960]), Beatty (1999) and Headly (2004) are in accord with one another. This belief has been maintained up to the present time in Java.

Other elements of village politics include a legal system and the agent who may establish local law and traditional norms which I consider to have involved *wong pinters*. Koentjaraningrat (1975) provides a bibliographical review of the works of Dutch scholarship on the traditional legal system in Indonesia named the *adat* or custom and taboo laws. Following a study by Ina Slamet-Velsink, it was revealed that the establishment of taboos and the *adat* emerged as a response to disasters and plague (1996, 70). Henry Maine explores this issue and his findings affirm what Slamet-Velsink argues. He says that according to the primitive mind these disasters are the effects of a cosmic disequilibrium caused by improper conduct such as disputes, conflicts, crimes, and breaches of the local laws. These improprieties activate an excessive amount of unfavourable magical power and this disturbs its equilibrium, thus transmitting the curse (1986 [1864], 122-123). In order to restore it, someone should perform a ritual to avert the unfavourable effect of that magical substance or to transfer it to another object for scapegoating (Koentjaraningrat 1975, 98-99 & 103). From this ritual performance the importance of being obedient to the *adat* law and new laws and new taboos will emerge after a ritual performance. This raises an important question about who may define that new taboos or laws.

There are two possible agents who will give the new laws or taboos. The first is that the head of the community and the second the kin-groups. The first agent is possible as far as s/he is a mediator between the village and its guardian spirits. However, it is not the case for the second, since a village consists of many clans. Otherwise, teachings passed on to the public as new taboos by a kin-group will not be accepted by other kin-groups because they will lack authority unless the *adat* law-taboo-giver is more respectable than others or belongs to a superior clan. Nevertheless, every kin-group is equal to other kin-groups. Therefore the *adat* law-taboo-giver must be sought from beyond the kin-groups. If we notice how the disturbance has been theorised, as a result of transgression against the operating taboo or *adat* law the lawgiver must be someone familiar with local values and with the agent affected by the improper conduct. This affected agent must be the one who established these village ethical codes handed down since the establishment of the village. Thus the establishing

agent must be the ancestral spirit of the village. They are the givers of the local taboos and the *adat*, and are therefore the ones affected by the breaches. The ongoing chaos can be a manifestation of their anger with and punishment of the existing community to whom the transgressor belongs. If this is the case, the turbulence can be ended when the community knows from these true owners of the village about the specific wrongdoing that has been committed and what act should be done to restore harmony.

The agent who will undergo the task of communicating with these ancestral spirits and will then deliver the messages to the people must be an individual who can bridge the world of the ancestors and that of the visible living being. Since the restoration ritual is an act of reconciliation, the ritual performer should at least be a negotiator. S/he must be able to communicate with both realms. As a result of that communication, messages must be delivered. I argue that only the words communicated by these specialists will be accepted by the whole body of the inhabitants and will not invite any refutation. The words that possibly formulates a new *adat* law or taboos have to be claimed given by the invisible agents, the ancestors of the village. These must be delivered by *wong pinters* or by an authoritative body under their influence, because they are the ones who understand the will and language of the ancestors (Haar 1948, 26-28). Their objection to any transgressions illustrates that they are still the conscience of the village community and specialists in the customary law (de Jong 1995, 116). Here is the basis for the reason why *adat* law and taboos harbour a religious significance and total acceptance.

Another aspect of village politics is the election of the headman. Ina Slamet-Velsink writes in her study on the villagers in Java that a preferable candidate is someone whose *kasekten* is widely recognised by people of every age. S/he must be someone who has gained favour from the spirits, mastery of the invulnerability spells and is able to mediate between the world of spirits and the world of the people (1998, 38). The headman, therefore, is someone who must maintain order over the spirits. Yet there is no mention in her explanation about the process of the election itself, she still provides information about how someone with a particular reputation finally gains what he wants to achieve, becoming the head of a village. His rowdiness, his involvement in many fights and his decision to learn the art of invulnerability and latter his attempt to be a master of spirit are strategic steps necessary in order to establish a convincing public persona and level of recognition. He was elected for that reason. Here, someone's

mystical prowess may be the main criteria to become a headman, although its possession of it does not guarantee that there will be no political manoeuvres to gain the majority of people's support. W.M.F. Hofstede manages to record how in the process of election some candidates for village head used a certain political manoeuvre (1971, 69-78). In the case mentioned above, the candidate managed to convince the village inhabitants that he was a reliable candidate as he had already gained and demonstrated the superiority needed.

In some cases, the process of election is different from those exemplified by Hofstede and Slamet-Velsink. Robert R. Jay reports that the rural election of the village headman is preceded by the appointment of some respected villagers to become members of the election committee and who emphasise "the importance of their picking of a good man" (1969, 385-386). However, it is not being mentioned who may be included in the category of "respected villagers". According to Ki Anom, this preparational practice has been applied over a long time though not all villages employ the same system (Bintaro-Jakarta, 11 September 2009). In contrast to Jay, Ki Anom says that the names of candidates have to be brought to an independent village *wong pinter*. S/he will be the one who assesses each candidate. If he is correct, his explanation strengthens what Koentjaraningrat recorded. According to him, only in "the areas of direct concern to the king [such] as in the villages situated near the court town was a royal approval of the candidate required" (1985, 190). A king would assign the trusted person to approve the candidates. This is an opportunity to see how a *wong pinter* may be involved formally in the process of a headman election. To put this electoral practice into the context of the political relationship between the *dzoma* and the *zagma* system, it demonstrates that a *wong pinter* plays a certain and decisive role in the process of election, as stated by Ki Anom. In this way, the role of the *wong pinter* is clear. The choosing of the correct candidate indicates that the elected has the appropriate qualities needed for the transmission of cosmic energy.

The last element of *wong pinters'* political involvement at a village level involves the continuing interference of the deceased *wong pinter* venerated as a *pepunden*. The word *pepunden* is constructed from *pundi-pundi* which literally means a treasure bag. Its connotative meaning refers to every valuable put into it. The active verb *memundi-mundi* means to regard that person as valuable. The person regarded as such is a *pepundi-pundian*. Its contraction is *pepundian* and then spelled out as

pepunden. Not all people can be called a *pepunden*. Only the already dead founder(s) of the village deserve that respect. However, it is not only because the figure was a founder of the village, but also because he continues providing protection for the village. He – in contrast to what Geertz stated – is not a terrorising ghost or *demit* (1976 [1960], 24). Because of his continuing concern with the well-being of the village, s/he becomes the village guardian spirit. Whoever becomes a village leader, s/he has to conform to their will. As stated by Ki Anom, the *lurah*, when performing a *punden* visit, will discern what he is going to do when the village is in trouble (Bintaro-Jakarta, 11 September 2009). Ward Keeler notes that if the headman’s spiritual quality is not matched with that of the *danyang*, his being in the front of the *punden* will end up as a mere monologue. In contrast, if it is matched he will engage in a dialogue with the *danyang*, discussing things that will bring good to the village. A *wong-pinter* headman may be the only person able to carry out that task (1985, 130). This practice reflects the continuing involvement of *wong pinters* from the past in the present day. Robert Wessing states: “We have seen how spirits of deceased nobles, ancestors, shamans and culture heroes may return to their respective spheres and ... aid their subjects and descendants. In all these cases this return concerns the continued well-being of the peoples concerned” (1986, 63 & 113).

5.4.1.2 *Wong pinters*’ involvement in the royal court

Knowing that I have completed my preliminary research in four villages in Ambarawa, a *wong pinter* called Silidub says: “Welcome to the magical (*wingit*) villages of the kings’ councillors” (Bedono-Ambarawa, 18 September 2009). If it is true that these villages had a great importance in the past, why did the *wong pinters* of these villages migrate to the court circle? If the kings relied on them, why did not they take over the throne? To extend the question, it can be asked whether their movement to the court demonstrates a consistency with their own *mangayu hayuning bawana* worldview.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, 53% (69) of the participants have an aristocratic background. It means that they are not true villagers. In some cases many court *wong pinters* left behind their dignitary status and chose to live in peripheral villages in order to hide their identity. This motivation could be political. Seen from this perspective, their move to the court could be to show their primal or original commitment to guard the entity of the court as the centre of life force. Another motivation for their migration

from the court milieu to the peripheral village is to maintain the life force and that becomes the source of their nobility. They opened up a new settlement which later became a centre of economic and religious activities. By doing so, they maximised their nobility, increased their charisma, became a centre of power and protectors for the new village. Thus, their return or decision to connect themselves to the court is no more than an act of returning to their normal place of nobility after a period of time of moving away from the court. There is another possible explanation.

The *BTJ* provides some clues as to why this happened. It provides names and the hidden lives of legendary *wong pinters* involved in the establishment of Javanese kingdoms such as Ken Arok, Ciung Wanara, Bra Wijaya, Damarwulan and Jaka Tingkir. According to the book – and as also mentioned by a *wong pinter*, Ki Joko Kijeng – those figures started their initial lives in the villages before they became kings (Jakarta, 17 January 2010). Their migration to the court was motivated by their awareness of their ultimate destiny to become rulers. Once they knew from their mentor that their time was due, they went to serve in the court (*BTJ*, 36). Two legendary *wong pinters*, Ki Ageng Pemanahan and Ki Ageng Panjawi, left their villages and were attached to the King of Pajang because they were to become the councillors of this kingdom's kings. While undertaking his task Ki Pamanahan knew that his descendants would become the kings of Mataram (63). In this context, their attachment to the court is double-sided. On the one hand, their migration is to follow and discern the divine revelation about preparing the future sovereignty in Java. On the other hand, they were to dedicate themselves as advisors to the kings, a role similar to that of Nathan to King David in the Bible (2 Sam.12:1-15) or that of Resi Bisma in the Mahabharata, the councillor of the kings of Kurawa (Anderson 1965, 35; Menon 2004, 440).

In the Javanese shadow puppet performance (*wayang*) Semar and his three sons go to the Pandawa court to offer enlightenment and encouragement to the Pandawa kings when chaos strikes it so that they can regain clear vision about their *dharma* as a *ksatriya* (Anderson 1965, 22-23). Their role resembles that of prophet Elijah for King Ahab (1 Kings 18:1-46) and the role of Sunan Kalijaga for Panembahan Senapati, the Prince of Mataram (*BTJ*, 79). This is the role that Abiyasa (Vyasa) the mystical maharishi played when he visited the Pandhawa kings (Anderson 1965, 34; Menon 2004, 534-538). Therefore it is their nature to guard the kings and to remind them of their tasks as leaders of the people and to dedicate themselves to become their servants

and act as an intelligentsia. For the rulers of their time they are, in Weber's terms, prophets or 'persons of charisma'. Why do these individuals not take over the throne if in fact the kings depend on their role?

A useful example to cite in answer to that question is a story in the *BTJ* concerning an intimate conversation between a *wong pinter*, Ki Ageng Selo, and his adopted son Ki Jaka Tingkir, who was also his pupil (*BTJ*, 35-36). The attitude displayed by Ki Ageng Sela toward him is a total acceptance to the will of Allah. His wisdom guides him to accept the fact that the chosen future king is not someone of his blood, which reflects his awareness that Allah is the one who has a plan and has revealed his will to Ki Jaka Tingkir. Although he could do something evil to Ki Jaka, he does not do so. It is because he knows what his role and place are and is fully aware of the destiny of his adopted child. He can see clearly that Ki Jaka has the *wahyu*, the divine blessing from Allah to become the next king of Java, the one that he has prayed for since a long time before. Everyone has his/her own destiny and should know what is due to each. The grace of kingship – or the *wahyu kedaton* which is called *tjahja nurbuah* – is not for him or his descendants, although the gift of wongpintership is with him. For this reason, Ki Ageng makes no attempt to take over Ki Jaka's *wahyu*.¹² An acceptance of the *dharma* is a way to promote the realisation of the ideal *mangayu hayuning bawana*. In the language of the commoners, everyone has his/her own destiny (*pepesthen*) and chance to play an irreplaceable role. As every *pepesthen* is designed for the good of all, fidelity in carrying it out is inevitable.

Some *wong pinters* are recruited by the kings because of their outstanding qualities regarding wisdom (*kawicaksanan*), insightfulness (*kawaskitan*) and mystical power (*kasekten*). They are matched with the demands and needs of the court for the right officials, roles which consist of:

First of all a *pandita* (sage), second a *tijang petang iladoe ning palak palakijah* (astrologer and numerologist), third a *tijang ahli tapa* or an ascetic. If you find any difficulty to manage the state, do ask advice from the *pandita*; if you want to know things that are going to happen, do come to the astrologer or numerologist; if you

¹² Moertono writes: "In its original Arabic form, *wahy*, it has the meaning of "revelation" from God, but the Javanese thought of it as a substance which graced kingship (*wahyu kedaton* or *tjahja nurbuawah*), literary genius (*wahyu kapujanggan*), knightly valour (*wahyu kapradjurit*), or *wali-ship* and even *bupati-ship*. This god-given substance was not always granted to a specific person, as was seen in the transfer of kingship from Madjapahir to Demak. It was visualised in different shapes and forms: bright luminescence, a 'star', but most often it was seen as a dazzling blue, green or white ball of light (*andaru, pulung*), streaking through the night sky" (1981, 56).

want to know about acquiring *kasekten*, do ask the ascetic (*BTJ*, 96; Moertono 1981, 41).

Others are recruited to become court poets (*pujangga*) or philosophers. They are there to exercise their special knowledge and skill in order to guard the *wahyu kedaton* of the kings and to ensure that it is always with them and the blessings of the life force from relevant deities spread to the entire kingdom. Therefore, their presence around the court plays an important role. In Indian philosophy total acceptance to one's destiny is rooted in the awareness that everyone has his/her own *dharma*. It must be carried out by the bearer. It is the only way to guarantee that the cosmic harmony is maintained. In this context, their moving to the court fulfils the universal ideology to enhance the beauty of the world. The continuity of this idea can be seen in *wong pinters'* movement in the national politics of modern Indonesia.

5.4.1.3 Involvement in national politics

At the national level, *wong pinters* seem to be inseparable from the practice of politics in Indonesia. In the time before and during European colonisation, many *wong pinters* came to the fore as local leaders or stood beside these leaders as their councillors, whether as *pandita*, sages or prophets. Ki Anom and most practitioners of wongpintership state that even many heroes of the Majapahit (such as Ranggalawe, who is named by Ki Anom as a *Kakang* or his older brother) are still obsessed with defending the unity of the Nusantara, the whole area covering the current territory of the Republic of Indonesia (Jakarta-Bintaro, 11 September 2009). For this, they still present and demand an opportunity to participate in every political discussion regarding the maintaining of Indonesia as one nation and state. Of course, this statement could be credulous and needs critical assessment. How can any listeners believe in the truth of such a look-like-a fairy-tale statement that the dead even participate in political discussion with the living? It is not my intention here to uncover the truth of this story.

However, there are some interesting and intriguing questions to be asked. If the individuals with whom *Kakang* was in discussion with still have concerns regarding the ongoing political situation of the Indonesian Republic, what is the role of its current politicians in managing the course of politics in Indonesia? If these spirits, including that of *Kakang* himself, are seen to be the bedrock of contemporary Indonesian nationalism, they must have concerns with current national issues and threats such as

the separation of Aceh and West Papua, and therefore, the persons who are in contact with them must belong to nationalist circles. However, instead of trying to answer these questions, I will focus on the continuity of the ideology of these invisible *wong pinters* who physically lived long time ago but are still preoccupied with the idea of maintaining the existence of Nusantara as one nation and state, an ideology which was proclaimed in the heyday of Majapahit (Pradotokusumo 1986, 132 & 136).

The continuity of an ideology is in the hands of its supporters. Usually, once the creator of an ideology dies, its collective awareness may or may not survive. If it was not well founded, it could be gone after the death of its establishing figure. This will not be the case if the ideology itself was not inspired by a particular founder but was revealed as a divine message or if the founder is still actively working on it even after his/her death. I will present two examples here. The Christian ideology, as far as it is recorded in narratives about the deeds of Jesus's apostles, was well maintained because Jesus was believed to be involving himself in the works of his followers although without being physically present anymore. There have been many attempts to tackle its growth. However, because of the divine source of its existence and the continuing interference of Christ himself, Christianity continues to exist. This point is strengthened by the promise that Christ himself will always be with his followers until the end of time. His spirit was promised to accompany them and his presence is guaranteed wherever there are two or three people gathered together in his name (Mat 18:20). An awareness of this has influenced the persecutors of this community to come to acknowledge: "If this movement is from human interest it will finish by itself. However, if it is from God no one can prevent it" (Acts. 5:39). This is applicable to other religions since each has its own religious ideology.

In parallel with this, the ideological pursuit of *mangayu hayuning bawana* is claimed to be the product of divine enlightenment. The bearers of that ideology remain active even after their death. The phenomenon found in the story about Ki Anom, his *Kakang* and the spirits of the political leaders who were in a meeting shares the same idea. In Java, in order to lead many people into a world marked by order, fairness, peace, and material and spiritual well-being, a leader or the bearer of the power must be someone who receives the *wahyu*, a specific divine blessing for leadership also called the *wahyu cakraningrat*. (Anderson 1990, 33). The bearer's loss of this blessing will result in the decline of their leadership.

A divine ideology must be carried out by someone touched by divine revelation; someone who is in the line of the divine king, someone with *trahing kusuma, rembesing madu, widjining tapa, tedaking andana warih*, which means “descendant of the best, the seepage of a honey, the seed of an ascetic and the descent of a true nobility” (Moertono 1981, 52). The story about the young Tingkir is one of many examples that can be found in Javanese society. The story of Soekarno, who was in fact a direct descendant of King Singaraja from Bali, is another one (Anderson 1990, 39). Therefore, this divine ideology is unchanging and its successful bearer will continue to guard and ensure its fulfilment. This concept of leadership is manifested in the Javanese belief in the coming of the ‘Just Prince’, the *Ratu Adil*, a Messianic liberator in a time of madness (*jaman edan*), a period of disorder and moral degradation. These are the signs when the divine blessing is not with the leader any more (Moertono 1981, 56; Anderson 1990, 31-33 & 35). Such a leader is one who is losing his *kasekten, kawaskitan* and *kawicaksanan*, someone who is left by his God who is the source of the three sovereign values: power, intelligence and wisdom. S/he is not in oneness with his/her master. His or her *Wahyu* has been taken away and granted to someone else called the *satriya piningit*, a hidden candidate, the new Messiah, the upcoming leader of the people who is also a *wong pinter*. Once the *wahyu cakraningrat* is granted, the three values required to become a blessed leader are with him/her.

Such a pattern of leadership succession is common to the people of Java even in modern times. In his awareness of becoming Allah’s chosen messenger, during the Java war (1825-1830) Prince Dipanegara took up a messianic title *Ngabdulkamid Eroetjakra Sajidin Panatagama Chalifat Rasulu’llah Sain*, meaning the Heavenly Priest, Righteous Prince, Master of Divine Knowledge, the Leader of Religion and God’s Faithful Ambassador. With this title he claimed to have become a messiah to protect the people of Java from oppression by both Dutch colonial power and ongoing political chaos. This title reflects the ideals of his time. A leader of the state is also the highest leader of religion (*panatagama*). From a nationalist perspective, he was seen as the progenitor of nationalism in Indonesia (Palmier 1965, 82). At the inception of the Republic of Indonesia, Soekarno, the first president, was also seen as an incarnation of the *Ratu Adil*, the bearer of God’s blessing of leadership. Though surrounded by many *wong pinters*, Soeharto was not seen as a manifestation of the Just King. In his time a competitor called Sawito emerged and for Soeharto he was a real threat (Friend 2003, 175-179). He came forth onto the public scene as a result of a mystical revelation. The

unassuming villager Sawito felt the need to respond to the emerging call from the world of spirits to save the state from the threat of being led by a wrong leader.

Sawito was only one of the many Javanese who are aware of this divine ideology and its continuity throughout the history of Java. Hardjaka Hardjamardjaja lists the names and actions of Javanese claimants to the title of *Ratu Adil*. After Prince Dipanegara, Kyai Nurhakim came to the fore in 1870 (1962, 11 & 16-17). In the 1930s there was Kyai Tambakmerang II, or Kyai Wirasandjaja, whose original name was Irasetika, a simple villager nicknamed was Pak Bentje, who emerged before the public of Central Java appealing to the same claim (32-37). In the 1940s, Sukarno the first president of Indonesia was seen as the fulfilment of the prophesied ruler to become a *Ratu Adil* who would rule the land of Java in a different way from all rulers in ancient times (24). Then in 1952 another figure called Kjai Ronggo Djatikusuma continued the legend (37-40). Like these individuals, in his conscience Sawito was convinced that he had received the baton of rulership because the light of the *wahyu* had fallen upon him.

However, faced with the modernity of Indonesian politics under the regime of Soeharto, Sawito's claim about the source of his courage and supernatural confidence fell into the category of naivety or nonsense. Furthermore, his plea for the ideal of a renewal of morality was seen as the unrealistic mindset of an insane villager who asserted himself as a bearer of the *wahyu cakraningrat*. Friend is right when he states that "any populist receiver of this type of divine blessing could obviously expect to languish in prison" (2003, 179). Does it mean that the tradition of leadership based on divine election has been discontinued? Is Sawito's venture just a wishful endeavour to climb onto the stage of Indonesian politics? Based on my encounter with *wong pinters* in a national seminar on the union between subjects and their master (*Manunggaling Kawula lan Gusti*) from 6-9 August 2007 at the National Library in Jakarta – an event at which the ex-president Abdurrachman Wahid, who was known as a *wong pinter*, attended it and was one of the contributors – I would argue that the continuity of this interest has been maintained. In a break time during the proceedings, the elders discussed a live political issue about the *satriya piningit*, the hidden prince, who would become the next president after Megawati Soekarnoputri.

To prove that the continuity of the divine leadership blessing is there, the current rebirth of Javanese mysticism may open up a vision that more people who claim to be descendants of *wong pinters* will swarm around current elite politicians in order to

guard the light of the blessing (*cahyaning wahyu*). Some of them play their role as politicians and some of them are their spiritual advisors or experts in heirloom conservation, including the kerises. Together with this enthusiasm for conserving the Javanese heirlooms, the emergence of so many *kebatinan* groups as examples of the domain of wongpintership strengthens the impression that in the midst of current political uncertainty the role of the *wong pinter* in the area of politics is most favourably expected.¹³ It means that the continuity of that traditional belief is well maintained and culturally imbued in the practice of the modern politics in Indonesia. They start to go public and are known both as politicians and advisors of current politicians. There are many examples. Permadi is an active politician who has become an advisor of a leader of a political party. Handaka and Sabdana are high ranking figures in the Indonesian army and recognised as in the top ranks of *wong pinters* and spiritual teachers. Ki Hariyadi, who received his wongpintership from his father-in-law General Soedjono Oemardani, continues the role of his ancestor in being a spiritual advisor of the current president of Indonesia and governor of Jakarta.

