

Transformation of Ramayana Story Mandates in Indonesia-Thailand Tourism Performance Art

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The background of this research is to answer the hesitance on moral messages in tourism performance art. Moral messages in tourism performance art that plays Ramayana story are then analyzed. Ramayana story is presented as tourism performance art in Indonesia and Thailand. In the beginning, Ramayana story is functioned to guide the audiences to learn about moral ethics from the character, structure, and appearance of the presentation. Ramayana story is now presented mostly for tourism entertainment but Educative Mandate of the story is still conserved. The design of this research is qualitative descriptive with functional approach. Data collection method involves interview and observation. Key informants are dancer, musician, tourism performance organizer, and art teacher in art school that represent Indonesia and Thailand. Observation was conducted on the centers of tourism performance art in Yogyakarta and Badung, Indonesia and also in Bangkok, Thailand. The results of research showed that (1) Mandate of Morality in Romance refers to the moral values in the romance life of the characters in Ramayana story; (2) Mandate of Woman Paragon considers woman as both strength and weakness of man; and (3) Mandate of Causal Law emphasizes that the wrong is lost and the right is won.

Transformasi Amanat Lakon Ramayana dalam Seni Pertunjukan Wisata Indonesia –Thailand

Penelitian ini didasari atas keraguan adanya pesan moral dari seni pertunjukan wisata, oleh karena itu dilakukan analisis tentang pesan moral seni pertunjukan wisata berlakon Ramayana di dua negara, yaitu Indonesia dan Thailand. Memperhatikan perkembangan seni wisata di Indonesia dan Thailand terus dikembangkan, salah satunya adalah lakon Ramayana. Pada mulanya lakon Ramayana, difungsikan sebagai baca untuk mengenal etika moral melalui tokoh, struktur, atau tampilan sebagai seni yang bersifat tuntunan, hingga kini telah berkembang sebagai tontonan untuk menghibur wisatawan. Amanat Pendidikan dalam seni wisata tentunya masih diperlukan, amanat apa yang dibutuhkan dalam penyajian seni wisata itu. Rancangan penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan pendekatan fungsional. Metode pengumpulan data berupa wawancara, dengan narasumber kunci yang terdiri dari penari, pemusik, pengelola pertunjukan wisata, dan pengajar seni di perguruan tinggi seni di Indonesia dan Thailand. Selain dari pada itu juga dilakukan observasi ke pusat seni pertunjukan wisata di Yogyakarta, Badung, dan Bangkok Thailand. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya pesan moral, (1) amanat berupa pesan moral kisah asmara (romantik), (2) amanat keteladanan wanita sebagai kekuatan laki-laki dan sekaligus kelemahannya, (3) amanat tentang hukum sebab akibat, yang bersalah pasti kalah, dan yang benar pasti akan jaya.

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INTRODUCTION

A two-year research (2019-2020) was underlain by the hesitance regarding moral messages implied in the tourism performance art. In the period of this research, the authors visited and watched *Ramayana Ballet* on Prambanan Open Stage just like what the tourists do during vacation at the entertainment resort.

Ramayana story has been played on Prambanan Open Stage since 1961 ([Ruastiti 2010](#)) and even now that story becomes the iconic event that is always optional for the tourism journey in Candi Prambanan. Ramayana story is a quite popular in Southeast Asia, mainly in Indonesia and Thailand ([Hidajat 2019](#)). The repertory of Ramayana story have been presented since 4th century ([Hakim 2014](#)). The arrival of Ramayana story at the ancient Indonesia was initially introduced by priests (from Brahmana class) who were sent to Indonesia to teach moral ethics for the Javanese aristocrat families. After making a scrutiny, the authors believe that the presentation of Ramayana repertory on Prambanan Open Stage is almost similar to the presentation of *Wayang Orang Sriwedari* in Surakarta or the annually held Ramayana Festival in Yogyakarta.