It is interesting to know what kind of political orientation these *wong pinters* ascribe to. Most of them are supporters of nationalist parties. Given this phenomenon it can be asked whether they have a particular tradition which means they become supporters of nationalist parties or whether there is a profound reason for this preference. Surprisingly enough, most of them have that tradition. According to Herbert Feith, the supporters of the Nationalist Party (PNI) in 1963 were the Javanese, who were mostly casual Muslims whose social class and occupations referred to Javanese aristocrats (*priyayi*), civil servant (*pegawai negeri*) and professionals. Always drawing its leaders from Javanese aristocrats, this was a party whose principal organisation represented the “Javanese-aristocratic political culture” (1962, 139-143). It emphasised a political creed that stressed national unity and national culture and either a socialist or

¹³ According to Juanda, the deputy of the Supervising Directorate of the Local Belief in the One God and Tradition, the number of Javanese mysticism groups reached 500-600 in 1985. This excludes smaller branches of the groups which in total may be around 1,000 groups spread throughout the islands of Indonesia (Jakarta, 8 August 2012). The only formal document published on the matter is the *Encyclopedia of the Traditional Beliefs in the One God* (2006). This document records 147 organisations formally recognised by the Directorate of the Traditional Belief, 54 congregations (*paguyuban*), 7 martial art groups (*perguruan*), 3 brotherhood (*kekadangan*) groups and 5 associations (*himpunan*). This Directorate basically filters any groups regarding whether they are heretic or not, and whether they are suitable to be included under the protection of the Directorate. According to Bambang and Kismanto, the number of the Javanese mysticism groups in the 1960s-1970s reached more than 800. That was only in Java (Jakarta, 20 January 2010).

collectivist economy (140). This party is characterised by its pride in traditional Javanese culture and to use this as the basis of a new Indonesian civilization. This orientation has been seen by Laurie Sears (1996) as bringing the shadow of past Javanese empires into modern Indonesia or as a way to romanticise the glories of past Javanese kingdoms. I consider their political orientation as an illustration that wherever one finds the *priyayi* social class one can detect the continuing tradition of wongpintership, the pursuit of its ancient ideology and the fully maintained practice of mysticism. An example of this is the Boedi Oetomo alliance in 1908, which was founded by some civil servants from the Javanese aristocratic class. This organisation aimed to promote education for the Javanese and to liberate Indonesian rulers and their officials from the Dutch administration (Tas 1974, 108). The aim again was to serve the traditional philosophy, *mamayu hayuning bawana*.

Besides the PNI, there were smaller nationalist parties like The Great Indonesian Union Party (PIR), which consisted of people from the higher Javanese aristocracy. The Parindra (Greater Indonesia Party) was also established by individuals from the *priyayi* social class. The PNI-Merdeka party and SKI (Indonesian's People Association) shared their political orientation with that of the PNI. This is confirmed by studies made by Wertheim (1955), van der Kroef (1956) and Sutherland (1979). In their research on the social structure of different Indonesian societies, they find that by joining these political parties of Javanese aristocrats they managed to maintain their social prestige. However, I would argue that *wong pinters'* involvement in nationalist political parties is not entirely explained by that concern. There is something greater than this at work here and it is much more ideological. The question is whether that tradition is just part of what their ancestors had to do to establish lives for their families. They are not paid advisors or employees, and they develop livelihoods from their own efforts. Becoming a spiritual advisor for the chosen leader is a calling. It is not a way to generate money. It is *pamali*, taboo. There is an inspirational ideology to carry on which underlines their consistent attempt to promote the realisation of the Javanese ideal, that is to create a society shaped by a *tata, titi, tentren, karta, raharja, gemah ripah loh jinawi* milieu.

To *wong pinters* the duty of a servant is to serve the rightful bearer of the *wahyu* of rulership. Whoever will become the bearer of the *wahyu cakraningrat* or *wahyu kedaton*, they will dedicate their spiritual mission to guard the *wahyu* and its rightful holders. They follow the *wahyu* whose movement is unpredictable, flowing wherever

and whenever it pleases, leaving the previous bearer who is not suitable to continue carrying on his or her leadership. An example taken from a story in the Bible may provide an idea about why a chosen leader may be left by the *wahyu*. Saul, the first king of Israel, was left by his God because he did not listen to God's words as passed on through Samuel the prophet. As a result of his rebellious behaviour the blessing of leadership was taken away and then passed to David (1 Sam 15:10-23). Then Samuel guarded him as its new bearer and he became his conscience and that of the nation.

A similar idea applies to the bearer of the *wahyu* of leadership. Once s/he trespasses the *wewaler* or taboo attached to the leadership blessing, the *wahyu* will leave him or her. In this context the loyalty of the *wong pinter* is much a loyalty to the *wahyu* itself rather than to the bearer. It may explain why they have a particular attachment to a certain type of political orientation. Their preference for nationalists' parties is determined by their fidelity to undertaking the task of guarding the ideology of their ancestors who in fact were faithful supporters of the *Nusantara* ideology regarded as preserving a divine belief system. Here the *wahyu* that constitutes the *Nusantara* ideology is presented as transferable like the blessing reserved for Esau in the biblical story but taken by Isaac, his brother (Gen 27:1-45). The blessing of leadership is already there. It needs an appropriate receiver. Though procedurally Esau deserves the blessing, the primacy is given to the more suitable bearer. Isaac prefers Jacob to Esau to become the right receiver of his blessing (vrs. 27-30). The story itself is similar to a story about two *wong pinters* in the *BTJ*, Ki Ageng Pemanahan and his close friend Ki Ageng Giring. It was Ki Ageng Giring who heard the voice revealing that the one who drank the juice of the young speaking coconut (*dawegan*) would become the father of the kings of Java. However, although he was the one who heard this revelation and picked up the *dawegan*, it was Ki Ageng Pemanahan who drank it. Because of this his descendants became the kings of Mataram (Knappert 1977, 64-65; *BTJ*, 65-67).

Having explored the role and involvement of *wong pinters* in the world of politics, it can be stated here that although they are from different periods, levels of society and spheres, they show the same motivational spirit behind their involvement. There is a unifying element that ensures they observe the same ideal and to be called by the same title. Anthropologist Adolf Bastian (1826-1905), as detailed by Needham, maintained that this is not only because there is something such as the psychic unity of mankind that results in these *wong pinters* of different periods displaying the same

interest in participating in the world of politics (Needham 1970, lxxii), but it is due to an unchanging ideology that is continually transmitted from generation to generation. That ideology contains man's most fundamental demands to preserve life and implies the technique needed to develop this to its fullest extent. Their active involvement in the world of politics should be seen in that light. Politics is the technique for procuring and enhancing a satisfactory life. The involvement of *wong pinters* in village, city and national politics as elders, advisors, councillors, and leaders is shaped by their awareness of the fundamental call to actualise the divine ideology.

5.4.2 Engagement with the established religions

Just as in the world of shamanism, the encounter of wongpintership with the religious establishment displays three dynamics: condemnation, synthesis, and complete separation. I discussed this in Chapter 4. Here I will devote more attention to the products of *wong pinters* activities which consist of elements of religion. Insofar as the data show, the engagement of *wong pinters* with the religious sphere is manifested at least in five common activities: pilgrimage, ritual performance, spiritual mentoring, mysticism and supernaturalism. In total 48% (62 people) of them are known as leaders of traditional pilgrimages such as visiting tombs, sacred caves or mountains, and other sites, 55% (71) are ritual experts, 78% (100) act as spiritual mentors, 65% (83) are members of mysticism groups, and 83% (103) are masters of spirits. With these figures, a *wong pinter* plays the same variety of roles as most priests of established religions do. Their role in this religious sphere, therefore, could be potentially competitive with that of established religious figures. However, in term of uniqueness, the knowledge of the *wong pinters* and their worldview are irreplaceable. I will examine three aspects of their religious outlook: their view about deities, the world of spirit and cosmology.

Their view about the divine being is theosophical. *Wong pinters'* conversation about God is inseparable from their activities. It emerges almost every time when we discussed issues concerning struggles against illnesses, bewitchment, and other sources of their practical knowledge. Most of them state that God or other phrases that refer to God in Christian or Islamic terms is the key for healing and deliverance from danger. How do they think about God or any other supreme being? I begin the discussion with a story about Mbah Buddhho. Beside his interesting way of invoking the help of the gods of many people, he is unique for his specialty in altering the direction of the rainfall.

Most villagers called him the best *pawang hujan* (rain tamer). He was asked by the Reog dancer group of Bedono to help them perform. That was required so that the plan might proceed well and the village cleansing ritual might be attended by as many people as possible and the rain would not fall in that area. Mbah Buddhho had agreed. He prayed to the gods of all people. When he prayed to the God of Islam, he used formulations which included Islamic terms though it was not really an Islamic invocation. When he pleaded to the Christian God he uttered an opening greeting: *Gusti Allah ing ndhuwur, ngisor, kiwo lan tengen* (God who is above, below, left and right), imitating the Catholic in making of the sign of the cross. He will use prayers suitable for the religion of his client. He pleaded also to the *danyangs* (spirit protectors) of the village that they help all other gods to withhold the rain and direct it to another direction. He said: “I do not cancel the rain. I ask the Gods to make it fall on other villages. I am just a human. I do not have the right to take over Gods’ business” (Josari-Bedono, 12 October 2010). Similar stories were also told by Krisnadi and Prof. Soedjarwadi from Jember-East Java. The difference is that both participants from East Java used a special mantra.

It is interesting to notice the way *wong pinters* employ ideas about God in their work. This is what distinguishes wongpintership from shamanism. Shamans do not invoke God but *wong pinters* do. The Mbah Buddhho example cited above is only one instance of this. Readers may think that his view of God is very syncretic. There are similarities in *wong pinters*’ views about God. According to them God does not need to have religion(s). Allah the Lord (*Gusti Allah*) is *Sang Hyang Murbeng Dumadi* – the One who created all beings, *Kang Akarya Jagad* – the One who creates the universe, *Sang Sangkan Paraning Dumadi* – the Origin and Destination of all created beings. *Gusti Allah* has no name but every name addressing him is acceptable. God is as far as the subjects can name. Of course, these understandings may have been influenced by Hinduism, Javanese mysticism, Christianity and Islam. Such a tendency to mix many sources is a part of Javanese virtues. The more syncretic someone is, the more Javanese s/he is. The reason behind this local wisdom is a view that God is the Supreme Being whose nature is goodness and every good thing comes from this entity. It means that it is very wise to syncretically adopt good elements from every religion. That is the best way to have a more complete and integrated description about who God the Supreme Being is. Humanity is partial and so is his perception about who a God is. This practice of welcoming and taking every good thing from various religions and local beliefs is made more formal among the learned *wong pinters* members of the MSC. They

consider themselves as a *makrifat* people, followers of the Sufism of Sunan Kalijaga and Syekh Siti Jenar. They are very appreciative of New Age spirituality.

Up to this point, we can see that there has been a tradition to associate wongpintership with the role of the divine being. It means that the practice is not a new development or that it contains a political motif such as employing it in order to harvest a wider welcome from followers of mainstream religions. However, there are widespread suspicions that their works are not in favour of mainstream religious traditions. A close look at the process of becoming of a *wong pinter* shows that they undertake a long and severe discipline, starting with a total devotion of the self to *Gusti Allah Kang Agawe Urip* (God the maker and sustainer of life). This statement implies that they are independent in terms of their religious conviction. An appropriate example is shown in Kasiran's experience. Before his encounter with the Lord of Catholicism he was a dejected and ignored poor man. He himself was a Javanese Muslim by upbringing but his healing power relies on the person called *Kanjeng Tuhan Gusti Yesus*, who, according to him, visited him with his twelve sheep. He does not know the formulation of the sign of the cross and what he used to do was to utter the words: "*Tuhan Gusti Yesus* (the Lord of the Catholic), please help me! I have work to get done." It is obvious that he, like other *wong pinters*, is not tied down by specific formulations. He said:

It is your Lord who told me what medicines should be given, what words should be said, what vision concerned the life of the patients that I see. I have known him. He came here asking for food. I gave him one hundred thousand rupiahs (£7 sterling). In response to this he left this *keris*, with a warning that I should not be haughty but full of mercy and compassion. His *qadam* is in this *keris*. He has helped me to restore people's health (Ndode-Magelang, 7 February 2011).

The most important insight that I can grasp from his statement is that he depends on someone beyond himself, on the *Kanjeng Gusti Yesus*, the Lord of the Catholic. "It is him who healed so many people, not me. I am just mediating his compassion", as stated by this *abangan* Muslim *wong pinter*. There is a certain attitude displayed by most *wong pinters*. They have a great sense of observance and obedience to their Gods.¹⁴

¹⁴ One of *wong pinters* who shared that view was Prof. Soedjarwadi. He gave me an example. There was a child, the son of a successful businessman in Jakarta. He suffered from illness. His family took him to China and Singapore for the best medical treatment but he did not get well. After he met Prof. Soedjarwadi, he found his health restored. Knowing this, his father wanted to give him gifts. He was allowed by this family, father and son, to carry bars of gold as heavy as he could manage. Being conscious that he was just a mediator, he prayed to get guidance about what he should decide. Then he said: "It is neither you nor your son who should decide. It is

As for *wong pinters*' understanding of the spirit world, there are oral sources which illustrate an elaborate knowledge about it. Suryo Negoro, together with his fellow spiritualist R.M. Anom Binaji (Negoro 1999b), summarises this oral information and transcribes it together with his conversation concerning the spirit worlds in Java. There are at least six different worlds of spirits, i.e. the *merkayangan*, *siluman*, *kajiman*, *demit* worlds and two others designated only for the holy and righteous. Beside those six, there are other domains, evil and malevolent ones. The majority of informants are able to show their knowledge of spirits' names. The exception is shown by *wong pinters* who have never lived outside the city and are non-Javanese by origin. However, they acknowledge that there are varieties of spirits and there is no need to name them. Mukhlas and his mentor Mustafa suggest not imagining their shapes too. They explain that the world of spirits is formless (Gresik, 8-10 October 2010). The *causa forma* of their shape is the human's imagination. Some anthropologists make a list of spirits' names. Geertz (1976, 16-29) and Subagya (1981, 77-78) explore what the spirit belief means and Magnis-Suseno mentions the names of the spirits (1997, 89). Thus, these written sources confirm existing oral sources and that signifies more how integrated the themes concerning the world of spirits among *wong pinters* are.

According to Geertz, names of the spirits in Java can be separated into five categories, i.e. *memedies* or frightening spirits, *lelembuts* or possessing spirits, *tuyul* or familiar spirits, *demits* or place spirits and *danyang* or guardian spirits. Included in the category of *memedi* are spectral beings called the *jrangkong*, *panaspati*, *djinns*, *pisatjis*, *uwils*, *setan gundul* (bold headed Satan), *sundel bolong*, and *gendruwos*. Geertz does not mention any names for the *lelembuts* as he does with the *memedies*. However, he mentions in great detail about types of spirit possessions caused by *lelembuts*. Whereas the *tuyul* category involves the invisible one called *mentek*, *gebleg*, and *tuyul*. Suyono recounts the names of 86 spirits (2007, 85-129). The place spirits or *demits* refer to spirits of the dead who inhabit places such as ruined buildings or uninhabited old places, massive banyan trees (*Ficus benjamina*), ancient tombs, *belik* or founts, and some topographical peculiarities such as *kedung* (deeper and calmer parts of a river caused by

your wife." He called upon his wife and her decision was that he could bring three bars. He took them to Jember and showed them to his wife. But, the following morning, while having breakfast he said to his wife: "I had a dream. There was a voice saying that the three bars of gold are not for our family. They are for Kyai Subandi in Mount Semeru. He has prayed for a long time, asking for help to build a Mosque. We do not have the choice." Until now, there is a big mosque with a monument in which there is a tribute written: "This Mosque is a gift from Prof. Dr. Ignatius Soedjarwadi" (Jember, 8 December 2010).

a waterfall), mountains, caves and forests (Wessing 1986, 41). Although some place spirits are known by names, most of them are not. This is what distinguishes them from the *danyang*, the guardian spirits who are ancestors and guardians of the villages. Every village has its own *danyangs*. An exception is Semar, the *danyang* of Java, and most *danyangs* are known from the history of their lives.

Although Geertz recorded terms for the spirits in a quite great detail, he does not include the spirits of the saints and heroes in his chapter on spirit belief. Chambert-Loir has a discussion on the role of the local saints and heroes which includes the ancestors and familial spirits (2002, 132). Though it is not presented in great detail, it states that the world of the unseen consists of powerful spirits with all their specifications and distinctions. Some points can be underlined here. First, figures from the unseen world can be spirits of the dead from ancient times or those of our relatives. Second, spirits can also be independent (Negoro 1999b). Third, they can be visible beings for those who are capable of seeing them or may reveal themselves to those whom they want to. Fourth, the world of the spirit seems to exist as solitary individuals and also as groups.

The way all participants explain the world of spirits, describe their names and even try to demonstrate the existence of the spirits is completely different from the way some western scholars understand it. Pascal Boyer (2002) acknowledges such practices. However, he prefers emphasizing his theoretical rationalization of the idea of supernatural beings including the spirits complying with what the local practice may be. In his opinion, all what the believers call the supernatural is just the mind's construction based on an ontological violation of reality and, therefore, is no more than the demonstration of counter-intuitive physical, biological and psychological properties (2002, 84-96). Their sincere explanation about the spirit world is far different from that of William James concerning the Unseen World. He reduces the reality of the spirits as explained above to a mere hallucination or psychological episode or a sense of presence (2008 [1902], 44). A more sympathetic opinion about the existence and the practice of the belief in spirits is found in Barbara Drieskens, an anthropologist whose fieldwork was conducted among the Imbaba in Kairo. To her, citing from her participants, the spirits are reality (2002, 13). They have the power to influence the lives of people in the seen world. Like the Kairenes, most Javanese cannot deny their existence or their influence, especially concerning those who seem to be identical with the life force.

As for *wong pinters*' cosmological worldview, as in the study of shamanism, *wong pinters* maintain a specific understanding about the cosmos. Different disciplines define what cosmology means differently.¹⁵ It means that the understanding of cosmology and cosmological knowledge comprises the relationship between the whole and the part, macrocosm and microcosm (Howell 2007, 129). This concept of cosmology is relevant to *wong pinters*' cosmology. At the level of daily and practical life, *wong pinters*' cosmological knowledge about the cosmos and those subjects dwelling in it determines people's attitude towards their surroundings. Moreover, it also determines what sort of ritual is to be performed. These practices confirm that *wong pinters*' cosmological awareness is related to Javanese religious belief. As the idea of microcosm and macrocosm are part of it, cosmological knowledge may be best described as a form of belief, a belief about the creation and the order of the world, and the layers of cosmos and varieties of beings dwelling in each. Among the *wong pinters* there is no specific theory of cosmos. However, most of them share the same view about it when they talk about the *jagad gedhe* (macrocosmos) and the *jagad cilik* (microcosmos). Their conversation about the spiritual agents dwelling in each layer of the cosmos is definitely part of a cosmological discourse. We will interpret this from the comments of some *wong pinters* as extracted from some interviews.

Looking at the case of Sigit's account concerning the layers of the cosmos in Chapter 4, there is an indirect explanation about types of dwelling places in the universe. Once the whole process of helping Sigit's deceased mother to be freed from the burden she had suffered in the tomb for two years and then accompanied her to find her rightful place (like a psychopomp) was complete, Mrs Tamtu said that Sigit's mother went to a place with a white but empty room and then walked through green pastures. Concerning the amulet thrown into the river, they said that it was returned to the South Sea (Kuncen-Yogyakarta, 28 October 2010). We can construct an opinion about *wong pinters*' cosmology from this direct experience. The world appears before Mr and Mrs Tamtu as consisting of two layers, the seen and the unseen. With regard to

¹⁵ In consequence, what cosmological knowledge means can be disputed. Cosmology, according to its lexical definition, means the theory of universe as an ordered whole and of the general laws which govern it (SOED) or it is a study about the origin and nature of the universe (CCD). In philosophy, cosmology is part of metaphysics, which deals with material nature in its most general aspect (McMullin 2005, 150), and with the idea of the world as a totality of all phenomena in space and time. In social anthropology this term refers to the system of belief and practices of primitive religion (Leach 1982, 229). This definition places the subject in the realm of religious studies.

the dwelling place of the unseen, it reveals other layers too, the underworld and the upper world. The upper world consists of layers such as the white and green spaces for human beings. It means that the final abode of the amulet and Sigit's mother are not the same. Therefore there are two origin domains for the two different beings: the one where Sigit's mother was supposed to be and the place where the amulet should be returned. Furthermore, each returns to its respective masters. As they find their right place, peace reigns over Sigit's mother and the series of harms incited by the amulet comes to an end. The success was a result of the correct numerological consideration that told them the right day for performing the necessary task. Numerology exists side by side with cosmology.

We will examine the act of throwing the amulet into the river. As an amulet is made by infusing a certain mantra in the object and to get a mantra requires some conditions and procedures be fulfilled, therefore once it is not in use anymore it must be returned to the place where it came from. There has been a belief among *wong pinters* that the North and South Seas are the locations of all heirlooms and amulets. "The South Sea is ruled by the Kanjeng Ratu Kidul. The North Sea", as stated by Sutiman, "is ruled by Kyai Ontosari whose brother is Kyai Ontoboga, protector of water existing within the Island" (Probolinggo, 28 September 2010). Both dignitaries protect the island of Java from both directions. While on the mainland it is Semar, the highest spirit, who guards the island and its inhabitants. Topographically, thus, the island of Java is divided into three spaces: North Sea, mainland and South Sea. Each has its own ruler. The cosmos is spatialised. The island of Java and its people is a territory and people of many lords. Thus, *wong pinters* introduced an understanding that there is the finest thing or being in the order of things or beings.

Just as in the order of spiritual agents, the cosmos is structured into layers of orders and overlordship. The most basic classification is the dualistic one. The world consists of the unseen and seen worlds. The invisible one contains various worlds. Another classification divides the cosmos into two, the *jagad gedhe* and the *jagad cilik*. *Wong pinters* strongly influenced by Islamic mysticism may view the cosmos as consisting of five worlds: the world of *Hahut* (the un-manifest absolute), *Lahut* (the world of gods), *Jabarut* (the world of spirits), *Malakut* (the world of angels), and *Nasut* or 'the physically visible being' (Harvat 2008; De Marquette 1949, 175-176). Muhammad Sayyid al-Musayyar (2009) provides details of what the unseen world is

constituted of by referring to existing Islamic teaching and philosophy. *Wong pinters* with local beliefs tend to use terms and classifications introduced by the book of Mahabarata and Veda (Zaehner 1966, 18-28). Rahmat Subagya combines both influences. However, he reduces number of the cosmos's layers from five to three: the *alam l(h)ahut*, *jabarut* and *nasut* (1981, 169). He identifies spirits with names similar to those found in the book of Mahabarata (Menon 2004, 658-659) such as *gendruwo* (gandarva), *apsara* (Asura), *raksasi* (rakshasa) and classifies them within the *jabarut* layer alongside well-known Islamic terms such as *Iblis*, *Siluman* and *Djin* (Satan, Devil and Jinn). The local term for the inhabitants of that layer is the *(D)anyang*.

Regardless of the complexity of these local terms and the difficulties of categorizing them into the five Islamic terms above, it is clear that there are orders of beings in the cosmos. There is a world where the powerful entities dwell. A term such as *Mahavisnu* (God of Gods), and the God Brahma are used. Lesser than the world of Gods is the world of devas equivalent with the Pitrs and the manes. These three beings worship the Day. In contrast, a type of divine living being who worships the God Brahma during the hours of darkness, worshipping the Night, is created not from the *sattva* of God Brahma but from Brahma's *tamas*. There are worlds of those who are less powerful. The weakest of all powerful created beings is the world of man, the mortal, created from a body of *rajas*. From the combination of the three elements of Brahma i.e. *sattva*, *tamas* and *rajas*, were the *rakshasas*, *bhutas* (Jv. *Buto*) and *pisachas* created from the material body as well as that of the mortal human. From the body of mixed *gunas* the *yakshas*, *gandharvas*, the *nagas*, *kinnaras*, *charanas* and other divine beings came into existence (Menon, 959). Each of them inhabits a certain territory.

In addition to *wong pinters'* cosmological world view, their cosmological knowledge as mentioned above is practical in its nature. It serves a very specific purpose. It is necessary to acquire the best way to adjust and readjust oneself to the whole constellation of nature as any intrusion of another layer of the cosmos will result in disharmony. Two main reasons to consider these elements of cosmological knowledge are harmony and the restoration of harmony. Moreover, to be aware of that cosmic constellation means to know the right place and time where a subject or an individual should be in. As a result of that thorough consideration, an illness may find its remedy, the lost objects can be found, all activities are in accordance with the order of things and all labour is fruitful. The ritual of *nglarung*, house cleansing and village

cleansing, are parts of many cosmological attitudes displayed by a *wong pinter* for a similar purpose: to restore imbalance and harmony and to make everyone aware of his place in terms of the co-ordinates of the cosmos. The responses displayed by Muslims and Christians towards *wong pinters* and their activities are varied. This will be discussed specifically in Sections 6.4 and 6.5.

5.4.3 *Wong pinters'* involvement in the wider social and economic arena

Politics stems from human being's most fundamental preoccupations with advancing life circumstances and maintain and increasing its satisfactory state. Therefore, in its essence this human endeavour has been ultimately orientated to the pursuit of economic progress, its development and the acquisition of improved economic strength and to do so involve other practices including rituals. In his introduction to Hocart's work, Needham remarks that the possession of physical organic life is considered as the highest good (Hocart 1970, xxxiv). His assertion on this matter is used to confirm what Hocart thinks about material welfare. According to him, politics and rituals aim at the attainment of prosperity which may occur when the macrocosm abounds with the objects of men's desires (1970, 193 & 202). Both Hocart and Needham underline that material benefits are not disdained, although most religious prayers are for the spiritual good. Hocart gives an example derived from Christian rites, although Christianity emphasises the primacy of being good more than being healthy and wealthy. However, there is a prayer formula to "comfort and succour all them, who in transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity". Furthermore, "there are prayers for rain, good weather, in time of dearth and scarcity of food, in time of war and turmoil, plagues and sickness" (Hocart 1970, 73). Hocart quotes a prayer from Christian rites: "Increase the fruit of the earth by thy heavenly benediction; and grant that we, receiving thy bountiful liberality, may use the same to thy glory, the relief of them that are needy, and our own comfort" (73). Although this prayer is directed to do good after its contents is granted, it is obvious that to have material good in plenty is necessary in order to do good deeds. Therefore, if politics and religion are inseparable from wealth, the agents of both areas must have concerns with economics too. This is the place where *wong pinters* play their role and engage with the world of economic endeavours.

Most cultural anthropologists have agreed that economy is defined as "the daily transactions of producing, exchanging, storing, and consuming that form so much

human existence” (Wilk 1996, 28-29). This definition places emphasis on those transactions that form human existence. Without disagreeing with this definition, I propose an emphasis based more on its etymological meaning. Lexically, the Greek word *oikonomia* (*oikos* for ‘house’ and *nemein* for ‘manage’) from which the word ‘economy’ originated, illustrates that economy is the management of material resources in order for the household to function (SOED). Given this point, I argue that economy is about those enterprises that ensure the household continues to function.

Economists note that “by creating more wealth, and thus satisfying more of our collective wants, the economic welfare of society will increase” (Kaplan 2008, 1). Here welfare in a society is understood as a combination of both wealth acquired and sensible satisfaction with what can be achieved. That, according to Alfred Marshall, may include all desirable things comprising both man’s material and non-material goods (1997, 54). Insofar as his explanation is concerned, the possession of wealth includes the ownership of the resources needed to create it. Similarly, the *Kaplan Business Book* mentions four of them: land, labour, capital and enterprise. The first includes all natural resources that are available for exploration. The second includes all types of human power, both physical and mental, directed towards the making of goods and the provision of services. The third includes “all manmade aids to production created by society, not as an end in themselves, but to improve the quality and quantity of the goods and services that have been created. [It] is both a resource and a part of the wealth created by society” (Kaplan 2008, 3). The fourth includes every endeavour needed to find sources, to produce, to procure and to increase wealth.

Based on this understanding about economy and wealth, I will examine local concepts of wealth and welfare to explain how *wong pinters* have played a certain role in the creation of the local economy and its maintenance, and attempted to increase it and maintain the functioning of households. As our table data shows, there are many *wong pinters*’ activities that can be categorised as social and economic. They include activities such as giving a *penglaris* or wealth and luck enhancer to those whose business is in trading (49 people or 38%) and farming (66 or 51%), finding a job (38 or 30%), predicting the future (76 or 59%), performing a ritual of divination or *nyarati* in order to provide spiritual protection and help (95 or 70%), finding lost items (42 or 33%), family counselling (106 or 82%), healing (104 or 81%), dispelling sorcery,

bewitchment or *santet* (71 or 55%), and house cleansing (62 or 48%). The significant parts of these elements involve organisation and management.

The Javanese concept of economic welfare is described in the saying: *murah sandang pangan, seger kuwarasan*. This adage means “It is easy and cheap to get clothes and food, and everyone is fine”. In a time of famine and plague, such as in the 1960s, to eat rice and wear clothes was a luxury. Having rice and decent clothes can be said to be a measurement of wealth. “Easy and cheap” are words to describe when both food and clothes are within the reach of everyone’s capacity to purchase. Both reflect economic achievements. It also illustrates that a time of difficulty (*jaman susah*) has gone and a new state of well-being reigns. This saying is often continued with *wis kacukupan samubarange, ora ana kurang apa-apane*. This describes an economic state in which someone has enough of everything. These economic achievements are seen as a result of a blessing granted by the natural environment where people live in. Not only that, material wealth and land fertility are also signs that the dwellers and guardian spirits of the place, or the spirits who are the masters of the land (*sing mbahurekso*), are in accordance with each other. In the words of Benedict Anderson, that ideal state of being is a product of the effective *kasekten* owned by leaders of the locality and wealth is an attribute of power, thereby evidence of the rightly-chosen leader and which flows to the holder of the *kasekten* because of his superior power. It does not generate *kasekten* and is not its source (1990, 53). The thought behind this belief is that wealth is the gift of nature. Someone who holds that *kasekten* is determined to have the capability to control the environment (28). In its turn, the environment will produce fertility, both for humankind and other creatures.

The effective mystical power of the leader, as the centre of the accumulated life force, brings benefits to all. The water of the land is gushing, plants yield fruit, soil provides growth to whatever is cultivated and the air brings health. The accumulation of these signs of the leader’s effective power is formulated in the slogan of a dreamt-of economic milieu, describing material and spiritual prosperity, fertile plants without needing cultivation, things are easy and cheap to get even without money (*gemah ripah loh jinawi, subur tanpa tinandur, murah tur tanpa tinuku one*).¹⁶ Wealth and welfare are

¹⁶ Of course this description sounds utopian. However, for a new community called the Griya Karmel established by three *wong pinters* in Ci Batu Belah, West Java, that is not a fairytale. In the land that they look after now there are some new fountains emerging. Moreover, plants planted by visitors seems to be welcomed by the soil and show promising growth. With care, all

the blessings of the deity, and transmitted through a godly individual because of his/her charisma and prowess. Thus, the fundamental element of welfare is not the amount of wealth accumulated but the active synergy between nature, economic agents, and appropriate enterprise.

Wealth and welfare refer to economic advancement and material prosperity. In the Javanese view material achievement are signs of blessings disseminated by the divinity or divinities because of their approval of the presence of a blessed *wong pinter*, whether as a leader or a *guru* of the people (Magnis-Suseno 1997, 103). Furthermore, the exemplary presence and leadership of *wong pinters* are a guarantee that the inhabitants will live a life that is in accord with the will of the spirits of the place inhabited. Wealth and welfare are a consequence of a proper alignment between human beings and the rest of the nature (*kecocokan*), a result of cosmic harmony and an optimal state of being under the blessing and protection of God (*slamet*). Both are not as a result of environmental exploitation. For them domination over the material environment is unjustifiable since that way of accumulating material wealth is against the value of mysticism and simplicity, one which pays a great deal of respect to material goods and the environment (Magnis-Suseno 1997, 103). An exaggerated effort to generate income is disapproved of. As Mulder writes: "Having in plenty is not an ideal, material riches are a novelty, concentrated in Jakarta or among the military elite, but not an example to follow. Food, environment, material conditions do not motivate even when they are within reach" (1983 [1978], 84). In this view, economic endeavour, the activity of managing the household, includes acts of invoking divine interference, gaining divine approval, finding and preparing the land, thus securing and increasing the blessing. That is what economic activities meant for the Javanese and their *wong*

members of the community work together cleaning the rice fields of stones, making compost, clearing the ponds of parasitic plants. Barren land is now fruitful, becoming a centre of attraction for the surrounding villages. This small community becomes a new economic machine in that village in terms of their organic red rice, fruit and vegetables. Children from schools in the cities go on regular visits to the village to live among the simple inhabitants. The community describes that development: "Those who come here with gloomy appearances go back home with big smiles. The water rejuvenates them with its natural freshness. The mud of the paddy field makes them strong again. Nature provides contentment that cannot be measured with money. They eat food provided on banana leaves joyously with bare hands" (Ci Batu Belah, 7 August 2009). Such a success story can also be read in the *Kakawin Gajah Mada* in which it is stated that the barren and dry land named *Tanah Tarik* (the weary land) changed into a fruitful one because of the blessed Pipil Mada (Pradotokusumo 1986, 245-250). The book shows that because of Pipil Mada, the son of Wisnu the deva, this dramatic change occurred. Later, it became the capital of Majapahit.

pinters until the arrival of capitalism in the villages (Davis 1986, 144). Economic welfare is a sign of divine approval.

As in other religious traditions, a search for divine approval in Javanese religious practice is usually undertaken when there is a demand for recognition. Generally, it is conducted by a downcast person; someone who needs a new place to survive. Human limitations in finding expected information sometimes creates the need for a merciful, inspiring and generous superhuman figure seem indispensably urgent. Some people have engaged in that search in terms of legitimising their claim over a particular land. Some others use it to open up new possibilities. The Old Testament is rich with stories of this kind. The passage about the call of Abraham to go to the Promised Land (Gen. 12:1-20) that will be shown later to him is just one of them. The story about Jacob who found refuge in Egypt is another one (Gen. 28:10-22).

In the book *BTJ*, there are many stories of that kind. A good example is the story of Prince Susuruh at the dawn of the Majapahit Kingdom. He was at an utter loss after his father was killed by his own general, Arya Banyak Wide. In his sadness and anger he travelled eastward and met a female *wong pinter* called Tjemara Tunggal who originated from the Padjadjaran kingdom. She prophesied that he would find a *madja* tree whose fruit is deadly bitter (*pahit*) and establish his place of stay there, develop it, reign and the kings of the whole island of Java would descend from him. Only through following this way would he be able to fulfil his pledge for vengeance. In the sight of the sage-hermit Tjemara Tunggal, the prince was an answer for her severe asceticism to find the best husband. As part of her joy, she promised to see him again after his enthronement and prophesied that all descendants of the prince would reign in the south of Mount Merapi and marry her. She herself decided to become the queen of all spirits in the land of Java and dwell in the South Sea. Her blessing would continue upon the prince and his descendants. Any time he might meet difficulty in his governance, he should invoke her to receive aid from the island's spirits (*BTJ*, 16-17). There are other stories similar to this, such as one involving the establishment of a pilgrimage site in Mount Kawi (Wardoyo cs. 2009) and two kingdoms, Majapahit and Mataram (Ranggawirawangsa 1979, 61-63). They tell how these unrecognised new settlements become centres of economic activity because they gained divine approval.

The next economic activity required after finding and receiving the divine favour is how to secure and maintain it. The new owner of the land, with the advice of

the *wong pinters* involved in the Griya Karmel project (see footnote 16), agreed to return the most profit that the land produced for the wider benefit of the locality. To do so, this institutional owner takes only 30% of the profit and leaves the rest for the well-being of the whole community. On top of this, maintaining social solidarity is considered to be a good factor which pleases the local spirits. The community maintains that it is wise if every member of the community does not enrich his or her own family exclusively. This concern is facilitated by increasing the spirit of mutual cooperation and subduing every personal concern regarding the accumulation of wealth into a wider concern with promoting the common good. This has been maintained by the whole membership as the elders communicate that only by that way of life they will not just be able to secure the blessing, but also to increase it and gain more favour from the ancestors of that land.

5.4.4 Involvement in the conservation of Javanese culture

The content and material representation of culture differs from place to place.¹⁷ Here I will present some of the cultural representations associated with the practice of *wongpintership*. As the data shows, there is significant information about the familiarity of *wong pinters* with Javanese traditional teachings concerning the truth of life (95 participants or 74%), Javanese *wayang*/art (86 or 67%) which contain most *wong pinters*' cosmological worldview, Javanese numerology (87 or 68%), conserving heirlooms (87 or 68%), and Javanese cultural practices (97 or 76%), such as performing tomb visits, and giving offertories (*sesajen*). They are integral to the daily practices and awareness of *wong pinters*. I will delineate how they create and apply these products of creativity in the narratives captured during the fieldwork period together with their anthropological context and the practice of materialising heirlooms from their unseen abode, the last which involves the application of numerology.

As for the Javanese anthropological view, these following paragraphs explore the application of their concept about it in terms of its lexical sense. The Greek word for

¹⁷ Culture, insofar as defined by Frans Boas as a socially transmitted and creatively learned behaviour or by David Schneider the total representation of the reality of life (Rapport and Offering 2000, 95) and by Geertz the web of significant meanings (1980 [1973], 5), can comprise of anything, material and non material, and is purposefully created, cultivated, and habituated either systemically or not to serve and conserve the efficacy, practicality and meaningfulness of things for daily practices in dialogue with one own self, society, nature and environment.

human beings is *anthropos*, from which the word ‘anthropology’ is derived. Anthropology is a study of human beings and their associated aspects (Keesing 1998, 2; Salmon 2005, 23). It is associated with human culture. Mr and Mrs Tamtu’s activities when helping Sigit’s deceased mother free herself from the influence of her own amulet, as mentioned in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3, are rich with issues relevant to Javanese anthropology. It means that as far as a conversation is based on concerns regarding human experience, any information generated from it may consist of anthropological knowledge about human understanding regarding his or her complete entity. The understanding of that anthropological knowledge is then cultivated and traditionalised as the essence of culture itself. What does it comprise of?

Most *wong pinters* interviewed (86%) shared their experience of undertaking an extreme discipline in order to complete their wongpintership. In total 89% of them employed severe asceticism when they needed to get information for their search for answers. Meanwhile 20% of them engaged with wongpintership because of acute poverty. Conducting severe discipline and immersion in acute poverty are activities undertaken by *wong pinters* to condition themselves to the minimum concerns regarding the physical aspects of their humanity in order to cultivate a liminal experience. These are undertaken in order to increase the perceptivity of their *rasa*, an inner faculty that enables them to live with sensitivity to their spiritual dimension (Stange 1984, 114). By being more spiritual, they are eased in terms of their access to the world of spirits. To let oneself be trapped in a liminal experience enables them to adjust to the requirements necessary to become connected with the world beyond human physical needs. We will pay attention to their understanding about the complexity of personhood. According to them, the reality of humanity is that it is not an independent entity. Once someone is born, s/he has already been in a network with spiritual beings. The Javanese concept about spiritual siblings who come into being together with the centre of one’s individuality demonstrates that belief and is common among *wong pinters*.

In their view every human being is born together with four invisible siblings (*sedulur papat*). This Javanese concept of a human being is familiar from Javanese mysticism literature. A baby born is not coming alone. There have been four other siblings who follow the birth of the self as the centre or *pancer* (Headley 2004, 65-66). They are *Kakang Kawah*, the elder sibling, and the younger siblings, the *Adi Ari-ari*, *Getih* and *Puser*. Like other spirits, they are equipped with natural powers and play a

great role in assisting and providing protection to the related individual (Negoro 1999a; Hajit 2002, 28-40; Endraswara 2003, 41). The *Ari-ari* sibling is the amniotic fluid. It comes out after the body and is called the younger brother. The *Kakang Kawah* is the liquid contained in the foetal membrane. It is called the elder sibling because it comes out first before others. The *Getih*, which is the blood, and the *Puser*, the umbilical cord, are younger than the self. Soon after the birth, they are to be buried in front of the house with a lantern placed close by, at the right hand side of the front door. According to Wahyu, the dried umbilical cord can be kept all the time and it will give the related individual help to be healthy. Furthermore, he explains that these four siblings are accompanied by two other entities called *mar* and *marti*. *Mar* is a mother's breath when she was in birth pangs, whereas *marti* is the mother's breath exhaled after she successfully gave birth to the baby. In Christian terms these are two guardian angels (Kudus, 23 August 2009). Suryo Negoro says that everyone can ask the help of the *mar* and *marti* siblings, as well as to the four others, only after undergoing a *gentur tapa brata* or intensive ascense (1999a). Almost all *wong pinters* with a Javanese cultural background are seriously concerned with the importance of the four invisible siblings.

Wong pinters' anthropological views about the human being may have been best described by the book *Wirid Hidayat Jati* written by Ranggawarsita the *pujangga*, a type of *wong pinter* who specialises in Javanese philosophy. In Chapter 5 of the book he delineates the beginning of human life, its development and the life beyond the earthly one when a human person reaches the world of the Lord (Simuh 1988, 205-220). It explains in great detail what is involved in living as a human being, what it means and what death is. This book provides insight about the journey of humanity. The most perfect accomplishment would be determined by how perfect the process is (*sampurnaning lampah*). A perfect process may suppose perfection of will (*sampurnaning niyat*), embodiment of God's own vision (*sampurnaning takbir*), emptiness from human interest but full of God's will (*sampurnaning sahadat*), death to human characters (*sampurnaning sekarat*), and union with the True Life (*sampurnaning urip*). Someone's ultimate perfection is known at the time of his death (Simuh 1988, 209). In terms of deciphering the development of human life it could be seen as psychological theories of personal and moral development. However, it is just a book.

Instead of exploring the book to construct the anthropological view of the writer Raden Ngabehi Ranggawarsita, whom many Javanese believe to be a great *wong pinter*,

I will include what Hariadi said about the stages of development that lead to the perfection of humanity. According to him, there are six of them. Each is a matter of choice whether someone may stay at a particular level or whether they move upward to the higher ones. Listed from that considered the lowest level to the highest one, these seven are: man of *prewangan* (embodied with lower spirits), man of *kanuragan* (oriented to physical matters), man of *sangkan paraning dumadi* (absorbed in the philosophical search for the origin and destination of a human being), man of *kasampurnaning puruwita* (guided to the perfection of the soul), man of *kasampurnaning dumadi* (drawn into the perfection of being), and man of *kasampurnaning janma* (immersed in the perfection of humanity) (Bintaro-South Jakarta, 29 September 2010). Each of these can be the goal of man's pursuits.

Eddy, a *wong pinter* from the village of Nepen in Mount Merapi, explained this quite differently, although some similarities can also be found. According to him, every one of us is to face many choices regarding what we are going to be. Metaphorically, he said that we could become red, yellow, blue, white and other colours. Each choice will find its perfection and every perfection will have its manifestation. He quoted a message whispered to him by his spirit guide: "Do not be surprised, my son, when you see those who come in the *paseban* (the day of paying tribute to the Sultan) have various heads of animals like goats, monkeys and other kinds. That is the perfection of what they value most", said his senior, "to you I say, strive for the *kasampurnaning janma*". Furthermore, he adds that a conversion to another level is not something that is impossible (Nepen-Central Java, 8 February 2011). Values are changeable and so are destinations. Generally, people choose higher values along with their consciousness of what is regarded as higher. A higher value generates a higher hierarchy because "to adopt value is to introduce hierarchy" (Dumont 1979, 20). Among the *wong pinters* also, there are hierarchies because of the different degrees of their spirit helpers and the spiritual values they have cultivated in themselves. Conversion is about changing and adopting a new value considered better or higher than the one possessed beforehand.

Another aspect of *wong pinters'* influence on the Javanese religious teaching is their understanding of death. Among the many aspects of humanity studied by anthropology and religious studies, death is one of the most interesting. The *Wirid Hidayat Jati* features an elaborate explanation of death including its nature and process. Death is the return of all things to their original state (Simuh 1988, 209-214). The books

Ajaran Rahasia Orang Jawa (The Secret Teaching of the Javanese) (Suyono 2009, 69-75) and *Dunia Mistik Orang Jawa* (The Mystic World of the Javanese) (Suyono 2007, 97-129) include a discussion of the matter. There are different terms used in the various explanations. However, these three books elaborate the process of death and explain the continuing journey of human souls. An intimate discussion about death according to the Javanese view has become of interest to some anthropologists such as Henri Chambert-Loir and Anthony Reid, as well as to the contributors of their edited book *Potent Dead* (2002), Koentjaraningrat (1985, 361-367) and also to Geertz (1976, 68-76). These sources reflect the views that most *wong pinters* have shared. Even *wong pinters* who subject to strong influence from the mainstream religions exhibit and maintain local teachings about these matters, including the possession of heirlooms and other spiritual technologies.

As for the conservation of heirlooms, I present here some experiential stories regarding the materialization of some *kerises*. One of many *wong pinters*' activities involves their capability to materialize invisible heirlooms. The word 'materialize' may not be the most appropriate one. The act itself in the Javanese phrase is called *narik keris*, to draw a *keris*. To perform this act they need to negotiate with heirlooms' invisible keepers through an act of *nayuh keris*, asking the potential *keris* to take its physical form. In the data, 87 (68%) of participants acknowledge to have engaged in this particular activity. This figure illustrates that heirlooms mean a great deal for *wong pinters*. When I asked Hamid whether it was possible for me to acquire a good *keris*, one suitable for a lecturer he says that there is one. He told what should be provided. It depends on how high the quality of the *keris* required is. The better the *keris*, the more expensive the oil. In some cases, it is not oil that is asked for but the petals of three types of flowers (*kembang telon*). Joko Kijeng owns more than three thousand *kerises*. Many of them were drawn not by using oil but using buffalo heads as an instrument of exchange. Some participants have to fight against the invisible keepers. The one who wins the fight will keep the heirloom. Most *wong pinters* who deal with this activity object to engaging in a fight. They outline that it is a matter of fairness and mutual respect. However, when I relayed these experiential stories to Ki Anom, an emeritus *wong pinter* who is a law lecturer at the University of Indonesia, he demonstrated a slight disagreement. He questioned our right to make them come into being. In his opinion, a *keris* is a free individual. To make it materialise is to take over its freedom.

Moreover, this act may take this *keris* out of its group (Bintaro, 11 September 2009). The question is how the process of materialization happens.