Nowadays, Ramayana Ballet in Prambanan has been organized as a tourism attraction. The choreographers of tourism performance art are no longer thinking about entertaining the officials and elites in royal court. The early function of Ramayana story was indeed to deliver moral guidance to the aristocrats, the gentries and the wealthies, who mostly have a power over regional trade ([Mulyono 2012](#)). In current days, the tourism art choreographers are usually the practical art workers who decide to isolate themselves from contemporary performance art. On the other hand, many Indian artists have produced many creations in the realm of contemporary performance art ([Smith and Foley 2018](#)).

The authors attempt to observe the presentation of Ramayana story in Bali. Performance art has become tourism industry in Bali since 1970s ([Desak, Putu, and Komang 2017](#)). The behavior of visitors who watch Kecak Ramayana in Pura Uluwatu, Badung, Bali, was analyzed. Kecak Ramayana was often held during sunset by intention to obtain the natural-based spectacular moment. The attractiveness of Pura Uluwatu and the nearby slope allows the visitors to enjoy dramatic sensation while watching Kecak Ramayana. Originally, the priests disseminate Ramayana story through verbal tradition ([Saputra 2019](#)), or precisely by narrating

the story as imaginative event. Such storytelling has successfully drawn attention from the strong listeners.

On the other hand, the tradition of Ramayana story in Thailand began from Thai people who reside at the bank of Chao Phraya River. As the main water stream in Thailand, this river has 372 kilometers length. The residence of these people continues to develop and pervades all over Thailand ([Yodsurang and Yasufumi 2015](#)).

In the beginning of the century, there was a residence alongside Chao Phraya River which is dwelled by various ethnics. Thai people came later after this first dweller and added new ethnicity to the existing multiculturalism. The riverbank dweller professed Buddhism as their religion. When the civilization grew, Thai people established their government center in Ayutthaya ([Kä and Staatstheater 2011](#)). The City of Ayutthaya is then becoming the origin of royal dynasty where the king is given a title "Rama". The adoption of Ramayana story, which is actually from India, as an inspiration of city architecture has made Ayutthaya to be recognized as the first city in the world that glorifies Ramayana story. All elements that constitute Ayutthaya, including the natives, localities, and legends, are linked closely to the virtue of Ramayana story.

Two countries in Southeast Asia, namely Indonesia and Thailand, already experience what so called "Indianization" because these two countries prominently implement Ramayana story as the base of moral ethics to their people ([Das 2020](#)). The difference between both countries is that the acculturation of Indian culture to Indonesia is through different path, precisely using the path of the sea. Some individuals were sent directly from India to Indonesia, including the Brahmana priests to teach moral ethics of Indian culture ([Lochan 2005](#)). The ancient Indonesian people gave huge respect to the outsider who have knowledge and understanding on the spirituality, which in this case is the priests from India. Such fanaticism to moral ethics has successfully changed the ancient people from "primitive" or "barbarian" to "more civilized" although the process is gradual ([Desi Karolina Saragih 2015](#)).

Ramayana story in Indonesia and Thailand has been affected, empowered and modified by locality, technical mastery, and personal taste as well as the existing condition and situation that support the presentation of the story. One instrument of this presentation is through *wayang* ([Seramasara 2019](#)).

The presentation of *wayang* (puppet) is usually accompanied by traditional or literary songs called *tembang*, which one of them is *macapat*. The presentation of *wayang* is also held for certain ritual ceremony or for tourism performance art.

In general, the presentation of Ramayana story in Indonesia and Thailand is functioned as tourism performance art which is organized for economic purposes (Hidajat 2020). The authors of the current research have spent more than 8 months to observe the presentation of Ramayana story as tourism performance art either in Indonesia and Thailand. The people of both countries are given freedom to organize performance art, including to play Ramayana story on the stage, because this art is considered by the ruler as the effort to read the past that contains historical complexities (Stabler 2018).