I have asked Hamid to perform the materialization of *kerises* as many as five times.¹⁸ At last I asked what actually happens when he draws heirlooms. According to him, everything that ever existed always exists and will always exist, especially things that have been touched by an intensive prayer. This statement justifies the practice of materializing two ancient rosaries as happened to a medical doctor Budiarto. Only by using the soil taken from a catacomb in Italy, with the help of two other *wong pinters*, two ancient rosaries were materialized. The first one only consists of around thirty beads and the other around sixty. His second test was by using water taken from a site of pilgrimage, Lourdes. From that water, his wife got a statue of the Virgin Mary the Mother of Jesus which is made as if from solid water (West Jakarta, 18 January 2011). Hamid detailed the key for that skill. According to him it comes along with someone's maturity in three powers: the *daya cipta* (creative power), *daya rasa* (perceptive power), and the power of will or *daya karsa* (Pingit-Temanggung, 19 February 2011). The synergetic union of three inner faculties is essential. The creative power includes the word power to recall what has existed. Furthermore, he says:

There are centres where heirlooms have been kept in their unseen abode. If you ask for a *keris* with certain specifications, the *keris* searched for has been available. In the world of the unseen a thousand kilometre journey is like less than the blink of an eye. Do not be surprised if I tell you that the first *keris* you received was from Blitar. So, using the *daya rasa*, *karsa* and *cipta*, the act of asking for permission, our search can be answered from a place located far away from ours. But distance

¹⁸ Hamid was challenged by some Indonesian scientists to decipher his theory of materialization. In response he said: "I do not know how to explain it. But, if you want me to prove it you can have it". At the first occasion a *keris* was drawn. Coming along with it was a couple of mystical stones called the *Kembang Wijaya Kusuma* stone. After grabbing the stones from leaves of a plant growing nearby, then, he drew the *keris* from a *kamboja* (*Plumeria Alba*) tree. Prof. Babyatar, a Tibetan scientist, Dr. Mao, a Laotian medical doctor and shaman, and some scientists of shamanism attending the Twenty Seventh International Conference of Shamanism in San Rafael suggest employing quantum physics to understand the practices performed by Hamid. Some others say that the hologram theory may be compatible. In response to the phenomena of heirloom materialization, Mao said that it is not something impossible. For a shaman, that practice is part of his physical world. All information coming from outside that has been selected will be stored in the sub-consciousness sphere in someone's mind. It stays there as energy. By being in a low frequency, someone can recall his memory back. That is the way a shaman works when he travelled to the land of the ancestors. From that journey he can bring information for the client (San Rafael, 5 September 2010). Nevertheless, this explanation does not answer the practice of materializing heirlooms. The hologram theory may be useful. It says that the smallest particle can be developed into a complete entity of something. The atmosphere is full with particles manifested in a wave of energy. So there is no surprise if someone can grab something out of nothing.

is nothing. Once an agreement is achieved, a delivery will follow (Bedono-Ambarawa, 14 September 2009).

The last statement is important: once an agreement is achieved, the delivery occurs. This remark reminds me of the last activity involved in *keris* materialization. Tono, a *wong pinter*, was on his way to Handy's house. When he was about to enter the village he saw a flashing light followed by a fragrance of *misik* oil during his motorbike ride. He saw the light hit a tree. He knew that a *keris* was just about to come out. He arrived at the time when we finished folding the linen cloth and wrapped the *kerises*. When we opened it, one of the *keris*'s scabbard was a little damaged. That probably justified what he saw and simultaneously it verified the truth about a delivery of the *keris*. If this is a fact, then, the word materialization may generate a debate when it is tested using the quantum physics and hologram theories.

5.4.5 Engagement with environmental and ecological concerns

John A. Grim writes that shamanism is related to ecology and environmentalism (2004, 107). Shamans work with the soul of plants and animals, and spirits inhabit the world to gain practical knowledge for finding medicinal herbs or influencing the course of nature. They have a distinct environmental knowledge and concern with the harmony of nature and its restoration once a breach in its cosmic equilibrium occurs. Such environmental and ecological interactions have been part of the practice of *wongpintership* too. As far as the data shows, there are 62 (48%) *wong pinters* who specialise themselves in providing medicinal plants. In total 10 of them (7%), known as *pawang hujan* or rain-diverting experts, have been known as capable of influencing the course of nature by diverting rain. In addition, 30 people (23%) are frequently asked to help to locate wells and 33 of them (26%) are experts in conducting and presiding over village cleansing rituals.

Harmonious relationships with the world of spirits are also seen as generating good effects. Every form of *kecocokan* between well-meaning intentions, deeds or thoughts and words of human being (the visible being) with those of the invisible agents will maintain harmony with nature, society and the spirits (Magnis-Suseno 1997, 85; Geertz 2001, 3). The gushing of the springs, the growth of cultivated plants, the contentment of the inhabitants, good harvests and the absence of famine, conflict, disease or plagues are signs of synergy with all the elements of nature, signs of being

correctly coordinated or in good coordination with others. Robert Wessing records a story about the benefit of having a good relationship with the invisible community as found in the legend about the kings of Java and Nyai Roro Kidul, the queen of all spirits in the South Sea. The fidelity of Panembahan Senopati and his descendants with maintaining a good relationship with the Queen and her invisible armies will result in their commitment to help defend their realm (1997, 322-323).

To hold a *slametan* and give an offering for the lords of the unseen community are one of the ways to maintain harmony with the other elements of nature. It is a respectful expression of acknowledging each own place and world. By doing so, every one of the seen society will meet a state of *slamet* (Pemberton 1994, 301). Slametan ritual is an opportunity to “formulate the relationship between this world and the world of the invisible” (Miyazaki 1988, 88). In it, everyone is guaranteed to receive what is due. There are many other ritual acts which aim at dispensing what the spirits, in contractual relationship with human being, may deserve. Rituals of visiting the tombs of village tutelary spirits, providing offerings in the house, and bathing *pusakas* with ointment are forms of recognition and respect to the spirits dwelling within. Any neglect of care or lack of respect to the local spirits may result in the breaking of that relationship.

Wessing described a similar example found while he was doing his research in East Java. He recorded a story about a *dhanyang* who had remained at a stone called the Watu Blorok near the village of Mojokerto. The *dhanyang* appeared as a tiger called Mbah Blorok and punished those who intentionally or unintentionally disrespected his place (Wessing 1995, 211). The *dhanyang* inhabits roles as an ancestor, protector and as the one who punishes transgressors (Wessing 1988, 44). To trespass the *adat* law is an offence to the respectability of those ancestors understood as the givers of the *adat* or the local customs. A severe death is a possible consequence inflicted upon anyone ignoring the taboos. A taboo concerning the constraint of wearing green-coloured clothing at the burial sites of the kings of Mataram and the South Sea beaches has been noted. Ricklefs writes:

In his search for spiritual support, Pakubuwana II... while he was in the village Sawo (in Mount Lawu)... encountered the spirit of Sunan Lawu, one of the most important supernatural forces of Java. This spirit is ... the mountain counterpoise to the ocean-based powers of the Goddess of the Southern Ocean. The present-day courts of Java still make offerings to both deities... The spirit is said to be that of the last king of Majapahit. It is said to be taboo to speak the name of Allah while

climbing Mt Lawu; explicitly sexual jokes and foul language are appropriate instead. Indeed Sunan Lawu is said not to care for pious Muslims. Taboos surround him. One who climbs Mt Lawu is forbidden to wear green or the fabric pattern called *poleng*; the same taboos are observed with regard to the Goddess of the Southern Ocean (Ricklefs 1998, 277-278).

The reason behind the imposition of these taboos is to avoid the impression that the visitors may be seen by the spirits of Mataram kings as their rivals in gaining the favour of the Queen of all spirits. Thus, a visitor should not be more attractive than the one who is visited as most Javanese know that the kings of Mataram were very fond of the colour green and so was the Queen of the South Sea. The act of wearing green cloth may be interpreted as challenging the beauty of the king or the queen. Furthermore, any offending and unconsidered words against them or improper conducts, such as ignoring the operational taboos, will also be taken into account. There is a significant emphasis on the importance of showing genuine recognition and reference to the visited religious patrons (Hefner 1983, 670).

Difficult lives are signs that wrongdoing has occurred. They are signs of disorder. The most sincere expression of someone's goodwill regarding restoring the harmonious relationship broken is by holding a proper *slametan*. Wessing writes about giving the right sacrifices. In relation to the building of new establishments, he recorded that a sacrifice is to be made to appease the spirits "whose habitation is disturbed by the building activities" (1997, 104). That is made to pacify supernatural entities for the disturbance made by human actions. He writes:

It does happen that in spite of these ritual precautions a spirit is dissatisfied and demands a greater sacrifice. The spirit's displeasure becomes evident, for instance, through an unusual number of accidents during the construction or through a tendency of part of the construction to collapse, time and again, in spite of any technical expertise applied to it... (A) road under construction kept collapsing at a certain spot. A shaman was called in and, having determined that a local tutelary spirit did not suffice, he recommended that a human sacrifice be made. According to the informant, a condemned prisoner was eventually executed on the spot, after which, the spirit gave no further trouble (Wessing 1997, 107).

This quote is an example of how insufficient respect to the spirits who have guarded the area for many ages may cause continual problems. Basically, every chagrin felt by the spirits, as far as it was incited by the visible human being, has to be dealt responsibly since it will stir up disharmony. Once a preferable offering is given, the disturbance ceases to exist and that stops the supernatural retribution provoked. Thus, a proper sacrifice helps restore the relationship between the living and the spirits.

Geertz (1976), Headley (2000), Beatty (1999) and Koentjaraningrat (1985) have not included a discussion on the *slametan* as a way of restoring a damaged relationship with the world of spirits in their written works. Most of them considered it as a social act to maintain peace among the neighbourhood (*kerukunan*) or to wish the well-being (*keselamatan*) of the householder. The *slametan* that they discussed are performed to ask that everything will run smoothly and well, one which is done before bad things come. It has nothing to do with the aftermath, such as to asking for forgiveness for the wrongdoings committed. Nevertheless, Rahmat Subagya includes it in his discussion of the *kurban* or sacrificial offering (1981, 167-171). The general aim of offering a sacrifice after an accident or plague is to make the potentially perpetual dangers caused by natural factors, and one's own neglect or carelessness towards the operational taboos or other cultural constraints, cease to operate. A sacrificial offering can be in the form of *wadal*, *tumbal*, *tawur* and *bebanten*. All refer to human sacrifice. He gives some good examples for these, although they occurred a long time ago:

In 1929 the four leaders of the four villages suffering from volcanic eruption threw themselves into the crater of Mount Merapi to calm the angry Kyai Semar (the spirit *danyang* of Mount Merapi). In 1972 when oil pipes were fixed and planted deep under the earth from Cilacap to Jogjakarta, there was a widespread belief in South Kedu that a sacrifice of a little child should be made for a *tumbal*, sacrificial victim, in order to make the mega project successful. *Peruwatan* sacrifice is known everywhere. It shows that a public redemption is to be applied at that particular moment (170) (My own translation).

To perform a *ruwatan*, meaning to holding the rite of purification, is also relevant to this section. Its relevance lies on the idea that a sacrifice can free someone from a danger inflicted by the spirits. This liberating rite aims at the purification of the human milieu and protecting it from the interference of evil spirits and their forces. According to Reksosusilo, the goal of a *ruwatan* is to liberate the human being from doom, evil spirits, and influences of the spirits that potentially cause misfortune (2008, 174). This rite is to restore disorder raised by imperfect conditions, called *sukerta*, that follow someone from his/her birth (179-186; Headley 2000, 156-174). It is an exorcism wrapped in storytelling. As Headley states: "The ritual telling of the myth links the misfortunes of an ordinary human being to a broader reality and deals with evil at its hidden other-worldly source" (Headley 2000, 6). Basically, the idea behind this storytelling ritual is that for the Javanese an evil character is represented by a monster figure called Kala. Once a long misery touches someone's life or savages the welfare of

the whole village, the Javanese believe that they are victims of the hungry Kala and need to be liberated. Once it is done, the equilibrium is restored and maintained.

Now, as for their expertise in finding medicinal plants, there is a significant relationship between this skill and their activities in restoring someone's health. One of the reasons why the term *wong pinter* is associated with the *dhukun* is that most *wong pinters* deal with healing activities too. The data show that 104 *wong pinters* out of 128 participants (81%) perform healing. Most of them are just part-timers (73%). It means that they do not depend on the service of healing for their livelihoods. That significant number tells that performing healing is the most common assumption regarding their main role. These data imply that, along with their ongoing experience, they have knowledge of providing medical treatment at least, and also of medicinal plants. There is a book called *Kitab Primbon Betaljemur Adammakna*, a traditional handbook of medicinal herbs and treatments of illnesses, which is based not on academic research but is widely used by many Javanese people including the *wong pinters*. It consists of numerology, divination, mantras, list of illnesses and medicinal herbs. I wonder whether most *wong pinters'* knowledge of many kinds of illnesses and medicines originate from this book or not. Looking at the way they share their stories, they are independent. This is strengthened by the fact that five out of seventeen *wong pinters* met only in the District of Magelang and those who shared the stories of healing are illiterate. Another possibility is that the tradition is handed down from previous generations, although it still reflects the content of the Primbon.

According to some *wong pinters*, every illness can be well treated if the day when it starts is remembered. Medicines are everywhere around us. The key to all is the understanding of the day of birth. For example, if someone's birthday is on 15 January 1972, the local date will be on *Senin Kliwon*, the Kliwon Monday. Here, Kliwon is the signifier. If the hour is also known, someone's characteristics will be better explained. Illnesses and appropriate medicines will also be known. As *Senin Kliwon* consists of *Senin*, whose mystical value is five, and *Kliwon*, with a mystical value of seven, medicines and illnesses should be treated in accordance with the characteristics of the number twelve. Thus, the direction of those medicines needed for that person born on *Senin Kliwon* is to be found in an easternly direction. The herb required is a plant whose first letter starts with the syllable *dha*, since in the order of Javanese letters the number 12 denotes the *dha* letter. The plant in that category is the *Dhadap Srep* (*Erythrina*

Indica). This dependence on the importance of the *weton* shows that most *wong pinters* develop a method of diagnosing clients' problems. It assumes a certain worldview that makes them have an automatic association with particular types of medicinal herbs.

A documentary book on the traditional healing practices was published in 1983. Eight contributors, out of forty seven, discussed these practices in Java. Of these eight, three of them dealt with the traditional herbal medicines used by Javanese folk healers. Among these three, only Suyono Yahya recorded herbs used by the *dhukuns* along with the types of the diseases to be tackled (1983, 221-223). This book gives us more insight into the work of *wong pinters* up until the time it was published. Their contribution to the naming of medicinal plants reflects ancient traditions about healthcare as developed in Javanese society. Having read these contributors' opinions, I would say that although there are elements of unpredictability and uncertainty in *wong pinters*' medical advice, some general knowledge about the use of a plant for medical treatment shows that there is a uniformity in terms of their understanding. For example, the use of young green coconut water for dealing with poison and sorcery seems to be agreed by most practitioners. Furthermore, the unpredictability of what herbal medicines should be used suggests that there are always particularities in many cases of illness. On the other hand, it implies the existence of different sources for the required knowledge regarding each health problem.

5.5 Some consequences for their existence

The involvement of *wong pinters* with the concerns of more established spheres affects their existence. It affirms that they do not exist for monetary gain by beguiling susceptible persons as accused by those who stigmatise them as money-oriented healers (*dhukun mata duitan*). Furthermore, their concern with the *bonum commune* is as profound as that of statesmen, academics and environmental activists. It highlights that they can bring influence to formal institutions which allow them to enter into the concerns of their organisations. Thus, this engagement frees them from the accusation that they only perform trivial tasks. In other words, they gain more respect, higher social esteem and affirmation, and have more established roles which cannot be belittled. Their expanded involvement in wider and more established spheres may invite onlookers to revise their opinions, instead of accusing them of absolute irrationality, as

suggested by Torunn Selberg (2003, 298). Otherwise we keep asking the question as to why more people from different institutions ask for the services of these practitioners.

Further developments show that there have been attempts to appreciate their roles and establish formal posts within various institutions. As in the role of shamans, some *wong pinters* have been recruited as hospital staff as suggested by many contributors in the book *Traditional Healing Practices* (Setyonegoro 1983) and by some contributors to *Health Care in Java* (Boomgaard cs. 1996). Some medical doctors are *wong pinters* and also trained healers. Such developments have touched governmental and educational institutions. Guno and Soedjarwadi are *wong pinter* lecturers in Javanese literature for advanced studies and the art of Javanese shadow puppetry. Several *wong pinters* are recruited by political leaders to act as their conscience as in the case of prophets or to become special supporter for a candidate in an election. Of course there is no special department in these governmental institutions for their role. However, there are examples of their significance in the area of politics as exemplified by the role of a group of *wong pinters* in the MSC whose comments and advice are frequently sought out by current leaders. As I have mentioned in Chapter 4, in Central Java there have been two dioceses which facilitated *wong pinters* to grow as a group with the main interest being to deepen the teaching of the Christian faith using the values offered by the methods of gaining wisdom as practised in Javanese mysticism. There is a long list of these expanded involvements but it is unnecessary to be included here. I will pay more attention on its impact on these practitioners themselves.

Besides resulting in their being settled economically and gaining better social recognition, the involvement of *wong pinters* in more established institutions also leads them to constitute their own network, as these institutions sometimes have a number of *wong pinters*. Within this group itself, a certain relation has developed in which some *wong pinters* respect other practitioners more than others. There is a sense of hierarchy within the group. In the wider scope, some formal organisations, such as the FKPPAI, MSC and other smaller groups, have been established to serve as fora in which practitioners can meet with others, educate themselves regarding current political and social issues, discuss a chosen theme of the meeting and share their own experiences. In 2008 the Indonesian National Library published a directory of paranormals in which three hundred practitioners are listed. These affirm both their existence and significance.

However, although they are more settled than before, they still have to face objections as demonstrated by the Indonesian Conference of the Islamic Clergy (MUI).

5.6 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated that, as in the world of shamanism, there have been mentions of *wong pinters*' engagement with more established social, religious, political, cultural and environmental spheres. It is evident both from academic literature and direct encounters that wongpintership has been proven to have a certain contribution to wider spheres. That expanded involvement is a concrete manifestation of their common ideology of *mangayu hayuning bawana*, an ideology created as a consequence of the incorporation of the characteristics of life force which becomes the basis of the services of both political and religious leaders, *wong pinters* and public servants. As their involvement touches larger areas of concerns, their significance provides for them, not only improved social and political recognition for their ongoing role in society thus confirming their efficacy, but it also leads them to a wider network of *wong pinters* and demonstrates a continual commitment to these wider concerns. These underline that their existence does not only with trivial things but also with larger concerns that belong to more institutional establishments. This statement may open up a discussion about existential crises which they have suffered from. The next chapter will discuss specifically the challenges which have made *wong pinters* lose confidence in practising their wongpintership at some period of time and why they reemerged with greater confidence in current Javanese society.

Chapter 6

Submergence and Re-emergence of *Wong Pinters*

Having explored in Chapter 2 the nature and some fundamental aspects of shamanism and in Chapter 3 its connection with *wong pinter* as a type of Javanese shaman, I then discussed the reality of the *wong pinter* in terms of their domestic sphere in Chapter 4, as well as their engagement with realms outside their internal concerns and services for their closed community in Chapter 5. In this chapter I will discuss the existential crisis that practitioners of wongpintership have suffered from, how they have proved to be resilient and why their numbers have tended to proliferate. I consider that this crisis of existence – as well as their re-emergence into the public sphere – may have been caused by the same factors that the practice of shamanism in other places has experienced.¹⁹ In the case of wongpintership, those causal elements contributing to the demise of shamanism remain intact, including interference by the political authorities, the religious establishment, and whether they practise as individuals or whether they work as a network of *wong pinters*. There is another factor to be included here which is social by nature because it relates to social stigmatisation. It is found in the terminological bias about who the practitioners of wongpintership are from the point of view of non-practitioners since they tend to call them *dhukun*, or they use the more euphemistic term *wong pinter*. Moreover, I suggest that the decline of the practice of wongpintership is also due to the lack of scientific back-up especially in regard to the demand for scientific justification for the basis of their shamanistic knowledge and skills. However,

¹⁹ Frank Kressing, in his study on the proliferation of shamans among the Ladakh society of Northwest India, finds that the decline of shamanistic practice in that region was caused by the operational hegemony of the Indian military, domination exerted by the Islamic state of Kashmir and the penetration of Western culture into Ladakh via tourism (2003, 1 & 14). The re-emergence of shamanistic practice among the Ladakhi, according to him, may be seen as a reaction towards the existing “social disruptions, psychic stress, and mental imbalance which is increasingly prevalent among the Ladakhi population” and as a manifestation of existential, cultural and religious alienation (16). Sherry B. Ortner states that the decrease of shamanism among the Sherpas of Nepal is caused by the dominance of the religious establishment over the role of shamans. She concludes that their defeat by Buddhist monks and lamas is a result of certain factors: their service as ritual specialists is less reliable than theirs, and they have no community, individuality or relationism (1995, 356). Thomas A. DuBois (2009, 221-227), Vitebsky (1995, 135-141), and David Chidester (2004, 41-49) argue that the decline of shamanism was caused by colonialism and missionary activities which attempted to eradicate them through persecution and systematic marginalisation. Despite some writings on the demise of shamanism, there have also been treatments of neo-shamanism. Vitebsky (2009, 150-153) and Alby Stone (2003, 143-158) show how shamanism has found a new place and form in a society marked by spiritual discontent.

in the current context those demising agencies seem to have changed the way they deal with this ancient practice, although at the level of public law there has been an on-going debate since early December 2012 to establish a legal provision with regard to sorcery which I believe will affect these practitioners. Based on this research, is it likely that *wong pinters* and the practice of wongpintership will persist in Javanese society?

In order to answer the research question in this chapter, I will delineate some of the existential crises that practitioners of wongpintership have suffered from, how they have been proven to be resilient and why they have seemed to proliferate during the last decade in Java. Firstly, I will look at the effects brought about by the existing terminological uncertainty. Secondly, I will examine the validity of this cultural phenomenon under the principles of science in order to underline that wongpintership is a valid material subject for scientific study. Thirdly, I will expose how political factors have contributed both to the near-extinction and proliferation of wongpintership. Fourthly, I will discuss how some formal religions have influenced the decrease and increase of the practice of Javanese shamanism. Fifthly, I will show how the current search for depth among religious practitioners has made them believe that traditional practices offer something distinct. This has opened up a possibility for the re-awakening of the Javanese mysticism (*kebatinan*) from which many prominent figures of the learned *wong pinters* have emerged. Sixthly, by exposing how poverty, poor access to the public healthcare system and other factors are still the main problems faced by the Javanese, I will argue that they will keep going to the *wong pinters* to solve their problems. These six factors can be conducive to preservation of their existence on the one hand and a serious threat on the other hand.

6.1 The effects of terminological problem

I have discussed briefly the issue concerning the terminological uncertainty about the terms attached by outsiders to practitioners of wongpintership in Section 3.1. To restate this, we can summarise that there are two terms, *wong pinter* and *dhukun*, used by non-practitioners which are not really agreeable from the perspective of the practitioners themselves and who suggest other terms. Their objection to these terms has resulted in the creation of a certain social type which has been abruptly categorised as a marginalised type both by practitioners and non-practitioners. The latter classify practitioners as a social type to be avoided on the one hand, but are needed on the other.

To practitioners, this social esteem has a dual aspect as well. They are respected but also disregarded, welcome but also alienated. Some of them find it difficult to integrate into their own society. This is made worse when they have to deal with the religious authorities. Not only are they undermined but they are also suspected and demonised. I will discuss this issue in greater detail later in this section.

I will delineate the reason why practitioners object to taking up the terms *wong pinter* and *dhukun* as attached by onlookers and will examine what impact this problem has had and how it has affected *wong pinters'* social standing. As for their objection to the term *dhukun'*s associations, there is no explicit explanation for this so far. A deeper enquiry may lead us to question what may cause their hesitance to apply the word to themselves. I propose some suggestions. Firstly, someone avoids something because of the imagined value attached to it. In this case, many *wong pinters'* social backgrounds may stand behind this reluctance. An analysis of the word *dukum* by Munadia Karaan, and types of *dhukun* in Java as detailed by C. Geertz, may provide a hint. In relation to this possibility, a short analysis about the place and role of a *dhukun* in its terms of the social constellation may be useful. Secondly, scrutinised in terms of Javanese virtues such as humility and modesty, practitioners' reluctance to apply this term *dhukun* – or even *wong pinter* – may be caused by their awareness of these values, which are seen as the key to becoming a good Javanese. Thirdly, the superiority of religious over traditional teachings and practices seems to be one of the stronger reasons.

The first variable draws on the work of Karaan and Geertz. An article by Karaan (2009) on the basis of her understanding of the word *dukum* as found among the Javanese living in South Africa since the colonial period shows that the word is a mispronunciation of the Javanese word *dhukun* and is associated with slavery. She found that a *dukum* is identical to a South African *sangoma*, a local version of American shamans (2009). Her remark strengthens what Inez Mahony has maintained. According to her, a *dhukun* is just a shaman as understood in Western terms as the *dhukuns* she has interviewed have played roles as curers, priests, magicians, sorcerers, sages and counsellors (Mahony 2002, 1-4). Therefore, it is very possible that their hesitance to take on the title *dukun* may be caused by the dark history of the term which was rooted in Dutch colonial era of slavery. In Java among the practitioners themselves this argument is not fully comprehended or familiar. However, an argument can be developed from this point. Seen from the structure of Javanese society, the social place

of a slave is located on a lower or even the lowest stratum. Not only are they stigmatised socially and politically, their religion is also seen as inferior. Since the *dhukun* itself is intimately associated with people from the lower social stratum, the unwillingness to take up that title is then self-evident. It can be said that the reluctance of some *wong pinters* to be equated with the *dhukun* is caused by the terms association with their marginality. This position is formulated differently by Geertz. According to him, *dhukun* creates the impression of “severe superstition, savagery connotation, uncivilised and coarse nature, animistic character, contrary to common religions’ values, far from being rational, vague interests and bad reputation of cheating the clients or taking advantage of their vulnerability though some types of *dhukuns* are definitely required by traditional societies” (1976, 86). This remark harbours an overloaded set of meanings which shows how difficult it is to establish the social coordinate of a *dhukun* as seen from all aspects of society and simultaneously underlines the terms’ inconvenient labels. These labels are symbolic of low values, thus degrading someone’s sense of their Javanese-ness.

The second variable in this analysis is the values required to be seen as a good Javanese. Anderson (1990), Mulder (1989; 1978), Geertz (1976) and Magnis-Soseno (1997) include commentaries on what behaviours should be displayed in order to make someone fully Javanese. The social group in Javanese society which has the claim to be the one which embodies the essential value of Javanese-ness is the *priyayi*, or the Javanese who come from the aristocratic and noble tradition. According to that tradition, Javanese-ness is a quality marked by the characteristics of being *halus*, meaning displaying “smoothness of behaviours, the quality of not being disturbed, spotted, uneven, or discoloured... Smoothness of spirit means self-control, smoothness of appearance means beauty and elegance, smoothness of behaviour means politeness and sensitivity” (Anderson 1990, 50). The contrasting quality of being *halus* is being *kasar* or coarse. This word contains a sense of “lack of control, irregularity, imbalance, disharmony, ugliness, coarseness, and impurity” (1990, 50). Being *halus* includes the continued attempt to reach a reduction of the spectrum of human feeling, thought and outward expression. Geertz terms this effort as a suppression of feeling (1976, 366). The teaching to suppress one’s feeling is described by Mulder in the following terms: “Socially, the individual is not allowed the free expression of his feelings, will, and emotions... He should not pride himself in personal accomplishment; ... he should not make himself extraordinary or important... Individual expression ... is impolite,

embarrassing, and an intrusion upon the order” (Mulder 1978, 43). Humility is the key for maintaining a high level of Javanese-ness (Mulder 1989, 61). Impulsiveness and spontaneity are viewed as signs of under-development in Javanese terms (Magnis-Suseno 1997, 45). To be known as a *dhukun* is to be recognised as a *wong pinter*. To welcome that title is to agree to be called as such. To agree with it means to claim oneself as a *wong pinter*. This act may be regarded as not being *halus*. It is low in the quality of Javanese-ness, and thus, not worth pursuing. Practitioners’ avoidance of both terms may likely be based on their awareness of these Javanese traditional values. These terms cast someone into a lower stratum of society.

Insofar as the third variable is concerned, the avoidance of using the term *dhukun* could be a matter of their submission to the teachings of mainstream religions. Seen in the context of the engagement of wongpintership with the practice of religions, their avoidance to publicly take up these titles is very much a matter of their awareness that if they do so it will only generate more risk. It is a question of placing themselves before the opinion of those who hold firm values as taught by the dominant religions. In Indonesian society, to adhere to one of the formal religions is still a national obligatory. It must be known publicly. As far as the teaching of religion is concerned, the practice of wongpintership is seen as contrary to these mainstream faiths. This practice is labelled as utterly satanic and leads common people to deviate from worshiping the true God. Though they have their own opinion about the truth of what religion is and disagree with the position that most revelational religions proclaim, they choose not to be a scandal to their fellow citizens. For them religion is just a human creation. It is created to serve a certain human goal. Religious practices are just to scare scrupulous people. Nevertheless, for the virtue of civility, the principle “silence is golden” is observed. Not becoming engaged in conflict or debate is maintained as a high virtue. To be like other people is wise in terms of social life and useful for maintaining society and remaining in peace with one’s neighbours. Those who understand must control their tongue. For this reason they are neither debating nor defending their views. Knowledge is good but to have understanding is much better. Their philosophy is reflected in this principle: many people think of themselves as “capable of doing things but very few are those who are perceptive towards understanding” (*akeh wong kang rumangsa bisa, ning mung sithik kang bisa rumangsa*). In my analysis, this saying reveals something else. This may be a formulation they have used to pacify themselves. The fact that those remarks are always with them, I should think that they have become immune to these

kinds of accusation. According to people of religion, they are friends, servants, children, wives and husbands of devils. Social and religious exclusion are seen as an intolerable punishment and thus, it is wise not to put oneself at risk by claiming that one is a *wong pinter* or *dhukun*.

Therefore, like the term shaman in Chapter 2, the phrases *wong pinter* and *dhukun* are problematic and they are not created by practitioners themselves. Both are labels used by outsiders. However, compared with *dhukun*, the term *wong pinter* can still be tolerated by practitioners. There are reasons why they decline the former label. Not only do they see that the profession of a *dhukun* suggests a strong connotation of being from a lower social class, it also carries profound uneasiness socially, politically and religiously. If they are asked what names they prefer to be called they mention, for example, an elder (*piyayi sepuh*) rather than a *dhukun* or *wong pinter*. Their preference to adopt the term *piyayi sepuh* as opposed to *dhukun* is possibly caused by the issue of respectability and how they might attain that identity or attribute. This point is emphasised again when we look at the statistics which show that most participants claim to be connected with the centre of the Javanese court, which means that they still have an element of nobility. *Piyayi sepuh* is socially and culturally ideological. *Dhukun* is about a job required in order to generate money. The distinction between both is quite clear, as Mulder writes:

Mystical masters see themselves as *wong sepuh* –respected and respectable elders whose wisdom, revealed *wahyu*, and benevolent inclinations make them father-figures in relation to those who depend on their insights and advice. The source of their wisdom is with and within themselves. In this sense they are different from *dhukuns* who are basically shamans, people who go into trance, who are possessed by spirits, and who cultivate contacts with underworld of black-magical forces. This power comes from without; they do not harbour power within their own person. Besides, they exercise their craft for a fee; they are not free of *pamrih* such as the mystical teacher should be (1998, 50).

What do these findings mean? The hesitation of the practitioners to take up the terms *dhukun* and *wong pinter* may be seen as a reaction to the negative associations created by non-practitioners' typologies of their dimly perceived and understood practice. Learning from the literal meaning of a shaman, the term *wong pinter* also shares the same connotation. As both terms refer to "the one who knows", their position itself automatically puts them into a class of strangers in their own society and, thus, amplifies a sense of otherness, a sense of being another in their own habitat. However, when they are in public ministry they also clearly define that they are fully integrated

into the wider society. If practitioners fail to maintain the balance between their individuality and their social role, they will become immersed more and more in the pull toward the otherness which has caused the disappearance of shamanism in many places. Furthermore, immersion in individualism may result in the impoverishment of their social network, thus weakening their relationism, as happened in the diminishing of shamanism among the Ladakhi as theorised by Sherry B. Ortner (1995).

Nevertheless, although there is a pull towards individualism, as suggested by the first and second variables, the ideology of Javanese society itself seems to show a stronger tendency which insists that every member of society should integrate themselves more into the existing communality. It means that although practitioners of shamanism in Java show an inclination towards individualism, they are definitely under social pressure to be more relational both through being more involved in society or by joining into groups of local mysticism or more formal organisations. The current phenomena of TV shows on paranormal-related activities have re-stimulated the popularity of the practice of wongpintership. Moreover, this new development has been intensified by the fact that the media provides a place for public debate on the subject. Consequently, practitioners must equip themselves with updated explanations compatible with the demands of the modern world.

6.2 Contesting superstition, rationality, and cultural fact

As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, *wong pinters'* knowledge can include information about medicinal herbs, medical treatments, the cosmos, the nature of human beings, the world of spirits, and the animals and practical wisdoms needed to improve quality of life. One of the demands related to the practice of wongpintership is the challenge to find a bridge that helps their understanding to be accepted in the modern discipline of knowledge or how to make the practice of wongpintership acceptable from the point of view of modern rationality. That sets the parameters of its acceptability. This task includes the necessity of finding a possible explanation. Clifford Geertz has thought about the causes of *wong pinters'* marginality. As mentioned earlier, he underlines the impressions that practitioners of wongpintership are very superstitious, far from rationality and animistic (1976, 86). Implied in these impressions are accusations that their works rely on self-suggestion, that their skills are utter hocus-pocus, and that their knowledge is contrary to disciplines of science and religion. These

three challenges could become a serious threat for the practice of wongpintership unless there is an adequate response from its practitioners. If that is not possible, they should have an adequate explanation for their activities which supports their position in order to establish themselves as a definite social type. The following paragraph details some thoughts which respond to this demand and thus, will provide steps to justify this subject concerning *wong pinters* as a valid material object of science.

I propose five instruments of justification to support the premise that the practice of wongpintership and the phenomena of *wong pinter* contain the elements required to become the object of a scientific approach. Firstly, we can see the logicity of their knowledge. Knowledge can be accepted as scientific if it contains an element of traceability. Traceability relies on logicity.²⁰ Logicity is about rationality. Traceability is a matter of sense-experience and observation. Sense-experience and observation are about reality, the given fact, the way the world actually is, the basis of all knowledge. Instead of contrasting logic and a given reality, I would say that both are complementary to each other especially regarding the way they create the validity of knowledge.

In my opinion, the validity of thought is not determined by the process of how logic works in such a way that it produces an effective outcome but by the result of the outcome itself. Though a *wong pinter* may not be able to explain the logical process behind the activities and answers that he provides, I would argue that considering the effective outcomes experienced by clients, their knowledge is undoubtedly valid. The fact that their messages are effective to them shows that they manage to convey meanings. It means that the truth of the reality observed is there and understood, though it may more likely be considered a belief, a concept which may invite sceptical challenge for its susceptibility to uncertainty and fallibility. However the facticity of a widespread belief is as strong as a social fact, because it is a given reality and thus, according to Karl Manheim, is accessible to social science. The reason for this position is that belief is the essence of cultural objectification, its foundation. He states that “every cultural objectification has its manifestation. Art, religious system and philosophy are just its manifestations” (1972 [1952], 38). As these manifestations

²⁰ The first is the main concern of the rationalist and the latter of the empiricist. Both are schools of epistemology. To use A.C. Grayling’s terms, both logicity and traceability are about the ultimate source and authority of knowledge (2010, 120). Logic deals with the process of knowledge production through abstraction.

convey meaning, a belief that is at the heart of a worldview or outlook is therefore valid to be called knowledge, which in turn is an object fit for scientific study because it also conveys meaning. It is a product of an epistemological process and epistemology.

According to Geertz, a belief is also a form of cultural system (1983a, 76; 1983b, 120). The method employed here is a hermeneutic one. The knowledge of the *wong pinter* may fall into that category. To the eye of the onlooker, it is a belief. Consequently, their knowledge, as far as interpreted by bystanders (including researchers), is an interpretive one by nature. It may provoke sceptical challenges. However, knowledge always develops from scepticism, and according to the philosopher A.C. Grayling “the history of epistemology is mainly the history of responses to scepticism” (2010, 119). Epistemology has been acknowledged as a part of philosophical science as well as phenomenology. As the phenomena of *wong pinter* and the practice of wongpintership, as well as their knowledge and skills, have generated debate and scepticism, they are valid to become the material object of a scientific approach. Therefore, seen from its aspects of logicity, validity and facticity, this phenomenon is placed under categories of social fact, cultural system, and belief.

Secondly, the practice of wongpintership cannot be separated from the Javanese cosmological worldview. As I have mentioned above, all the information about *wong pinters*, their activities and services offered to their neighbours may, before the assessment of science, have been labelled as unscientific because they are already seen as a-theoretical, denoting a high degree of incredulity and a lack of empirical investigation or justification. I consider that this position is a premature assessment. So this research is not assessing participants’ everyday practices and customs whether or not they are qualified to be an object of social-science-based scrutiny. Instead, by employing opinions from several different social scientific thinkers, I will demonstrate that the idea of wongpintership and the practices of the *wong pinters* are appropriate to be an object of social science and worthy to be understood as knowledge. In the first place, I argue that their practices have a special place in, and contribution to, the discipline of social-cultural science. I also assert that wongpintership and the reality of *wong pinters* are part of a local worldview and a form of belief system. A worldview is a belief. A belief is a phenomenon. A phenomenon is an object of epistemology which is a science that generates knowledge. I shall find instruments of justification for that statement from some social and cultural scientists.

The discussion about worldview as an object of social study as well as religious study began with the dawn of social science and anthropology. Some founding fathers of social science, such as Max Scheler, Karl Manheim, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Clifford Geertz have dealt with it as a subject of social and cultural science. They demonstrate that science is not the only paradigm, the sole adequate form of knowledge, and not a superior form of knowledge. Scheler, as discussed by Paul Kescskemeti (1972 [1952]) in his introduction to Manheim's *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, has placed the idea of belief and world outlook into the arena of science and regarded them as a valid object of study for the discipline, even including magic.

Levi-Strauss states that "magic is a well-articulated mode of thought which, though complete in itself and independent of empirical knowledge, involves the same sort of mental operations as science" (Levi-Strauss cited in Worsley 1997, 122). Furthermore, Manheim stated that magic and science do not differ so much in kind. Knowledge is knowledge because of the meaning that it conveys. He wrote:

"Science a superior form of knowledge? Not at all! Science will be cultivated in societies dedicated in the first place to the manipulation and control of things. Such a society is the bourgeois capitalistic one. Societies dedicated to the pursuit of other values, especially spiritual ones, will cultivate other forms of knowledge. From the vantage point of a free disinterested meditation of things of spirits, the scientific form of knowledge appears as rather inferior though valid form" (Manheim 1972 [1952], 16-17).

This reference to Scheler's remark leads us to the discussion of *Weltanschauung*, the global outlook, which is a material object of Manheim's theory of the sociology of knowledge.

In Chapter 5 of his early work *Ideology and Utopia* (1991 [1936], 237), Manheim mentions the significance of non-theoretical conditioning factors in the production of knowledge. What he meant by non-theoretical conditioning factors are what science often ill-considers and regards as vague and relativistic because of its one-sided observations. However, they, in fact, are forms of thought (perspectives). They are the social existence that determines the forms of society. They are given realities which no theoretical account can render as a single mode of explanation. They lay outside the province of theory. *Weltanschauung* will never be theoretical by nature but is rather a-theoretical (Manheim 1972 [1952], 38-39). It does not mean that it is irrational, or removed from any rational analysis. Thus, there is the possibility of transposing it into theoretical terms through cultural objectifications and the analysis of their

manifestations. After all, the purpose of all theoretical enterprise which takes manifestations of *Weltanschauung* as an object of scrutiny is to capture the original meaning behind the *Weltanschauung*-based practices. These are what Max Weber calls ‘interpretive understandings’ or *verstehen* (Morrison 1997, 274-275), which then becomes a key concept in symbolic anthropology as applied by Geertz in *The Interpretation of Culture* (1973).

The given reality of a *Weltanschauung*, which is the formative factors of human knowledge that Manheim attempts to explain, is close to Durkheim’s concept of ‘social fact’ (Durkheim 1982, 59). They are manifested in collective representations, and recognized as collective phenomenon consisting characteristics of the common conscience (Durkheim 1997 [1933], xix & 42-43, 55; McGee and Warms 2004, 82, 89-90; Morrison 1997, 131 & 154-155). They are valid objects of social science. I will take Geertz’s theory on cultural system as an instrument of transposing the non-theoretical into theoretical wongpintership since it is integral to the local worldview.

Thirdly, approached as a form of common sense and a product of civilisation, the reality of this practice itself, to use a Geertzian term, is a cultural system. Clifford Geertz is an anthropologist who has demonstrated how cock-fighting practice is a cultural system and an interesting subject for symbolic anthropology. During his analysis of this, he was also part of the demonstration, revealing that the cock-fighting performance involves many elements of culture. He argues that a cultural system refers to particular symbols that interlink and represent different elements of culture including meanings, attitudes, abstractions from experience, emotional and intellectual creativities, concrete embodiment of ideas, judgments, and longings or beliefs (1973, 92). I believe that the practice of wongpintership can be examined under his method of analysing something as a cultural system. As far as Geertz is concerned, something can be called a cultural system when in itself it demonstrates a complex network of systematized meanings.

In *The Interpretation of Cultures* (2000 [1973]), Geertz suggests that religion and ideology can be considered to be cultural systems. The key understanding relates to the conception of culture. To him, a culture is “a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitude toward life” (Geertz 1973, 89). From this notion of

culture he derives the definition of religion as “a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, long-lasting mood and motivations in men...” (90). Furthermore, the system of symbols functions in a similar way. They are models for reality (93). Within the same interpretation, he sees ideology as having a similar nature as religion. To him ideology is an integrated and coherent system of symbols, values and beliefs. It is a system of interacting symbols and a pattern of inter-related meanings, expressed and recognized in ceremonies and the symbols of a society (207). It is a cognitive and expressive symbol-system that becomes an extrinsic source of information, an institutionalized guide for behaviour and a blueprint for the organization of social and psychological processes that shape collective conscience (216 & 218). Therefore, through the lens of ideology one can read the truth of a culture and society since it contains the collective experiences, daily realities and identities of a society, allowing it to become an open text ready to reveal its meanings.

A decade after *The Interpretation of Culture* Geertz wrote *Local Knowledge* (1983), in which he pointed out that common sense and art bore the same sign, a cultural system. The reason to assert this is that they have symbolic systems and display genres of cultural expressions. Both conceive of authoritative concepts that render them meaningful images as they contain the embodiment of someone’s self-expression, thought, values, philosophy, experience and standards of judgments (1983, 76). Common sense, according to Geertz, is a cultural form found everywhere. Everything natural, practical, thin or uninterpreted, immethodical and accessible has the potential to be part of people’s common sense. By adding “-ness” on these terms to substantiate them, they become un-standard properties which represent matters inherent in the situation. Common sense also functions as intrinsic aspect of reality which shows how the things go (85). Unlike common sense, art, with its various manifestations, including dance, music, song and its genres, paintings, poetry, prose, drama, crafts, etc., is a cultural system because it functions as means of communication, a code to be deciphered, modes of thought and idioms to be interpreted in unlimited ways (Geertz 1983, 120). Differences in the use of media to express that emotional, psychological and intellectual message are a matter of artistic preference and efficacy.

Along with common sense and art, there are science, law, ethics, mathematics, technology, myth and epistemology to consider. These are also part of humankind’s webs of significance that provide a pattern of meanings expressed in symbols and

codes. This web of significance can be attested, affirmed, expanded, formalized, reflected, even taught and manifested differently from one generation to the next. Thus, cultural system analysis can be applied to anything including our own theme of wongpintership because it has been proven in the previous chapters to be functioning as instrument to explore the Javanese world view and way of thinking, dealing with challenges within day to day life and most of all and instrument to read different aspects of the reality of Javanese society and culture. It means that wongpintership and the practices of *wong pinters* are appropriate subjects for scientific scrutiny.

Fourthly, the reality of wongpintership practice among the Javanese is appropriate for consideration as a key symbol which in turn is a valid material object of cultural study. Sherry B. Ortner (1973) proposes five indicators, each of which fits the situation faced by *wong pinters*, and underlines their status as key symbols. They are:

- (1) The natives tell us that X is culturally important.
- (2) The natives seem positively and negatively aroused about X, rather than indifferent.
- (3) X comes up in many different contexts. These contexts may be behavioural or systemic: X comes up in many different kind of action situation or conversation, or X comes up in many symbolic domains (myth, ritual, art, formal rhetoric, etc.).
- (4) There is a greater cultural elaboration surrounding X, e.g., elaboration of vocabulary, or elaboration of details of X's nature, compared with similar phenomena in the culture.
- (5) There are greater cultural restrictions surrounding X, either in sheer number of rules, or severity of sanctions regarding its misuse (Ortner 1973, 1339).

Beside many magazines dedicated to publishing narratives and television series broadcasting the practice of wongpintership and issues relevant to the reality of *wong pinter* among the Javanese, there are four published books which highlight the social, cultural, political and religious importance of these practitioners.²¹ These written sources provide information regarding how the practice of wongpintership and the reality of *wong pinters* have been seen both negatively and positively and how they engage intimately with all aspects of people's daily lives as I have mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5. Furthermore, the first points of Chapter 3 and of this chapter have also elaborated the many vocabularies and details relevant to the nature of *wong pinters*, and thus confirms the fourth indicator suggested by Ortner. On top of these, there have been legal attempts to restrict the practice of wongpintership and to make it subject to public laws (KUHP), concerning the practice of sorcery. A professor of criminology at

²¹ These four important books are: 1) *The Paranormal Directory*, published by the Indonesian National Library in 2008. This 96 page book consists of 300 remarkable *wong pinter* figures known in Indonesia; 2) *20 Provil Paranormal dan Daya Linuwihnya*; 3) *Traditional Healing Practices*, published in 1983; and 4) *Memuja Mantra*, published by University of Jember.

the University of Indonesia, Ronny Nitibaskara, as well as Herman Slaats and Karen Portier (1993, 145) exposes how the practitioners of wongpintership are easily accused as agents of witchcraft and should be protected or prosecuted under legal provisions (Nitibaskara 1993, 123). Even by fulfilling all these criteria set by Ortner, we can say that the practice of wongpintership and the reality of *wong pinter* among the Javanese are definitely a key symbol which exists in the Javanese society as a social fact.