Taking into consideration of the fact that Ramayana story has been presented as tourism performance art in Indonesia and Thailand, therefore, the objective of this research is to understand the meaning of mandates implied in Ramayana story. The mandates are actually the moral ethic values that are engrafted through tourism performance art. Early intention of Ramayana story presentation is for the creation of attitude and character in proportion to the elements that make up Ramayana story. Nowadays, the presentation is emphasized on growing appreciative posture, internalizing moral values, and developing empathy to any laudable deed described kinetically and aesthetically in tourism performance art.

In respect to the statements above, the teaching of the mandates is done by presenting Ramayana story as a tourism performance art. Moral ethic values in Ramayana story are ingrained while the potential transformation of the existing moral ethic values are exploited. The stakeholders of the local values are convinced, advised and persuaded to accept the attributes of humanity, tolerance and cooperation across creatures on earth, and also to believe that this acceptance is natural and inescapable. Moral ethic values of Ramayana story are presented as a symbolical expression that contains the description of character, structure, and artistic appearance. The main focus of the review is stressed on the fact that the presentation of *wayang* is used for guidance and entertainment.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

Method used in this research is qualitative with functional structural approach (Adibah 2017). Data were collected from the interview with research informants such as: *Sumardi*, the leader of the dance

group *Wisnu Murti* that performs Prambanan Ramayana Ballet; *Surasak Jamnongsarn*, the collaborator of this research and also the lecturer for the Department of Traditional Thai and Asian Music, Faculty of Fine Arts, Srinakharinwirot University in Bangkok, Thailand; *Suyanto*, a leather puppet master from ISI Surakarta in Indonesia; and *Summaryono*, a dancer for Hanoman character in Yogyakarta style. The data take form as statements, experiences, and opinions which were confirmed by observation on the centers of tourism performance art such as: Prambanan Open Stage in Yogyakarta, Central Java; Pura Uluwatu in Badung, Bali; and Grand Palace Theater in Bangkok, Thailand. The analytical process involves textual analysis and contextual analysis. Textual analysis is targeted on the story played by tourism performance art in Indonesia and Thailand. Contextual analysis is an effort to interpret the relevance of reality and concept in tourism performance art in Indonesia and Thailand.

The topic that becomes research focus is the mandates implied in Ramayana story, especially the mandates considered relevant to the ethnical expression in Ramayana story. The imaginary characters in Ramayana story, together with moral ethic values represented by those characters, have been adjusted to local construction. Moral ethic values contained within tourism performance art are intended to create attitude and action that reflect morality.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Data Description

The authors of the current research followed the trace of Ramayana story from Candi Penataran in East Java to Candi Prambanan in Central Java. After this historical journey, the authors found that tourism performance art called Ramayana Ballet is presented regularly on the stage located nearby the complex of Candi Prambanan. The Ballet was held every full moon from March to August. The existence of the Ballet signifies that the way to present Ramayana story has been transformed utterly and this transformation was legally validated by the government. Exactly, the government has actively transformed the historical property of Ramayana story from a passive relief into a dynamic performance art. Using Prambanan data as early reference, the authors look for the support to this reference by making a journey to Pura Uluwatu in Badung, Bali and also to Grand Palace Theater in Bangkok, Thailand. These two places are known for

presenting Ramayana story for tourist entertainment.

Sumaryono explained that in early days, Ramayana story was presented as a performance art to conserve royal tradition in traditional elite environment, precisely in Surakarta Palace and Yogyakarta Palace. However, since 1960s, this performance art was commercialized for tourism (Sumaryono, interview on 2020). After this commercialization, Ramayana story was once presented as a collaboration event between Indonesia and Thailand. Later, the performers of *Ramakien* (Thailand version of Ramayana) were invited in 1995 and 2015 by the Indonesia Government to play Ramayana story on Indonesia performance stage. As exchange, the Thailand Government invited Indonesia Ramayana performers to play Ramayana story on Thailand performance stage (Sumardi, interview on 2020).