Fifthly, it is not a superstition. Having demonstrated that the practice of wongpintership and the phenomena of *wong pinters* are in accordance with the principles of social and cultural science, therefore I underline that this practice must be revisited when it is seen as superstition, a word used to name other terms such as irrational practice, traditional worldview, inferior belief, and unofficial religious practices. However, the current study of superstition suggests that it “could constitute the subject of scholarly research” (Selberg 2003, 298). Seen from the perspectives of the various approaches mentioned above, I would say that there is a firm foundation for the practice of wongpintership to be included in the category of not being irrational. It is also qualified to be an object of scientific study. It contains an element of order and an order of something, as Levi-Strauss stated, is required by science (1995 [1979], 10-13).

To sum up this attempt to transpose the a-theoretical wongpintership and its phenomenon into a theoretical subject, I suggest that wongpintership and the practices generated from it by *wong pinters* can be seen as cultural phenomenon and practices, a form of belief, a worldview, a key symbol, a social fact, a form of common sense and a cultural system. The empirical data shows that it is practiced throughout the island. The national research on traditional healing practices conducted by fifty five researchers in 1979 under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the WHO SEARO Collaborating Centre for Research, Training and Service in Mental Health shows that there were 100,000 practitioners in 60,000 villages in Indonesia (Setyonegoro and Roan 1983, 9). Compared with the population at the time, that number is not big. However the percentage of people who have access to their services is high. Here the limitation of their numbers is overshadowed by the pervasiveness of their influence. People are familiar with the phenomenon. This research also affirms what has been figured out thirty years ago. Most questionnaire responses (94%) returned saying that participants are familiar with the term *wong pinter*. The phenomenon itself is organic and qualified to become part of people’s common sense.

Furthermore, it is a cultural system because it constitutes a web of significance and layers of understandings and meanings can be derived and explored from it.

As in the case of shamanism, when academic studies influence the conservation of shamanic practices, I see in the same way that if the academic sphere creates more space for objective research, the practice of wongpintership may neither have become an object of suspicion nor have been stereotyped to such an extent that it suffers ill-treatment. It should be seen as an integral part of the local culture and thus deserves to be systematically conserved, a process which has occurred with the Tokanoan Indian shamanism of Vaupes, Colombia given concerns to preserving a local culture by establishing shaman schools and ethno-education (Jackson 1995:305-309). In addition, the practice of shamanism in this area is welcomed politically and exists side by side with the public healthcare system (305-306).

6.3 Political factors

I have mentioned some key terms such as law, education, culture and the public healthcare system above. These are some concerns found in the domain of political affairs. As exemplified by the practices of shamanism from different societies, the rise and fall of the practice of wongpintership may also be influenced by political policy as implemented by the existing government. C.W. Watson, who studies the issue of malign magic in Indonesian literature, helps us be aware that even previously published fictional literatures on magical matters concerning witchcraft and sorcery demonstrate the influence of political representations and their context. He writes that “in many postcolonial societies the early influence of missionaries and education department officials working through government printing houses prompted writers to assume a colonial mentality in novels that are hostile to the pagan/demonic dimensions of the pre-colonial culture” (1993, 193). Hostility to magical practices is about their perceived contradiction of the idea of normality, albeit from the point of view of the established and governing political authority. Herman Slatts and Karen Portier underline that before having contact with Western culture many societies saw that the practice of magic was a normal matter (1993, 145). That hostile attitude has been manifested in two ways, by regarding its existence as an utter nonsense and by repressing it through formal legislation. The political and legal authorities mention that during the period of Dutch sovereignty, the practice and problem of magic was non-existent in Indonesian law,

although there are three indirect references in the Penal Codes (1993, 138-139).²² *Wongpintership* and its practitioners have been placed under legal supervision.

Since national independence to the present day in Indonesia, the need to include the practice of magic as a crime is felt to be more urgent although it is contrary to the principles of law which relies on a rational system and physical evidence. Despite this, the attempt to regard the practice of magic as a crime or as a category of anti-social behaviour seems to be proceeding into a further stage. Slatts and Portiers state:

There has been a tendency to take magic seriously and to treat it as an act that disrupts society, if not as a crime. This has led to a shift in the focus of attention from those who commit acts of violence against alleged witches to the “witches” themselves, along with an increasing disinclination to protect them when they are the victim of violence. There is a growing readiness among the officials of the civil administration and court to hear complaints and accusations on the subject of malign magic and witchcraft. ...It seems that the government has started the preparatory work, including the collection of ideas and approaches to future development (Slatts and Portiers 1993, 143).

Metro TV, in December 2012, broadcasted a talk show concerning a legal attempt to bring the practice of sorcery (*santet*) under the jurisdiction of state law. Claiming that the practice of *santet* is a social fact, Professor Muladi, one of the key speakers, confirmed that this plan would gain substantial support from Indonesian society because the Indonesian people, who are mostly adherents of Islam, consider this practice as against the Quran or Islamic law. Such a comment met with approval from another speaker, Professor Nitibaskara who argued that the necessity of including sorcery in the public legal system is due to the social disruption caused by the practice of magic. However, a practitioner Ki Gendheng Pamungkas suggested a different opinion as he stated that *santet* is not automatically evil since it can be used to heal many types of illnesses.

Apart from this current debate, since law and all its products are representations of a certain ideological inclination and often represent the ideology of the majority, the final decision as to whether or not sorcery and its practitioners will be subject to legal sanction will reflect the position of the state. In my opinion, the legislative and judicative body of politics should consider all possible aspects which are inherent to the

²² As quoted by Slatts and Portier, “Article 545 prohibits anyone from engaging professionally in fortune telling and explaining dream; Article 546 makes it an offense to sell or possess *jimats* or amulets and other supernatural objects or to teach magic knowledge or skills, with the suggestion that they may be carried out without fear of persecution; Article 547 bans the carrying of *jimats* when taking an oath in court” (1993, 138).

practice itself. It cannot be seen merely from the perspective of criminology because it is culturally, socially and closely related to religious practice. Here I see the necessity of increasing public awareness concerning the notion that the use of magic to inflict malicious acts on others is criminal by nature and to assist in that kind of act is to collaborate in performing a legal transgression. However, this attempt is susceptible to other possibilities such as those stated by Slatts and Portier, that legal sanction becomes “the political tool for the control and manipulation of the social order” (1993, 142). This possibility has been underlined by other anthropologists such as James Siegel and Kostas Retsikas and who have studied the 1998-1999 killing of witches in Java.

In his analysis on the killing of 120 – or 146 according to Nadhatul Ulama’s Fact Seeking Team – ‘suspected witches’ (an English term for *dhukun* or a certain type of *wong pinter*) between December 1998 and February 1999 in East Java, Siegel examines the reasons why that tragedy occurred.²³ He concludes that the killing of witches in East Java may not be explained only from the point of view that asserts that it is very much about social and economic envy, or from the point of view of the alleged sorcerers who confirm that sorcery is an answer to sorcery because sorcery is a mystical act and thus must be mystically combated (2001, 42). Instead, he suggests that it must be seen in a wider context within which that social turbulence took place. According to him, there must be an intelligent design which may be related to social forces and authorities including the army, political leaders, political organisations, religious leaders and their followers. At the heart of it all, he argues that this social turbulence signifies hierarchical uncertainty and disorder which attacked people’s social cohesion between their leaders and the people by turning their followers into an anonymous mob and by using a scapegoat strategy to incite distrust against those accused as being the agents behind the outbreak of violence for political ends (Siegel 2001, 76-77). This, therefore, affirms what Slatts and Portier have stated, in that social turbulence could be purposefully created as a political tool to control and manipulate the social order. In the case of the killing of witches in East Java, it is the government who benefits most from that chaos. The result has been that after the tragedy the people and the army were hand in hand and trust in the political apparatus increases more than in their religious leaders.

²³ In September 2009, TV-ONE tried to the cause of the Banyuwangi tragedy and found out that the *dukun santet* hunt was started after a radiogram passed by the head of Banyuwangi District, bupati Turyono Purnomosidi, which consisted of an instruction to register any *wong pinters* in the region for the sake of their own safety. However, this registration resulted in a massacre in which 147 people died (TV-ONE, September 2009).

With that, their identity is restored again from being named as a violent mob to constituting good citizens.

Although Kostas Retsikas, while stating that the killing of the *dhukun* and *kiyayis* who were allegedly practising sorcery was very much a matter of diverting public attention from current political uncertainties and the failure of the government to tackle the economic crisis, underlines that the main issue should be a concern with locating the process behind the “discursive production of meaning” embodied in the killing narratives and how rumours of horrific mass violence create social action and political change (2006, 84 & 86). He finds that the tragedy itself is no more than a mere fragment of wider and more global factors which more likely stem from a political act that “seeks to create actors or speakers who judge the use of power and control its distribution... and articulate and construct reality itself” (86).

Like Siegel, Retsikas sees the witch killing phenomenon as the excessive political manipulation by the threatened New Order regime. Seen in terms of a political manoeuvre, the existence of *dhukuns*, *kyais* and witches is less significant than that of the ongoing economic crisis and political turmoil. The killings themselves fall into the same category as the social implications of the 1998 instability that followed the end of the New Order hegemony, and it constitutes a social fact whose web of significance can be used as a political alibi. Consequently, before the political manipulation, the existence of these social types was not a significant issue although it had a certain importance in people’s lives. It means that its political significance is less valuable and thus it can be sacrificed for other things considered as more important. *Wong pinters* were an easy target of political scapegoating.

A view about the triviality of the practices of wongpintership is displayed by the Ministry of Religion. Although wongpintership is a matter of belief and its domains are categorised as a religious group, it is not treated in the same way that the government handles the mainstream religions which are under oversight of the Ministry of Religion. Instead, these traditional religious groups are placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The publication of the *Ensiklopedi Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan yang Maha Esa* (trans. “The Encyclopadia of the Local Believes in the Supreme One God”) by the General Directorate of the Belief in One God, a department in the Ministry of Education and Culture, shows that – politically speaking – these groups are seen as no more than products of local culture and must not be

acknowledged as a local religion. They are not seen as a form of religion, although they offer a system of belief. They are to be joined with one of the mainstream religions if it is found that their belief system contains references to any of them. Otherwise, they are categorised as heretic groups and thus must be closed down by force for the sake of maintaining social harmony (Subagya 1976, 120 & 122).

One of the main reasons these groups are to be supervised is that the government wants no new religion to emerge in Indonesia. For this reason, according to Mr Juanda the chief of the Inter-religious Belief Commission, the number has been reduced to 239 from around 1000 groups in 2010 (Jakarta, 8 August 2012). Dealing with these religious groups, the government finds itself in a difficult position and without a clear role. From 1985-2005 this department was titled the *Bina Hayat* department, meaning ‘Supervisor of Traditional Beliefs’. However, it has changed since 2005 into the Directorate of Traditional Beliefs with a role to facilitate existing groups to engage in dialogue and to have regular meetings. This department plays the same role as it has before, supervising, scrutinising and screening these groups and judging whether they are in accord with the national ideology or with the formally acknowledged religions. This unease reflects the ambiguous place of the beliefs themselves, as is the case with the ambiguity of the role of *wong pinters* in the political and social sphere.

Here I see that government intervention is potentially both beneficial and disastrous for the practitioners of wongpintership and for the continuity of its existence. There has been a sign of goodwill from the government toward the existing institutional domains of wongpintership that are protected by consciousness of human rights law regarding the freedom of maintaining certain religious beliefs. However, there has been an ongoing debate about what the government should do with the practitioners of wongpintership, their religious groups and activities, especially in regard to the suspicion that they introduce religious heresy, practicing witchcraft on the one hand and on the other acknowledging their positive contribution to the restoration of people’s health among other things. Seen from this political angle, the practice of wongpintership and its practitioners may have a good and respected position in both Java and Indonesia. However, this may probably not be the case if placed before the hegemony of formal religions although there is a shift of approach on the part of some mainstream religions from being merely judgemental to being more accommodative, collaborative, respectful and more balanced.

6.4 Facing religious hegemony and its doctrinal supremacy

Since its birth as a new nation in the nineteen forties, Indonesia has had to acknowledge the reality that there has been a remarkable influence of Islam throughout the archipelago. That must be considered in the process of determining what ideology this new nation should be based on because Islam has become the formal religion of those kingdoms emerging after the last Hindu monarchy, the Majapahit kingdom. The history of politics in Indonesia and its political result cannot be separated from the history of the dialogic bargain between the pull toward a national ideology, Pancasila, and that of a religious ideology, Islam. Not to make unnecessary generalisations, it should be stated that within Indonesian Islam itself there are groups with different political orientations and interests. There are at least four types: those who concerned most with the application of *syari'a* law, those who focus on the awareness of Islamic people as one *ummah*, those who concentrate more on the essence of becoming a true Muslim as a way of life rather than a religious ideology, and those who stress mysticism. I am not going to explore in a great detail any particular tendency or any Islamic-influenced political identity that has been promulgated. Instead, I would underline that there has been a constant shadow of religious hegemony cast throughout the history of Indonesia. It means that Indonesian Islam has had a long tradition of embedding Islamic values and applying them to many aspects of state affairs, including the products of law, culture and education.

Besides the dichotomy between Shia (In. *Syiah*) and Sunni streams, as commonly noted by scholars, Indonesian Islam also has two major groups, the Nadhatul Ulama (NU) and the Muhammadiyah. The first group represents a certain traditionalist perspective, because it tolerates and adopts the traditional practice of local beliefs and thus is seen as having an orthodox or conservative outlook, whereas the other is more modernist because it leaves behind totally local practices and demands a pure Islam, one based exclusively on the Quran (Azra 2003, 311).²⁴ There are also many other smaller

²⁴ The dichotomy and opposition between traditional and modernised Islam in Indonesia has been going on since their respective births in the 1920s (Wertheim 1964, 223). Although Muhammadiyah has been known as a modernist and reformist, current developments illustrate that it has become conservative, orthodox and less open minded than its Islamic counterpart. What is known as conservative and traditionalist is now acknowledged as modernist because of its modern views on Islam and its practical application in the society, which is marked with openness to multi-culturalism and religious plurality. Nadhatul Ulama is now seen as an Indonesian Islam which offers modern views on politics, religion, nationality and democracy, although not all members of the group are at the same advanced stage in their ideological

streams. They have their own Islamic ideologies. In the current context these different types of Indonesian Islam have entered into the body of Indonesian politics through Islamic parties as a result of new freedoms to establish political parties as facilitated by the reforming regime who have applied a multiparty system and due to the Islamisation of the New Order (Bertrand 2004, 83-89) or even the lifelong strife of the Islamisation of Indonesia (Wertheim 1964, 202-233). There were 48 political parties eligible to participate in the 1999 general election (Friend 2003, 407). Out of these, 20 were new Islamic-based parties which represented both dominant streams of Indonesian Islam (Azra 2000, 309-310). These numbers have been reduced to 38 parties in the 2009 general election, out of which at least ten of them were drawn from the Islamic paradigm (*Direktori Partai Politik Indonesia* 2009). Their emergence has been reflected in a greater influence over the direction of the state's policies as the state applies the representative system of democracy. How much they influence the state and how they may influence it will be determined by how long they continue to dominate the main political domains that generate those politicians who will occupy the legislative, judicative, and executive *apparati*. In relation to this research on *wong pinter* and the practice of wongpintership, the composition of votes in parliament, for example concerning the current issue of placing the alleged practice of witchcraft under a formal criminal statute, may be determined by the consent of the already Islamicized judicative and legislative assembly. If the majority of the assembly are from the modernist mainstream, the fate of the practitioners of wongpintership may be moving towards their final stage since the practice of wongpintership will be placed in the category of *syirik* and *musrik* practice according to a more puritanical version of Islam. A suggestion of this possibility, as I have also mentioned in Chapter 4, is contained in Muhammadiyah members declining to fill in the questionnaire form because they belong to the group.

Therefore, if the Muhammadiyah group is in a strong position to influence the government because most new Islam-based political parties have roots in it, the direction of legislation on many issues will involve the group's general ideological orientation. For example, in 2005 the idea of pluralism was banned by MUI, a national

beliefs. In other words, not all NU members agree with some NU scholars, such as Gus Dur, Hasyim Musyadi, Ulil Abshar Abdalla. These figures and their intellectual achievements have brought fresh air to the important issues of inter-religious dialogue and concerns regarding the national idealism which promotes the idea of the United Republic of the Indonesian State (NKRI) and the ideology of *Pancasila* over the imperative to establish an Islamic state (Azra 2000, 311; Hefner 2000, 160).

organisation which is equivalent to the National Conference of Bishops. At that time, as described by Fatimah Husein, Din Syamsudin, who was the head of the Muhammadiyah and a chair of the MUI, proclaimed that pluralism is legally forbidden for Muslims to accept (2008:vi). Although this exhortation has no legal power, its effect has been to influence the way many Indonesian Muslims think and behave toward their neighbours. The current 2012 fatwa or Islamic doctrinal exhortation passed by this formal organisation of Islamic leaders forbids a Muslim to say ‘Merry Christmas’ to Christians. These examples show how a certain type of dominating group in Indonesian Islam has shadowed the government’s political direction. Such political practice will also involve the amendment of the new law on the issue of sorcery.

Professor Muladi, the head of the 2003 KUHP planning committee, is very optimistic that this plan will be agreed by a public majority because most Indonesians are adherents of Islam and Islam believes that *santet* (witchcraft and sorcery) is performed by involving the work of Djin, and Djin is against Allah, thus any cooperation with Djin is *syirik* and *musrik*. However, his opinion was disapproved by the practitioner Ki Gendeng Pamungkas, who suggested that *santet* is not only a matter of inflicting suffering (illness and even death) upon other people but also a useful instrument to help someone to recover from any variety of ill health (Metro TV-Mata Najwa, December 2012). His opinion is in accordance with that of Hasnan Singodimayan, a culturist interviewed by TV-ONE which has tried to undercover the roots of the Banyuwangi tragedy. Hasnan said that *santet* has been an integral part of the Banyuwangi people for a long time and there has been no problem at all with the majority NU Muslim inhabitants until the outbreak of the witch hunt in 1998-1999.²⁵ According to him, people have practiced it for good purposes, such as healing, diverting the direction of rain, strengthening a dancer, easing the progress of trade, etc. and the practitioner will not do it for his/her own sake but because they have been asked to by someone in need of it (TV-ONE, September 2009). Therefore, regarding *santet* there is a clash in its interpretation between the traditional-cultural practice of local people and its religious understanding. This has been taken as a background for the on-going attempt to legislate on this cultural phenomenon. The shadow of religious hegemony,

²⁵ Later on it was found that most victims were Islamic teachers who belonged to the NU organisation. According to Dawis Utomo, the chief of the NU’s fact seeker team, nearly 80% of the victims were NU members. Despite the speculations regarding who may have initiated the massacre and what motives behind the massacre were, this clash of understanding has generated social groups of victims: the Indonesian army, prominent NU local teachers, innocent citizens.

thus, has influenced the government in terms of understanding this cultural phenomena which touches directly on the role of *wong pinters* or the practice of wongpintership.

The religious claim that a certain act is *syirik* or *musrik* is a label which carried with it certain connotations. It is intended to keep people in line with a certain morality and to ensure that they are not against Allah or befriending the Devil. The fact that a religious authority like MUI intervenes and places this label on the practice of wongpintership shows that delineating morality is in the hands of the *ulamas*. Matters about good and bad principles are determined by what they say. However, to place the practice of wongpintership in the category of morality or under the scrutiny of religious law is to oppose local values and beliefs against hegemonic and imported standards. It reflects not only how religion has become a new religious establishment outweighing the status of the locality but also demonstrates an arrogance and a lack of willingness to understand phenomenon from other perspectives. John R. Bowen, on the basis of his research on sorcery in the relatively egalitarian Muslim society of Gayo in Northern Sumatera, finds that there is another way to approach the practice of wongpintership from the perspective of Islam. Witnessing that Gayo Islamic healers and sorcerers use verses and inspiration from the Koran for their healing or attacking spells, he concludes that – according to these Gayo Islamic spirit invokers – “the Koran is the basis of all knowledge and can be used to kill or to heal, to clarify or to obscure” and thus “it is described as amoral, usable for healing and harming” (1993, 187). The Koran, therefore, is the same source of power for both acts. That position reminds him of what Benedict Anderson (1990) has said about the Javanese concept of power: “Since all power derives from a single homogenous source, power itself antecedes questions of good and evil... Power is neither legitimate nor illegitimate” (Bowen 1993, 187; Anderson 1990, 21). Based on this remark, he quotes what a Gayo Muslim said about God’s role towards mankind. He writes:

God and angels receive all requests for assistance, and thus can be called on to destroy someone and to protect him, to send a spirit to do ill and to send him back to the original source..... God and humans are seen as depending on each other. Just as humans must worship God, so [God] must receive human requests. God appears as being above good and evil. Because esoteric knowledge and ritual conduct (worship, fasting, and other observances) are knowledge of and obedience to God, they too are represented as above good and evil. Thus, sending a spirit to harm someone is not ethically wrong although it may be condemned as counter to one’s sympathies and thus socially wrong. Indeed, some spirit-caused illnesses were said to have been not only tolerated but commanded by God.... The activities of spirits are thus made to seem natural, and the activities of sorcerers but a subset of this natural order (Bowen 1993, 187&188).

To comment on the quotation above, I would maintain that the Gayo Muslim practitioners of wongpintership have interpreted the Koran in a certain way and hold firm to an esoteric concept that God as the essence of the Koran is the sole source of an effective power both to heal and to cause ill. Such a thought may match the biblical notion about who the God of Israel is, a God who protected Israel and inflicted death to the Egyptians (Ex. 12:29-34; 14:15-31), a God who saved Abraham and Lot, but burnt the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:1-29) or saved Noah's family and destroyed the rest of humanity dwelling on this earth (Gen. 7:1-8:14). Such a God is beyond the human category of good and evil, beyond the human standards of morality. As the sole source of all power, God's power itself is found in all things. According to mystic literature, Sufis and mystics believe that the essence of all things is the same (De Marquette 1949, 24 & 199; Carmody and Carmody 1996, 6). With this opinion in mind I would underline that there is another way of interpreting the Biblical or Koranic sources of authority. In the case of Indonesian Islam, Syariat-level Islam may see any matter regarding wongpintership practice differently from other groups within Indonesian Islam, such as the Tarekat-, Hakikat-, and the Makrifat-levels of believers. Consequently, to grant a certain group's demand to impose a particular interpretation as the only operational truth ignores what other groups may argue, and thus, overlooks other possibilities of truth. I acknowledge that there may be a doctrinal difficulty here.

If we base our understanding on who the practitioners of wongpintership are, we may have an alternative position, not just to condemn or demonize them. They introduce themselves as individuals whose role is to help those who ask them to. If they say that those they have helped should not thank them but rather thank whatever name they know God by, they would highlight that they are no more than just transmitters of that particular divine energy from its original source. They would only mediate this to the person who is apt to receive it. In other words, they gain their power without charge and therefore pass it to the one who deserves this and also without charge. Just like the biblical God who is good to those who are good and evil by letting the sun shine upon them without exception or sending down rain on both (Mat 6:45), these practitioners of wongpintership will be willing to help, whether the intentions of the help seekers are morally good or not. According to them, it is the help seekers who have to be morally responsible for the acts performed. Therefore they return the moral responsibility for any acts they perform to those who request their help. In Hindu terms, to help is their dharma. It means they cannot decline anyone who comes to them for help, whatever that

assistance may be. The role of these practitioners of wongpintership therefore excludes moral judgment. To them, there is no good or evil in the act of helping those who demand their assistance. Their ministry is based on prayer, a modern term for mantra. Seen from this point of view, prestige and worthwhile reputations are nothing to them. They are just human stigma and they do not need them. Such a practice is in contrast with the idea of placing things in the category of *syirik* and *musrik* or practitioner who perform any *syirik* act.

Defining *syirik* as an act which is not in accordance with the *syariat*, Musni Japrie has listed 17 types of traditional practices, including the practice of wongpintership, all of which he claims to be *syirik* by nature and that fall into a category of grievous sins because they harbour inclinations towards heresy (<http://www.novieffendi.com>, 25 February 2013). Every practice of traditional customs is *syirik*. Muhammad 'Imaduddin 'Abdulrahim defines that the word *syirik* as meaning to mix two different things thus making them as if they were one and the same thing, like blending good quality rice with bad. Its opposite is *khalasha*, 'to purify' (<http://ruangbacabuku.wordpress.com>, 25 February 2013). Syncretism, according to him, is therefore always *syirik* by nature because it defiles the practice of Islam or relegates it. Mark R. Woodward has explored the use of the word *syirik*, an act of associating other beings and powers with Allah (1989, 216). In his opinion this word has become an object of different interpretations. Different schools of Islam have offered different understandings. What Woodward has written on the subject is of relevance to this study:

Radical Sufis..., denounce the Qura'n and normative piety as being hidden shirk because they do not profess the doctrine of the unity of being. The more Sufi view is that anything that distracts attention from the quest for union with Allah is shirk, while anything that promote union is not..... The most common *kejawen* position is that any statement that does not constitute an open denunciation of Islam is not *shirk*.... When asked to explain why the veneration of saints and the mystical interpretation of the *wayang* did not constitute shirk, one *kejawen* informant replied ...that neither saints nor *wayang* characters were Allah, how could anyone possibly imagine that venerating them constituted a denial of Allah? He continued that all created things mirror some of the attributes of Allah, but the unity of Allah is the same as that of the unity of creation and that nothing can equal him. A small minority of *kejawen* mystics approach the radical Sufi interpretation, claiming that the *shari'ah*-mindedness of *santri* is shirk because it is more concerned with ritual than with Allah (Woodward 1989, 216-217).

As the lexical and semantic meaning of the word *syirik* signifies the act of putting different things together, I would claim that the labelling of things as *syirik* or

musrik to the persons performing this is no more than just an obsession to keep Islam in Indonesia pure from elements of local influences and religious practices. It is a matter of preoccupation with religious purity. I consider that this attempt is contradictory in terms of any academic study of religion which shows that every religion is syncretic by its nature (Pandian 2006, 230; Pye 1971, 84; Firth 1996, 12; Aldridge 2000, 314; Viswanathan 1996, 1-11; Eliade 1957, 220-232; Lindenfeld 2005, 2). Thus, in the case of Indonesia, the imposition of religious purity as supported politically by the state through the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education and Culture is no more than a political policy to accommodate the vehement demands of the hegemonic religious group which also intends to influence the course of politics in Indonesia. Since the awareness of people about the essence of religion or religious practice increases, they can distinguish which religious leaders' voices are to be followed and which are to be disregarded, which religious practices are superficial from the ones which offer spiritual depth. Insofar as people continue to look for deeper insights in living their religious life, the practice of wongpintership will find fertile soil.

6.5 Religious superficiality and the search for pragmatic depth

In a society where religion has concerns in the political sphere and the political realm has a matching interest in religion, the dialectic between politics and religion may, as George Moyser has concluded, result in the politicisation of religion or a religiously inflected and influencing politics. The former has been a most common development especially during the pre-modern period (Moyser 2005, 423-428). Although I have introduced this point earlier in Section 5.4.1, Needham's conception of politics as the art of maintaining and increasing life to its maximum capacity, the development of this concept shows that it has, according to A.C. Grayling (2010), become the art of the near-impossible because the preoccupation to create a better life involves the groups, communities, nations or citizens of a state. This process includes attempts to, as he has argued, decide "what to do, how things should be run, how social good should be apportioned, how relations of authority and power should be managed – including who is to have power [in its various forms²⁶], for what purposes, for how long, and to what

²⁶ Furthermore Grayling notes that "power takes a variety of forms: the power to reward and to punish, the power conferred by knowledge, expertise or talent, and by success or accomplishment; the power gained by legitimate processes which communities agree upon; the power gained by force or strength" (2010, 269).

extent” (2010, 268). When religion is highly politicised, it will give itself over to becoming a vehicle for political agents – such as political parties – to become holders of political authority, to win political power or at least to support their political endeavours in order to gaining more votes for their political intentions. Such a religion will concern itself more with the pursuit of domination and other secular matters than with spiritual experiences. The emergence of many religiously-based political parties in Indonesia is a proof of that statement. We are not going to find out how the politicisation of religion occurs. Instead, we will discuss very briefly how religion falls into superficiality and lack of spiritual depth and how this may have prompted another religious movement which is in favour of the proliferation of *wong pinters* in the Javanese society.

I consider that the way to religious superficiality begins with the politicisation of religion. A politicised religion can evolve into organisational religion and fall into religious institutionalism because politics is both organisational and institutional. In turn religious institutionalism may open up new passages. It gives way to ceremonialism or ritualism. Religious ritualism begets congregationalism. Religious congregationalism yields to doctrinarism. Religious doctrinarism leads to religious legalism because the products of religious law come after doctrine. The doctrinal truths of religion are based on the authority of the overseeing body, the hierarchy, which allegedly plays a mediatory role between God and the people by passing official doctrines. These five “isms” alienate the subjects of religion from its very essence. Yet there is no definitive definition or universally agreed concept of religion (Kellett 1933, 9), there is a fundamental element of it that is the essence of what religion is. Grayling summarises it as “a set of beliefs about a supernatural agent or agents, and a set of practices entailed by those beliefs, usually articulated as responses to the wishes or demands of the supernatural agent or agents in questions” (2010, 312). Grayling’s emphasis on the set of beliefs regarding the communicable supernatural being and believers’ practical responses implies that – in its essence – religion is a direct communication between worshipers and the worshiped. That definition is similar to Emile Durkheim’s, though the term that he uses for supernatural agents is different (Durkheim 1995[1912]: 44; Schneider 1964, 35).

The unmediated religious experience of worshipers of the sacred is also found in Mircea Eliade’s work on the *Sacred and the Profane* (1957, 116; Pals 2006, 201). Brian Morris, in his exploration of the essence of religion, seems to underline what Feuerbach

has conceptualised, that is that religion is a matter of relation between man and the “projected image of his own self” (2003[1987], 22), a term which replaces the concept of a deity and supernatural beings. However the reality of the supernatural being is conceptualised, the essential element of religion is still the same, the relation between the profane and the sacred, between the natural and supernatural, between man and god(s). It means that the depth of religious practices and virtues is based on the intimate relationship between both agents. Religion is an inter-subjective engagement. Thus, every emphasis outside this inter-subjective relation alienates these subjects from the essence of religion. Superficiality in religious practices will occur when institutions, rituals, congregation, doctrines and laws become the main preoccupation of religion. That is a thesis which has generated an antithesis. It has provoked the emergence of religious movements including the rise of mysticism.

E.E. Kellett as well as William Philip Downes writes that sacerdotalism yields to mysticism, religious institutionalism to personal religion and underlines that true worship is a matter between the individual and the deity (Kellett 1933, 36; Downes 1920, 619). Suggesting that mysticism must be distinguished from spiritualism, various brands of Occultism and forms of psychism, Jacques de Marquette remarks that “mysticism liberates theologian from the vicious circle of trying to attain knowledge of God through the use of reason... and gives man the assurance of an immediate relation to God and even of communion with his transcendent being” (1949, 18).

Niels Mulder contrasts the practice of congregational religion with the practice of mysticism like *kejawen* as “an individual endeavour that is time-consuming and self-centred” (1996, 213). Mark Woodward discusses the continuing implicit rivalry between Sufism and normative piety among the Javanese (1989, 101-115). Considering these opinions, I would say that mysticism emerges to answer the desperate demand for deeper and more intimate spiritual experience. The mystic is “an adventurer in the realm of the spirit” (Downes 1920, 624). Therefore, the search for depth in spiritual experience is based on how directly someone gains spiritual knowledge from spiritual existents, regardless of what names this spiritual realm may be known by. Here is the meeting point between the practice of mysticism and the practice of shamanism and wongpintership. What makes Javanese mysticism seem to offer religious depth is the fact that its mystical teachings touch the actual life of the locality and they are available in the vernacular language and, thus, it culturally speaks to them as knowledge for their

soul. Moreover, there is an additional value that they can pursue as most practitioners of Javanese mysticism have also the capacity to mediate the process of healing (Dipojono 1983, 255-256).

Up to this point, I would underline that the thriving of Javanese mysticism groups in the last two decades is a sign that the practice of wongpintership can maintain its continuity, even in the years to come. On the one side, they are required to respond to the current practice of religion which has placed so much emphasis on establishing institutions, gaining larger congregations, celebrating rituals, spreading religious teachings and doctrines through public campaigns or lectures, supporting religious parties and imposing the application of religious law. Instead of providing certainty, these activities leave people of religion religiously confused.

The re-emergence of mysticism amidst the current religious crisis, therefore, offers an alternative way to live a religious life, how to gain religious wisdom or knowledge and to see the reality of the world in a different mode of understanding. On the other side, they have reappeared, as happened before (Mulder 1983[1978], 8), promoting a nationalistic message to defend the unity of the nation from being savaged by religious sectarianism loaded with politically separatist tendencies. Thus they are relevant to the current political culture of the Indonesian society which still has a significant reliance on or at least shows a good will to welcome the role of the wongpintership practitioners. Thereby, the dawn of religious superficiality in its many forms has encouraged the search for deeper and more personal, direct, and intuitive spiritual knowledge which is in fact also the main characteristic of shamanism and the practice of wongpintership.

6.6 Poor accessibility to public health provision and other factors

Debates on the pros and cons of creating a new law concerning sorcery and the paranormal was broadcast on three different TV programmes, TV One (14, 24 September 2011 and 18 & 20 March 2013), Metro TV (7 December 2012 and 26 March 2013) and Kompas TV (3 March 2013), show that one of the causes why people still need the role of *wong pinters* is the low level of access to public healthcare. This implies that to be able to visit medical doctors or to go a hospital for medical treatment is only a dream for most of the inhabitants. In other words, they need *wong pinters*

mostly for health reasons (81%, see Table 2) because poverty hinders them from having medical treatment from medical doctors and access to modern medicines, as well as the fact that the public medical service system is less than adequate. This argument may be convincing enough to support those who are in favour of the *wong pinters* and believe that they have a positive role. Furthermore, some writers in *Traditional Healing Practices* (Talogo 1983, 102; Subroto, 133 & 137; Yahya, 212 & 225), argue that poverty and the inadequacy of the public healthcare system are the main reasons why people still look for help from *wong pinters* (Hull 1981, 67). However, in many cases, there are examples that even medical doctors themselves, who are symbols of modernity in Javanese society, keep going to *wong pinters* for medical treatment as do many well-to-do people especially when inexplicable health issues cannot be solved by using modern medical approaches, whereas a sense of emergency is inevitable. It may be criticised that these “modern and well off” people are just superstitious and lack of education or are unwilling to find a better way to solve the problem. I argue that it is the sense of emergency itself which develops as other ‘normal’ methods have been undertaken but have not brought good results. In the case of the proliferation of Ladakhi shamans, as discussed by Frank Kressing (2003, 13), it was modern education and Western medical influence which caused the general turn to traditional healers. It should be noted here that the health issue is only one of many other reasons that cause people to go and seek help from *wong pinters*.

It is no secret among the Javanese that students as well as lecturers go to practitioners to acquire magical charms to enhance their luck in their academic career or to gain favour from their teachers or lecturers, to win an academic promotion and to secure a position achieved, such as head of a faculty, department or even to become a rector. Robert Wessing explores how some educated people or even academic professionals at a university in East Java think that there is an urgency to utilise the expertise of *wong pinters* (1996, 273 & 276). There could be various motives why these academics take advantage of their services. Not only do human agents seek benefit from their works, but it can also involve the school as a physical building. As requested by the overseer of the school or university, there could be a certain ritual used to protect the school area from any danger or disturbances caused by spirits or by potential competitors. This can be performed by giving offerings such as the head of a water buffalo or in other forms. This ritual is done to ringfence spiritually the school or university area from any unwanted intrusions, both from men and from evil spirits.

Similar acts are done for houses, public buildings and governmental offices. Wessing makes a list of motives behind why a lecturer, student or university rector may ask for something from a *wong pinter* and then concludes that these are requested by these academics just to perpetuate their high status achievements. At the end he concludes that the practice of visiting *wong pinters* by scholars is basically to prudently anticipate others' potentially harmful actions (Wessing 1996, 279).

I should also mention here other possible factors relevant to the re-emergence or submergence of the practice of wongpintership. If we notice the scope of *wong pinters'* knowledge and skills (Table 2), the six areas and their derivatives may reflect people's areas of interest. These popular concerns have become an integral part of people's ideals, cosmology, worldview, life strategy and identity for centuries, both before and after the era of colonialism. Wongpintership and its practices are something intimate and cherished yet they are challenged by the values introduced by imported religions. Thus, in many ways, the practice of wongpintership cannot be removed by any forces, including both the political and religious authorities. Furthermore, the increasing awareness on the part of the practitioners that they are not the only ones on this globe who apply and develop such practices, as mentioned in the debate between practitioners and religious leaders (TV One, 24 December 2011), will sustain their confidence that what they are practising is not something strange in terms of the history of humanity. In that debate, Mas'ud Thoyib, the head of the FKPPAI, states that the Indonesian paranormals and alternative healers are part of global shamanism as this organisation has been invited to attend an international conference on shamanism in Germany on 10 March 2012. That information has come to their rescue and connected them with a global network. There is a growing sense of internationality among them which validates their conviction that they have the right to exist in society without being discredited by the religious or political authorities. This international movement helps them to understand their precise place in the wider constellation of their network.

Finally, looking at Table 2, with at least twenty eight common activities from six different spheres, I am convinced that there are many reasons why *wong pinters* and the practice of wongpintership will continue to exist or even to proliferate, regardless of the challenges of mainstream religion and the currently religiously-inflected political culture. If it is asked which of these will stay intact when the pressure of modernity brought about by modern culture, science and religious teachings suppresses any

practices which involve the role of spirits, I would say that each of them will remain undisturbed particularly their service of giving counsel which involves 82% of participants (see Table 2). If it is not allowed legally, practitioners will do it illegally. The reason is that they exist because they can answer the multidimensional demands of most human preoccupations in life which touch the need to sustain and deal with the management of life, the pursuit of power and life force and how to guard or to maintain these. These practitioners may have no desire to achieve power, riches or prestige, although these are what most people seek for. The most convincing answer to these demands must be based on the truths of the past as well as of the present and future. This can only be provided by existing agents who have witnessed the whole journey of humanity. In the terminology of wongpintership, this refers to spirits, supernatural agents whose age is beyond human time such as the various deities in the book of Mahabarata (Menon 2004, xi). In this context, the necessity to achieve contact with the world of spirits may find its explanation because spirits, according to *wong pinters'* worldview, live not just seventy to eighty years as in the human lifespan, but thousands of years, as frequently heard in conversations between the spirit experts and the possessed mediums as seen on all episodes of the *Dua Dunia* TV show (Trans 7). Thus, as wongpintership is an act of contacting the spirit to gain practical knowledge and the will of the spirits is different from human will, the existence of *wong pinters* is determined not by human regulations passed by either religious leaders or political authorities. The secondary agents who sustain the ministry of the *wong pinters* are the people who need their services.

6.7 Summary

This chapter began by posing the question whether *wong pinters* and the practice of wongpintership will persist in modern Java. I have explored some fundamental factors' potential either to sustain this ancient practice and cause it to flourish, or to bring it to an end. *Wong pinters* have a need for certainty in the sense of a fair social, scientific, academic, political and religious assessment that might back up their identity, place and authority. Approached from the principle of science, the practitioners and practice of wongpintership can have a clear place in academic studies and scientific research because its nature has been recognised as a cultural phenomenon. Furthermore, its particular eligibility to engage with political agents and other spheres confirms that this

practice has been an integral part of the way the Javanese express their preoccupation with looking after, maintaining, expanding, and enhancing their lives. The main objection to the practice seems to come from the mainstream religions which have influenced the way how politics in Indonesia has been carried out. However, current developments shows that more people have started to see it as an alternative way to deepen their spirituality. Besides these factors, I have demonstrated that the current context of people's poverty and poor access to public healthcare will ensure the practice of wongpintership will still have a place in Javanese society. Learning from the areas that these practitioners have been dealing with, I conclude that their presence among the people of Java will always be relevant and thus they will continue to exist.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

To recap the whole process of this study, I will delineate three points in this conclusion chapter. First of all, I am going to set forth the red thread of the entire chapters. In answer to the question what basic elements commonly come up in the study of shamanism, in Chapter 2 we discovered that the discussions on the origin of the term shaman, shifts of approaches and attitudes towards the practice of shamanism, its varieties and core, its resilience and its domestic and wider spheres of concern, are almost found in every writing on shamanism. As a consequence, the rest of the chapters explored and developed these elements. While utilising the ideas found in the first three elements of the study in shamanism mentioned above, Chapter 3 covers the existing terminological problems attached to the term *wong pinter*, the varieties of *wong pinter*, and how this phenomenon has been approached by scholars and people ascribing to different religions. Based on the similarities and differences evident in both shaman and *wong pinter*, this chapter expanded its concerns to answering whether there is any practice of shamanism in Java. From the several proposals offered a foundational theory has been established for the claim that there is indeed such a practice in Java and this practice is connected to – and taking part with – the wider practice of shamanism. These findings confirm that there is continuity and discontinuity in the practice of Javanese shamanism in respect of the shamanism widely practised in South China and Southeast Asia. Although they are different in performance and display a huge range of variations, they are the same in essence. With this finding in mind, we can advance being mindful that, as in the study of shamanism, different attitudes towards *wong pinter* have been developed because of the different approaches applied. More importantly, researchers' better understanding of shamans' preoccupation with internal concerns and services within their closed communities and significance regarding broader concerns and more established institutions have become an effective instrument through which to see *wong pinters* within the framework of their domestic world as well as their involvement in concerns that move beyond their internal matters and closed communities.

The exposition of *wong pinters'* preoccupation with their internal account and ministry for their closed communities and engagement with broader concerns and more established spheres in Chapters 4 and 5 offers insights regarding why practitioners

should redefine and re-align their social stance and why attitudes and approaches towards them also require revision. There is evidence that the roles of *wong pinters* are vocational and their significance is multidimensional. Along with the growth of social, religious, cultural and political recognition of wongpintership's practitioners, the increasing need to connect *wong pinters* with a broader network in both a national and international context confirms the fact that the term *wong pinter* itself refers to the reality of a social type existing in the society and carrying with it a certain significance. Moreover, it shows how these practitioners themselves finally discovered that there is a need to relate themselves to wider network of their consociates in order to sustain their own entity. However, the existence of ongoing pro- and contra-opinions about their role and significance underlines that doubts regarding their presence reflects both their actual contributions to their society as well as misuses and abuses among those who claim to be practitioners. Despite these drawbacks, the variety of their work and roles – which touch almost every aspect of life, including political, social, religious, economic and environmental facets – are heard more loudly than the counterproductive attitudes stemming from religious suspicions, uncertainties and doctrinal clashes, or even from a sense of religious competition. The history of shamanism itself has been marked by the same experience. This exploration of *wong pinters'* preoccupation with their internal accounts, ministry for their closed societies and engagement with the wider world highlights the fundamental necessity to redefine their social standing and develops a strategy of survival, especially given their current challenges. Nevertheless, learning from what has happened in the world of shamanism, the practice of wongpintership or Javanese shamanism, as explored in Chapter 6, will remain intact and demonstrates resilience, not only because of its relevance and multi-faceted significance to contemporary Javanese society and Indonesia and their culture, religious traditions and politics, but also because of its recent connection with international shamanism.

Secondly, I would like to highlight some important points which constitute the core of this thesis. As stated at the very beginning, this thesis is an exploration of *wong pinter*, hypothesised here as the Javanese shaman. While proving that there is shamanistic practice in Java and that *wong pinter* is Javanese shaman, this thesis argues that Javanese shaman is a social fact, a surviving cultural and religious product brought about through a long history of population migration from Indochina and through cultural evolution in Java. It is, therefore, connected in many ways to the wider practice of shamanism in Southeast Asia, even with such practices in mainland China, where the

classical shaman is known to have originated from. In its core, shamanism is a matter of acquiring practical knowledge from spirit(s) through a direct encounter and communication with them given immediate and contextual demands. On the basis of their claim to be the sole agents who have the access to and are the dependants of the spirits who are the source of that practical knowledge, shamans bear the title of ‘the one who knows’, a meaning derived literally from the etymological origin of the word. This core meaning of shamanism corresponds literally and etymologically with the operational definition of who a *wong pinter* is. Someone is entitled a *wong pinter* because he or she has a unique and practical knowledge generated through shamanistic acts, acquired through communication with the spirit(s). They are knowledgeable persons whose unique, wise and practical knowledge is gained, not from reading books or other written sources, but from direct or indirect communication with spirits through mystical process, revelation, and utterances of the spirits when they are in contact with (or contacted by) them. The connection between shaman and *wong pinter*, including its varieties, is underlined by their resemblance to each other in terms of their roles, significance and literal meaning because both, connotatively and denotatively, mean the same thing, ‘the one who knows’.

Once we know the substance, we can separate it from what is accidental and contingent in both practices. The communication with the spirit is the essence of a shaman’s shamanic activity, whereas dancing, drumming, particular clothing, chanting, hallucinogenic smoking, soul traveling, dominating or being dominated by the spirit and other practices are just technical aspects, and thus are also accidental, contingent and insubstantial or not automatically necessary. There is no single and universal technique in shamanism. Even in a given region, drumming may be required but it is not in others. It means that a shaman does not have to apply the material cultures of shamanism found in Siberia, its *locus classicus*. A shaman is a shaman because of his or her communication with the spirit(s), who are everywhere and can be invoked to reveal the required knowledge. On the basis of a certain cosmological worldview, *wong pinter*, the Javanese shaman, develops certain techniques of having an instant contact with the required spirits through the using of heirlooms, magical stones and other instruments which have become the domains of the helping spirits. Their shamanic practice is placed in a wider context of participating in the kingly ideal to enhance the beauty of the world (*mangayu hayuning bawana*), an ideology which includes various activities touching all elements of human preoccupations with maintaining and enhancing life. They show a

strong attachment to the Javanese court and they tend to identify themselves socially as servants of the kings and ministers of nationalistic leaders. Therefore they are supporters of the nationalist movement and aristocratic in terms of their social awareness. Considering the above findings, Javanese shamanism is definitely part of worldwide shamanism because it shows continuity in terms of its essence. There is connectivity between both in many ways. The discontinuity is very much to do with the changeable aspects of shamanism, that is that its material culture in Java and other Southeast Asian societies is adapted, assimilated or ad-culturised to and challenged by local values which regard subtlety as more civilised and dignified. It has been developed and traditionalised differently. Javanese shamanism, therefore, can be studied by using approaches employed in studying shamanism worldwide.