Ramakien is the repertory of local epic recited by Thai people. Specifically, *Ramakien* still conserves the Ramayana story tradition from India but the presentation of *Ramakien* represents a product of modification that complies more with the favor of Thai people. Besides this fact, the presentation of *Ramakien* still maintains classical variant of performance art. King Rama I (1782-1809) was the first ruler who organizes the presentation of Ramayana story in the palace. Afterward, King Rama II (1809-1824) rewrote and modified the previous version into a dramatic script called *Drama Khon*. Under this new version, the presentation of Ramayana story was beautified with melodious music and charming poems. Until one day, *Ramakien* brought huge effect on the development of literary, dance and drama arts in Thailand (Jamnongsarn, 2020).

The shape and function of Ramayana story presentation have experienced transformation. Moral ethics-related mandates are displayed through movement, music, song, costume, and formation that are presented by performers to be enjoyed by the devotees. On the other hand, modern audiences usually observe a performance art instantaneously, probably because this art is already set in the trip agenda. The authors of the current research feel certain about this after encountering a group of high school students from Bandung that watched Ramayana Ballet after visiting Candi Prambanan. The visitors said that Ramayana Ballet was put into tour agenda due to its educative value contents.

Concerning with the presentation of Ramayana story in Prambanan Open Stage, Sumardi informed that

although the play was focused on romantic scenes, but the narration was not merely about the love story between Rama and Sinta (Sumardi, interview on 2020). In Ramayana Ballet, Rama and Sinta are the characters known for their allegiance to their partner. As said by Suyanto, Ramayana story that is spread in Nusantara was originally the derivation of non-verbal literary work. The priests, who came from India and professed Hindu religion, inculcated this work through verbal tradition, which includes songs and poems. One proof of this heritage is the traditional song called *macapat* which is popular among Ramayana devotees in Java and Bali (Suyanto, interview on 2020). Furthermore, Suyanto affirmed that Hanoman was also a central character in Ramayana story because Hanoman showed persistent effort to retake Sinta from Rahwana captivity and bring her back to Rama.

Tourism performance art in Indonesia and Thailand has its own variant probably due to its strong local marker. The performers play the scenes based on their ethnic imaginary comprehension. Despite their different characterization, both Indonesia and Thailand versions of Ramayana story similarly regard Rama as the crown prince of Ayutthaya Empire. His father, Dasarata, has made a promise to his concubine that the concubine's son, Barata, will be the heir of the Empire. In short, Barata becomes the King and his coronation involves the banishment of Rama and Sinta for 14 years that compels the evicted to wander through Dhandaka Forest.

In their journey of alienation, Rama and Sinta were accompanied by Rama's step brother, Laksmana. The wanderer encountered many obstacles and temptations including when Sinta insisted on capturing a golden deer (*kidang kencana*). Her insistence opened the path toward a misery. There are at least three occurrences that put them on the tests of patience and fidelity. First occurrence is when Sinta was kidnapped by a giant king named Rahwana from Alengka Kingdom. Second occurrence is that Laksmana was tempted by Sarpakenaka, Rahwana's sister. Finally, the third is that the wanderer must be accidentally involved in the sibling quarrel between Sugriwa and Subali. The lesson from this involvement is that Rama built alliance with Sugriwa who is then crowned as the King of Ape Kingdom. Later in times, his alliance with ape troops has given Rama a needed support to assail Alengka.

As previously specified, the central theme of Ramayana story is the journey of Rama and Sinta. Therefore, the presentation of Ramayana story always emphasizes on good deeds including helping



Figure 1. *Ramakien* (Thailand version of Ramayana story; Hanoman as the Troop Commander)
(Source: Robby Hidajat, 2020)

each other. The presented scenes suppose to inspire the audiences on the values of “affection” and “compassion”.

Based on the contents of Ramayana story, the Kingdom of Alengka ruled by the King Rahwana was located across the sea. Thai people identify this location with a name *Srilangka*. Such positioning is a common process among the devotees of Ramayana story. This process has made as if the story is actually happening locally. In the future, this presumption creates ethnical sentiment between Thailand and the neighbor countries (Jamnongsarn, 2020).

The searching of Sinta after abduction is an inspiring scene in Indonesia and Thailand versions of Ramayana story. The mandate of heroism during the searching is attributed to Hanoman. As confirmed by Suyanto, Hanoman is the special character because he is one of four pupils (adopted-siblings) of Dewa Bayu, the deity that rules the wind.

Hanoman was appointed as the commander of Ayutthaya ape troops. The launch of assault on Alengka was preceded by building embankment (*tambak*) to help the troops crossing the sea. In short, the perseverance of Hanoman successfully helped Rama to win the war. Even, Hanoman and his ape troops were successful to retake Sinta from Rahwana and bring her back to Rama (Sumaryono, interview on 2020). Inspiring by this success, the heroism of Hanoman is always set into prominence during the presentation of *Ramakien*.

The tearful part of Ramayana story is that after getting her freedom from Rahwana captivity, Sinta must undergo a serious test in which she must let her body burned to confirm her chastity. Javanese presentation is overstating the burning scene whereas in Bali and Thailand, the burning of Sinta is understated. The scenes that present Sinta paragon have been transformed differently by ethnics that perform the scenes. This transformation exhibits a moral mandate indicating that woman is not less important creature and the chastity is always the best judgment in assessing woman morality. Meanwhile, in Thailand, Hanoman is glorified as a character that inspires untiring struggle.

Although Sinta is a central character in the story but her presence is followed by an intriguing question. Many textual sources describe Sinta as a simple and reasonable woman. However, woman always adores a pleasant thing, including Sinta who asked Rama to capture a golden deer. Beyond her knowledge, her desire has caused misery to herself and her spouse, Rama.

Woman is a power for man because woman can motivate man through her supra-humanistic power. Not all humans have capability to hold such power. Woman motivation enables man to feel powerful and capable to cope with any obstacles despite their limitation as human being. Unfortunately, woman is easily tempted by a careless pretension. In case of Sinta, she decided to comply with her own desire without knowing that her curiosity will cause misery, unfortune and tragedy. The point of this statement is that Sinta can also be trapped by her



Figure 2. Rama and Sinta in Javanese version (Source: Abbiyu Ammar, 2020)

own desire but during her captivity, she successfully defends her allegiance from the woer. In this position, Sinta is representing a mandate of morality and positioned as a woman with a powerful allegiance to her spouse, Rama.

Sinta was in captivity for 3 years in Alengka Kingdom. Actually, she was detained in the royal court that is regal and luxurious. Although she was supported with plentiful of cloth, food and wealth, but she did not make a single thought to those things. She believed that her persistent allegiance will in return motivate Rama somewhere to use his power to free her from the kidnapper. Actually, Sinta allegiance got the sweet fruit because Rama was impelled by his urge to free his spouse. Rama followed up this urge by sending Hanoman, a white ape which the white color symbolizes the integrity and the purity of Rama's love to Sinta. In the story, the liberator of Sinta is Hanoman who then brings Sinta in the presence of Rama.

Ramayana story has a deep philosophical background. Several aspects in the story cannot be elaborated by common sense. Times are needed for contemplation. In the episode of *Sinta Obong* (when Sinta is required to enter a fireplace to prove her chastity), few questions arise. One of them is related with the plot that is paradoxal to the western movies that are always concluded with "happy ending."

Interestingly, Ramayana story does not follow the dramatic plot of western theater. During the war, Sinta was successfully freed from Rahwana captivity but her chastity was questioned. And, this question leads to a moral construction which

involves two groups, precisely the believer against the questioner of Sinta chastity. There are two stratifications in this matter. Surprisingly, moral education in ethnic communities in Southeast Asia is also differentiated into two stratifications, respectively: (1) upper class community, which the members are mostly educated (and also informed) with orientation toward moral ethics; and (2) lower class community, which the members are mostly learner but the strong conservator of verbal tradition. Apart from this differentiation, moral education is often conventional and dogmatic. And in this context, Ramayana story is dogmatic in nature.