To study Javanese shamanism is to examine *wong pinters* with their various names. This social type, as in the world of shamanism, demonstrates varieties ranging from the *acquisita* (learned) and *infusa* (given) types of *wong pinter* to a *mixta* one, meaning a combination of both types of *wong pinters*. It has domains for the reproduction of *wong pinters*, including family, mystic groups, *pesantren* (Islamic religious boarding schools), and martial art clubs (*perguruan silat*). Whatever domains they belong to, the outcome is the same. Their expertise is to communicate with the spirits and is used mainly to help those in need. As different people come to them with different predicaments, different *wong pinter* have different experiences, skills, knowledge and levels of mastery. In terms of those who benefit from their expertise, every *wong pinter* is differently experienced. For this reason, the varieties of *wong pinter* need to be explained. Their many names – as attributed by their users – have contributed to the creation of different titles. This variety in terms of title has been read by practitioners as an opportunity to communicate with one another. Corresponding with the current trend to amalgamate themselves with other practitioners in any form of organisation, this differentiation has promoted a sense of hierarchy among them. However, this does not mean that there is no specialisation. This development strengthens their position in society as a distinct social type and even increases their social prestige and confidence in dealing with various challenges, including the invitation to become involved in public debates against various religious authorities.

During the last four years, the phenomena of *wong pinters* has become a subject in the public discourse, beginning with the reopening of the Banyuwangi case involving

the massacre of practitioners, the attempt to create a networked global shamanism, and the emergence of the phenomenal young Ponari from Jombang-East Java whose magical stones are believed by thousands of sick people to be able to bring healing. In addition there is also the most recent affair, Suburgate, namely the October 2013 mystery of Bunda Putri (a female *wong pinter*) in a national issue of corruption allegedly involving prominent figures of the winning political party. These happenings have returned public attention to the *wong pinter* phenomena and the practice of wongpintership, especially as related to cases of *santet* or bewitchment, sorcery and witchcraft. Thus, the current state of the *wong pinter* and the practice of wongpintership shows that its practice and phenomenon are still a living history in Javanese society. Their significance, whether negatively or positively understood, has been publicly revealed by these affairs as well as by the mushrooming trend to employ them in television programmes and the entertainment business. This social type exists among the Javanese and it is thriving and flourishing. From an academic point of view it is important to see this as a distinct social type and to strip away suspicion. It is necessary to distinguish between the practice of wongpintership as a vocational existence and as assisting the criminal agents of sorcery. Being a *wong pinter* is a matter of welcoming the will of spirits who have concerns with human affairs, and no one can stop this social type continuing to exist and being reproduced, not even religious authorities. The current attempt to criminalise their services and to place them under the oversight of criminal law is utterly mistaken because their role is merely to minister to everyone who comes to them for help, and whether what they ask for is morally correct or not is a different issue. Their task is to pray for the help of the spirit, including God's. For them the operational principle is that if the person who comes to them deserves to get his or her due, what he or she wants will be fulfilled. The moral responsibility is absolutely in the users' hands, not in those of the practitioner.

Although many practitioners belong to mainstream religions, the practice of wongpintership is always scrutinised and categorised as being contrary to the discipline and tenets of religious faith. However, within the mainstream religions themselves, there is no single opinion about it. While some perspectives argue that wongpintership is a product of the power of evil, others maintain that it is God's gift to be utilised in order to serve God's people. In Indonesian Islam, which is basically divided into two groups *abangan* (non-puritan and more cultural), and *santri* (puritan) or *Nadhatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah*, the voice of shamanism and the practice of wongpintership

is welcome by one group but rejected by other. In Christianity, while there have been churches who welcome practitioners of wongpintership, other denominations definitely ban it. In the Catholic Church, two dioceses, those of Semarang and Purwokerto in Central Java, have provided a place for practitioners who have joined the relatively new mysticism movement the *Kebatinan Katolik*, Catholic mysticism. I consider that the problem with religious practitioners is more to do with religious authority and supremacy in terms of textual interpretation and authority. The disagreement within these religions regarding the matter of wongpintership is therefore a question of differing interpretations toward religious values and scriptural text. The decision is very much a matter of regarding which group is to be more powerful. The answer is the one which has an intimate relation with the governing political establishments in the society. This religious group's rejection of other practitioners of religion is amplified by its political voice. From my point of view, the feud between the practitioners of puritan Islam and the practitioners of wongpintership, who tend to show the spirit of Sufism, is basically a feud between locality and internationality. Most people on the island of Java still regard that whatever originates from abroad is superior to what exists in the locality. However, mainstream religions which respect and appreciate local religious values and practices provide a special place for the practitioners of wongpintership. They discover that this particular social type contributes to its community a distinct way of living out spiritual life in terms of its depth. It means that they recognise the specific contribution of these practitioners in the construction of a mature understanding about the practice of spiritual life through their worldview and inclusive services to those in need, although doctrinally they tend to welcome any insights from different religions and can be easily accused as syncretic. However, to be syncretic is seen as a virtue.

Thirdly, as viewed from the last paragraph, this research on *wong pinter* and the practice of wongpintership contributes practically to three areas of knowledge: the promotion of religious harmony, anthropology of shamanism in Java and religious studies. In regard to the contribution to the promotion of religious harmony, this project has established that *wong pinters* offer deeper religious understandings about spiritual life than most religious leaders can offer. The practitioners of wongpintership may not be so organisational-religion oriented. This position does not mean that they are anti-established religion or relativize the importance of organisation. The challenge they pose to the religious establishment is concerned more with the expression of religious arrogance. Most *wong pinters* who join with mystic groups, such as MSC, look for what

may unite people and enhance the creation of society into a better place to live, not what separates or leads people and society into conflict. For this reason, the books published by individual *wong pinters* sound strongly the voice of theosophy and religious mysticism. They are eager to find simple truths offered by different religions, and to synthesise and affirm the common truth voiced by each religion. While they try to find the spirit of each religion, they do not bother themselves with textual interpretations. Revelational truth is not monopolised by the religious scholar or religious leader. It is revealed by the owner of the words whose names can be many but in actual fact refers only to one being. These practitioners, thus, trace divine truth both in religions and other religious practices while they develop certain skills to communicate with the world of spirits.

As for the contribution to the discipline of religious studies, this research on *wong pinters* may help those who are interested in understanding religion to trace its roots, to find the essence of religion in its preliminary form. In a society like Java, where religious identity is seen more as an ideological grouping which demands new supporters, the essence of religion seems to be missed because it is covered by the strife that this generates. In the context of the current awareness about what religion may mean, I would affirm that religion is religion because it is an organisation, whether internationally organised or just locally based. It serves a certain ideology. It does not always deal with spiritual life and matter and thus religion is not always religious. Whereas living in the spirit, a kind of life introduced by the practitioners and mystics is religious and it surpasses the boundaries of organisational religion. Therefore, this research could contribute to the discipline of religious study since it explores practitioners of religion in their locality and in its elementary form which deals more with the mysterious and supernatural, the spirits or spiritual beings, as Emile Durkheim envisaged in his book *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1995 [1912], 27). I confirm that this discipline of knowledge has not been well developed in Indonesia, although it is known to be a country which directs its people to become adherents of politically recognised and understood religions. The using of anthropological and ethnographical approaches during the data collection and their management, which also employing phenomenological and hermeneutical technics to understand the matter and generate the web of knowledge from them, places this academic work as a seminal work for anthropology of shamanism in Java.

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D. Interviews

	Interviewee(s)	Date	Place
1.	Handoko,	12 th January 2011	Bintaro-South Jakarta
2.	Manto Wiyono	12 th February 2011	Klaten-Central Java
3.	Marsono	15 th February 2011	Ngaglik-Jogjakarta
4.	Agustinus Supanto	16 th February 2011	Ndero-Pakem, Central Java
5.	Guno	23 rd February	Jogjakarta
6.	Hariadi Usman	29 th September 2010	Bintaro-South Jakarta
7.	Mr. and Mrs. Tamtu	24 th October 2010	Sleman-Jogjakarta
8.	Handaka	12 th January 2011	Bintaro-South Jakarta
9.	Kasiran	7 th February 2011	Ndodhe-Magelang
10.	Mrs. and Mr. Tamtu	24 th October 2010	Sleman-Jogjakarta
11.	Riyanto	3 rd January 2011	Lawang-Malang-East Java
12.	Eddy	8 th February 2011	Nepen-Central Java
13.	Guno	23 rd February 2011	Jogjakarta
14.	Soedjarwadi	26 th September 2010	Jember-East Java
15.	Krisnadi	26 th September 2010	Jember-East Java
16.	Joko Kijeng	26 th January 2011	West Jakarta
17.	Hardjana	9 th August 2009	Bintaro-Jakarta
18.	Dr. Budiarto and wife	18 th January 2011	West Jakarta
19.	Mustafa and Mukhlas	8-10 th October 2010	Gresik-East Java
20.	Wihby-Eko,	7 th August 2009	Ci Batu Belah-Purwakarta,
21.	Wihby	7 th August 2009	Ci Batu Belah,
22.	Hamid	2 nd January 2011	Batu-Malang
23.	Hamid	1 st January 2011	Ngrejo-Malang
24.	Hamid	19 th February 2011	Pingit-Temanggung
25.	Hamid	14 th September 2009	Bedono-Ambarawa,
26.	Mbah Buddho	12 th October 2010	Josari-Bedono,
27.	Eddy	8 th February 2011	Nepen-Central Java
28.	Juanda,	8 th August 2012	Jakarta
29.	Soedjarwadi	8 th December 2010	Jember

	Interviewee(s)	Date	Place
30.	Sutiman,	28 th September 2010	Probolinggo,
31.	Mrs. and Mr Tamtu	28 th October 2010	Kuncen-Yogyakarta,
32.	Ki Anom,	11 th September 2009	Bintaro-Jakarta,
33.	Ki Joko Kijeng,	17 th January 2010	Jakarta,
		26 th January 2011	West Jakarta
34.	Bambang and Kis,	20 th January 2009	Jakarta,
35.	Encek,	3 rd August 2009	Ci Batu Belah,
36.	Gianto	14 th September 2009	Bedono-Ambarawa,
37.	Salim	7 th July 2009	Jakarta
38.	Sudiono-Maria	17 th September 2009	Banyu Biru-Ambarawa
39.	Wahyudi	23 rd August 2009	Kudus
40.	Pringgo	6 th February 2011	Seketi-Central Java

Appendix 1

Structured-Interview to Practitioners

A. Understanding about who a wong pinter is

1. Is the attribute “*wong pinter*” (*WP*) familiar to you and to Javanese people?
2. Who is a *WP*? Is it a term given by those who need him/her? Will the educated, politicians and religious practitioners claim themselves as such?
3. What may make someone be called a *WP*? Is it their conceptual presentations that they produce or are there other reasons?
4. Is there any other connotation about the term “*WP*”?
5. Who may be associated as a *WP*? Can the Javanese folk healers (*dukuns*) or anyone with mystical knowledge be called with that term?

B. On Becoming a *Wong Pinter*

I assume that the answer for number 5 question may be close to the idea that a *WP* is someone granted with mystical knowledge gained not from school but mystical sources. They make themselves known to the chosen individual(s) and not to others. These could be knowledge about medicinal herbs, technics of medical treatment, knowledge and skill of knowing and finding the lost stuff and the direction where a thief run away after stealing, of finding the genetical link with the ancestors, ways to know things going to happen etc. Based on these assumptions, I propose these questions:

1. Is the term “*WP*” a static or dinamic one?
2. How do someone become a *WP*? Is there any special school for that? Is it achieved from a private mentor?
3. Is the term itself referring to mastery in spiritual life or something that is more technical like common skill of finding water?
4. What may make someone posses the acapability to be called a *WP*? Is it because there is an element of divine infusion or because of determined to become as

such by the will of spirits including God? Is his/her secret knowledge about the skill coming from secret books? Are his/her secret knowledge and skills fruits of a search for knowing oneself better or of a struggle to find answers for fundamental questions like the meaning of life and death, of being healthy or sick, the meaning of human existence in this world, the search for God, his truth and power and the search for an understanding of someone's mission in this world (why am I here for?)

5. What may become the most determining factor to become a *WP*? Is it the quality of his/her intellect? Is it that mystical ability? Is that mystical knowledge hereditary?
6. Can the knowledge to become a *WP* be learnt, systematised in a curriculum or made as a subject of study in university level of study?
7. Is the state of being a *WP* more a given fact or always in the process of becoming?
8. Is it possible for someone (socially, academically) "lacking of brain" become a *WP*?
9. Where does the knowledge of the *WP* come from?

C. The Wong Pinter dan Their Significant Roles

In my assumption, the conclusion raised from the answers of the B's questions should be: "a *WP* is someone who can do anything even without preparation, always be able to find a way out for any anxieties and problems brought to him/her to solve".

1. What may become the concerns of the *WP*?
2. Is society which needs the *WP* or is it they themselves who need society?
3. Is "*WP*" a profesional or functional tittle?
4. What is really sought for by a *WP*? Is it social status, wealth, prestige? What is their contribution to society? Example.
5. What the contribution of *WP* to religion? Example

6. What is the contribution of *WP* in the world of politics? Example
7. What is *WP*'s contribution to people's economic development? Example
8. Do the *WP* have a certain role in the creation of the local culture? Example
9. Do the *WP* play a role in the conservation of local culture and custom?
10. Are the *WP* descendants of the ancestors who have created the local custom?
11. Are the *WP* guardians of the cultural inheritance that belongs to the local society or its owner or creator (in this context what I mean is the court family)?
12. Whom do the *WP* dedicate their life to? Whom do they serve?
13. Is the *WP* independent, not a subject of anyone including of the government?
14. What may become the primary concern of the *WP*?
15. Can a *WP* be called a prophet for his/her time and society?
16. Do the *WP* care for the harmony in their society?

D. Wong Pinter dan Ngelmu, the state of having a complete knowledge

Someone may be called a *WP* because of having practical knowledge. As the content of knowledge can be anything, there can be varieties of the *WP*. It means that each has speciality and specialisation. Everyone who gets the knowledge is a bearer of knowledge and thus could be called a *WP* too.

1. Are the *WP* another name for the wise men/women?
2. Where do the wisdoms of the *WP* come from?
3. There is a saying: *Ngelmu kalakone kanthi laku*, mastering knowledge finds its completion by doing. Is the becoming of *WP* a result of experience of life?
4. Should a *WP* be a member of traditional religious group called the *Penghayat*?
5. Are the *WP* and experts of Javanese mysticism (*kebatinan*) the same things?
6. Are there any tricks of acquiring the knowledge needed to be called a *WP*?

7. Are there any steps in the process of *ngelmu* or carrying out spiritual journey?
8. Are there any particular rituals to enter the world of the *ngelmu* persons?
9. Is the way of *ngelmu* uniform?
10. Allegedly, someone who will undertake the way of *ngelmu* has to be in contact with the ancestors and their spirits. To what extent is this statement true or not true?
11. Why does Central Java become the *locus classicus* to become a *WP*?
12. Can *ngelmu* be bought?
13. Is there any shortcut to become a *wong pinter* or a *ngelmu* person?

E. *Wong Pinter* and the content of their knowledge

This part is related with the idea of the *WP* as masters of spirits or someone who has the access to the world of spirits.

1. Is (are) there other world(s) besides human world? Can a *WP* see that there is (are) other world(s) outside the world of human being which dwell in this same earth?
2. Is it true that, according to the theosophic and sufistic literature, this world actually consists the unseen and the seen world?
3. It is said that the world has layers. There is “*alam Hahut* (the Unmanifest Absolute), the *alam Lahut* (the world of gods), the *Alam Jabarut* (the world of spirits including the spirit of the dead or *arwah*), the *Alam Malakut* (the world of angels), the *Alam Nakut* (physical world). Can the inhabitants of the world of spirits be seen, intruded, involved in the world of human being?
4. Does the world of spirits have ethnicities, social structure in themselves?
5. Does the world of spirits have a relationship with the world of human being?
6. Does the world of spirits have law, logic, order of governance or a belief system?

7. Can the world of spirits be invited to involve the business of the seen world?
8. Can the world of spirits express feelings like hatred, disappointment, anger, revenge?
9. Are the *WP* called as such for their expertise in communicating with the spirits?
10. Are spirits useful for the *WPs*?
11. Is it the spirit that makes someone a *WP*?
12. Are you familiar with these terms: *merkayangan*, *dunia lelembut* (tiny-winy being), *dunia dedemit* (the haunting creatures), and other terms related to the world of spirits?
13. Is it true that spirit is just energy, as normally said by the paranormals?
14. Can spirits dwell in material beings as well as in plants or animal?
15. Can spirits be invoked to come? Can they be asked to go away?
16. Can the spirit intervene the world of human being? How? Why?
17. Can spirits be materialised for example in the form of *kerises* or other heirlooms?
18. Why is a *keris* called a powerful weapon (*sakti*)?
19. Why can a *keris* be materialised from its unseen form? What does *menayuh* mean?
20. Before taking its material form, what is its reality?
21. Why are the *WP* associated with those who have the capability to control the heirlooms and even to ask the to take form in their material form?
22. What is a heirloom? What do make something heirloom? How is a *pusaka* made?

F. **Wong Pinter dan terminology**

1. Are the *WP* the same as the *dukuns*? What is the difference?

2. Are the *WP* and paranormal, wise men the same? Why?
3. Are the *WP* always male of forty years old or above? Why?
4. Are the *WP* and the *guru*, the *pandita*, *bhagawan*, and *empu* the same thing? Why?
5. Are the *WP* always a spiritualist or spirit expert?
6. Are you familiar with terms shaman, shamanism?
7. Do the *WP* look for money using their speciality? Why?
8. Are the *WP* automatically a mystic or *sufi* or a master of *tasawuf*?

G. Wong Pinter and Ritual

1. Does a *WP* conduct a ritual? What sort of ritual and why?
2. Why do the *WP* concern to conserve the culture transmitted by the ancestors?
3. Why do the *WP* tend to have many kerises and other heirlooms?
4. Is it that pusakas which make a *WP* perfect in its destined mission in accordance to the characteristic of the heirloom that he/she owns?
5. Could you give example of rituals conducted by a *WP*?
6. Why do the *WP* need to do a *nyadran* or tomb visit?
7. Why is in the ritual of materialising the potential *pusakas* a perfume (or sometimes insence, flowers, frankescence) needed?
8. Why do the *WP* respect the ritual of *slametan* with all its intentions including for cleansing a village, house, and to give offering to a particular unseen being?
9. Why do the way of putting things for orffering have to be observed?
10. Why is a *slametan* important?
11. Can a *slametan* be used to hold reconciliation with inhabitants of the spirit world?

12. Do you have information about ritual that need to be added in this list of questions?

H. Please add any information or comments if you need to do so.

Appendix 2

Questionnaire for non-practitioners

Introduction

First of all, let me introduce myself to you. I am Agustinus Sutiono, a student at York St John University, United Kingdom. I have just started my research programme at that university since 1st October 2009. This will end by 2013.

I would invite you to participate in this research on a topic regarding the roles and significance of *wong pinter* by filling this questionnaire. Its aim is to ensure that the phenomena of *wong pinter* is not a myth among the Javanese society and people.

This questionnaire is open to everyone of any religious denominations.

Once you have finished it, could you please send it back to my email address: agustinus_sutiono@yahoo.com. All your contribution is appreciated.

Agustinus Sutiono

York St John University

Lord Major's Walk

York YO31 7EX

York, United Kingdom

Your age : Gender:.....

Job :

Note: If you think you do not know, please answer the question with “No”

A. Familiarity with the term “*Wong Pinter (WP)*”

1. Are you familiar with this term, “*WP*”?
2. What may spontaneously come up in your mind when you heard that term?
3. What do you know about a *WP*?
4. What sort of profession that may be associated with that term do you know?
5. Have you had a personal encounter of meeting with a *WP*?
6. How can you get the term *WP* from?

B. The nature of a *WP*

1. Personally, according to your opinion, who is a *WP*?
2. Is he/she the same person with the one called a *dukun*?
3. What may distinguish a wong pinter from a *dukun*?
4. Is a *WP* dagerous to the society?
5. Does a *WP* have a good and useful contribution to the society?
6. Does a *WP* become friend for his/her society?
7. Are *WP* more likely to be welcome or avoided by his/her society?
8. Why is this personality called a *WP*?
9. What may become the main role of a *WP*?
10. What sort of areas that a wong pinter may involve in?

C. *Wong Pinter's social reputation*

1. Is it true that a *WP* tends to have a bad (or good) reputation in the society?
2. Do you think that everyone in the society avoids them; or just only some of them?
3. Which part of society that you know do deny the existence of the *WP*?
4. If the *WP* gain esteem, which part of society do think positively about the *WP*?
5. What may make a *WP* be seen as good?
6. Do you think that a *WP* should exist in society?
7. If the existence of the *WP* is suggested to be avoided by a certain element of society, what kind of argument may they have?

D. *The Skill of the wong pinter*

1. What may you think to be the primary skill of the *WP*?
2. According to you, where do the skill of the *WP* come from?
3. Do you think that a *WP* really has a proper knowledge relevant to his/her skill?
4. Where do you think a *WP* get his/her knowledge from?
5. Is the *WP's* skill making sense when thought using a common way of thinking?
6. Is the knowledge that a *WP* has possible to be approached using science?
7. What is unique about the knowledge of a *WP*?
8. Do you think that the knowledge of a *WP* generated from a book?
9. Is there any handbook or manual about *WP's* knowledge?
10. Is the skill that a *WP* has a result of a training?

E. *How to become a wong pinter*

1. Is a hereditary or genetical factor that make someone a *WP*?

2. Do you hear any stories about how to become a *WP*?
3. Is there any formal school for being a *WP*?
4. Is there any special training to become a *WP*?
5. Do you know how to become a person called as a *WP*? Explain!
6. Can a *WP* loose his/her skill? Do you think that he/she may become a *WP* for ever?
7. What may become conditions needed to be a *WP*?
8. Have you heard about “a-suddenly-made-folk healer” or *dukun tiban*? Explain!
9. Does “*WP*” refer to a type of profession or just a function in the society?

F. The area of *WP*'s involvement

1. Who may benefit from the role and existence of the *WP*?
2. Does a *WP* have any involvement in the world of politics? Explain!
3. Does a *WP* have any involvement in state matters? Please explain!
4. Does a *WP* have an involvement in the world of religion? Explain!
5. Does a *WP* have any involvement in the local culture? Explain!
6. Does a *WP* have any role in the promotion of health in society? Explain!
7. Is a *WP* involved in the conservation of environment? Explain!
8. Does a *WP* have contributions in the economy of the people/ society?
9. Does a *WP* have any contribution in promoting the science of diagnose?
10. Can a *WP* predict the future? Can their prediction be wrong?

G. *Wong Pinter*, Ritual and Mythology

1. Is it true that a *WP* is associated with experts of spirits?
2. Is a *WP* regarded as the one who create norms and *adat* values in the society?

3. Is a *WP* an agent who does care for the local folklores and wisdoms?
4. Does a *WP* become advisors of the persons holding the VIP label?
5. Does a *WP* have the capability of communicating with the world of spirits?
6. Does a *WP* necessarily have heirlooms?
7. Can a *WP* know something or situation that exist or happen in far distance?
8. Are *WPs* experts or specialists in (performing) rituals?
9. Is employing rituals necessary for the *WP*?
10. Do you think that their existence, knowledge, skill and role are reality or a myth?

H. Please add any information or comments if you need to do so.