Mythologically, Southeast Asian people are proud of their closeness with deities. According to them, Ramayana story is more like a religious story rather than a social humanistic story. There is a belief that the life is not abreast with the wish and the power of human but there is an intervention from deities that regulate all aspects of the life. Although Rama is the avatar of Dewa Wisnu, he cannot elude from his encounter with cosmic power. This encounter signifies that all problems in the world have been designed systemically and cosmologically.

Structurally, Ramayana story is a cosmos balance system created through a struggle for unification. Suyanto said that this unification is denoted by a Javanese term "*manunggal*", which Thai people call this term as *Nippan*. As previously told, Rama and his purity symbol (Hanoman) were able to defeat the evil power, represented by Rahwana. But, the evil does not disappear but only improves and merges with purity. However, after this merging process, Rama questions the chastity of Sinta and doubts that



Figure 3. Ramayana story presentation in Bali style at Pura Uluwatu, Badung, Bali (Source: Robby Hidajat, 2020)

their reunification can be helpful to rebuild the cosmic balance.

ANALYSIS AND RESULT

The results of data analysis are collected and classified (tabulated) based on topics that need to be focused in such a way to answer the questions of research. The answers will take form as systematic explanation by referring to the guidance of functional theory. Ramayana story is presented at the tourist centers in Indonesia and Thailand and the presentation is not merely an entertainment. Indeed, before presenting Ramayana story on the stage, the performers have been educated on art, mastering some techniques, and understanding aesthetical norms. All these qualifications are the usual attributes of professional art workers (Davies 2009). Educative mandate is considered by these art workers as universal. More specifically, there are three mandates in Ramayana story which respectively are (1) Mandate of Morality in Romance, (2) Mandate of Woman Paragon, and (3) Mandate of Causal Law.

Mandate of Romance Morality

Ramayana story is not only a romance narrative but also a construction to create a harmonious balance between macrocosm and microcosm. Specifically, all mandates implied in Ramayana story in Indonesia and Thailand similarly show a pattern of spiritual ideology. This story is told by intention to produce an elite culture in a social structure that underlies a systemic pattern that constitutes the ethnic community. The figuration of characters, the arrangement of social interaction among the

characters, and the formation of performance structure, are all based on the nature of ethnic community. Rama and Sinta represent a mandate of harmony that is actualized by a cosmological symbol in which both characters are exalted as a model of moral ethics mandate for the relationship between husband and wife. For Java people, the most prominent moral mandate is unification, which is pronounced by a term *kamanunggalan* that denotes a unification between macrocosm and microcosm. Meanwhile, Thai people who mostly profess Buddhism call this unification as *Nippan*, literally defined as actually quenched and never materialized. Moreover, this unification is needed to establish the world order that is calm, secured and peaceful. Therefore, Rama and Sinta are always positioned as an expression or symbol of fertility, eternal tranquility and wholeness in the harmonious household life. The ideal unification of husband and wife is described by Javanese people as *sejodo*.

Mandate of Woman Paragon

Woman is not only a source of power for man but also easily weak to worldly temptation. Ramayana story is telling about the persistence of woman to defend her allegiance. In the story, Sinta is exhibited as a character that successfully fulfills the mandate of woman paragon. Her successful fulfillment over the mandate is associated with her capability to build the images of sacred love, trustworthy love and eternal love. This personality is hardly compared to the man who is easily powerless on behalf of "love". In the case of Sinta, love is interpreted as an unconscious submission that will deny any materials that humiliate the essence of love. This position also involves the capability to endure the suffering in

order to take responsibility on her allegiance. Sinta's persistence in defending her love has compelled her to restrain herself from the flattery and persuasion of Rahwana. Any tricks and deceptions from the woer did not shake her mind. Sinta convinced that her allegiance will be rewarded by her freedom and reunification with Rama. Even, when her chastity was in doubt, she was dared to take a pledge of chastity by showing her courage to enter a fireplace. The Javanese perceive the episode of *Sinta Obong* as a manifestation of allegiance symbol. The scenes in this episode is also viewed as a construction of spiritual ideology. However, this ideology is not the main emphasis in the presentation of Ramayana story in Bali and Thailand.

Mandate of Causal Law

Hanoman is a character that enforces moral values through untiring struggle, heroic leadership, and sincere dedication. Ramayana story depicts how important is the role played by Hanoman. Under deep investigation, Ramayana story is emphasized on life struggle, not only the struggle of Rama and Sinta for their reunification but also the endeavor made by Hanoman to retake Sinta from Rahwana. What Hanoman did to save Sinta has impelled him to use his cunning, ingenuity, and perseverance. His mission is to restore a cosmical balance and this is done by helping the reunification of Rama and Sinta in order to bring security and peace on earth. This situation is relevant to the fact that Dewa Bayu is required to help Dewa Wisnu to clean cosmical impurities. Dewa Wisnu cannot clean these impurities alone and he will need help from Dewi Sri. Each deity has their own spiritual power and the proper use of this power is truly needed to keep the cosmic in balance. For instance, in one time, Dewi Sri shall merge herself with the earth but at the other time, she must separate herself from the earth. Each power needs to be utilized in a perfect proportion. A human can be a hero after struggling with perseverance. Heroism as a concept is an important guide especially for the youth, particularly at least to teach them about the importance of struggle to defend morality. Indeed, this struggle is not trivial, especially when the struggle is about persistently maintaining allegiance on love. Ramayana story differs from western philosophy that insists on saying that love is concluded with happy ending. Instead, Ramayana story persuades humans to contemplate or to be more sensitive to any symbolical condition and situation. Humans are required to be able to read the condition and situation with sense, not mind. In this matter, the sense is the stronger determiner in assessing whether something is right or wrong. Everything happened in the life is "*laku*", a Javanese word for *process of life*.

Every human must undergo this life process and human mind cannot determine or plan this process. There is a stronger power (divine rule) that regulates the life process. All the living creatures will go home at certain point of their life to the divine realm. Their spirit will unite with the spirit of divinity, which the Javanese people call this unification as *Manunggal* while the Thai people articulate the term as *Nippan*. A process of life has cause and effect, and that is why the causal law becomes an important mandate in this context. A certain process is often needed to make something become perfect. *Nippan* is rendered as something that is completely used up and obliterate. This something can also be said as going back to the Creator to produce unification, which represents the word *Manunggal*.

Taking into consideration of all the findings, the authors declare that in the life that has been affected by globalization, humans may have reached their awareness about the essence of life. Sometimes, humans become aware of themselves in the conditions of weary, saturated and under pressure. Surprisingly, humans can also reach their self-awareness in the relaxation, or while watching entertainment, or while enjoying vacation. Ramayana story that is transformed into tourism performance art can also be used as an instrument to help humans to find their essence of life.

CONCLUSION

Ramayana story is a religious literary work that is already proven as helpful to the ethnic communities in building their moral values. There are three mandates in Ramayana story that have been used to affect the morality of the conserver communities, respectively (1) Morality in Romance, (2) Woman Paragon, and (3) Causal Law. Meanwhile, the Javanese believe in *laku* or a process of life. The Javanese convince that the life process comprises misery and joy and everybody experiences both someday. In this context, the essence of life process is that Ramayana story was used as a guide (instrument of education) in the begining and then transforming into an entertainment (performance art). Life process is a purpose designed by cultural agent and this purpose is implemented in the form of *good karma*. Thai people pronounce *good karma* as *Karm Di* and articulate *bad karma* as *Karm Chua*. Each karma has culmination point. Furthermore, Mandate of Paragon is closely related with life process. Paragon is needed to agglutinate the relationship between macrocosm and microcosm, which is relevant to the Javanese term "*kamanunggalan*". This relationship is like a path that brings the spirits toward unification and to be

blessed with eternal life. Fortunately, deep investigation is not quite needed to understand the symbolical essence of the life process. But, still, this understanding is needed to ensure whether something is right or wrong.

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