

**THE RELATIONSHIP OF AKSARA JAWA AS LOCAL FOLKLORE
WITH MODERATE AND PROGRESSIVE ISLAMIC EDUCATION
(Ethnographic Studies on Implementation of Religious and Cultural Moderation)**

**KAITAN AKSARA JAWA SEBAGAI FOLKLOR DAERAH
DENGAN PENDIDIKAN ISLAM YANG MODERAT DAN BERKEMAJUAN
(Studi Etnografi tentang Implementasi Moderasi Beragama dan Berbudaya)**

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Abstract

Aksara Jawa or what we are familiar with as hanacaraka is one of the many priceless Javanese folklores, but in line with the flow of globalization, its existence is starting to be forgotten. Even though there have been many studies on Aksara Jawa, if we look at it from the perspective of Islamic philosophy, we still rarely find it. The focus of this research is to investigate the Islamic values contained in this indigenous culture. The purpose of this research is to find a relationship between Aksara Jawa and Islamic education. This study uses a qualitative approach by utilizing ethnographic methods that depart from the existence of the Aksara Jawa that grows in the community. The process of data accumulation was carried out by library research and ethnographic interviews. The results of this study indicate that the Aksara Jawa can be used as a lesson that humans as messengers of God must put their trust or surrender to Him so that in our lives we will achieve success both in this world and in the hereafter.

Keywords: *Folklore; Ethnography; Aksara Jawa; Islamic Education; Moderation*

Abstrak

Aksara Jawa atau yang familiar kita sebut dengan hanacaraka merupakan satu dari banyaknya folklor Jawa yang tidak ternilai harganya, akan tetapi sejalan dengan arus globalisasi, keberadaannya mulai terlupakan. Sekalipun sudah banyak penelitian mengenai aksara Jawa, namun bila dilihat dari kacamata filosofis Islam masih jarang kita temui. Fokus penelitian ini adalah menyelidik nilai-nilai Islami yang terkandung dalam budaya pribumi ini. Adapun tujuan penelitian adalah untuk menemukan adanya relasi antara aksara Jawa dengan pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan memanfaatkan metode etnografi yang berangkat dari keberadaan aksara Jawa yang tumbuh di masyarakat. Proses akumulasi data dilakukan dengan studi literatur dan wawancara etnografi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa aksara Jawa dapat digunakan sebagai pembelajaran bahwa manusia sebagai utusan Allah harus bertawakkal atau berserah diri kepada-Nya agar di kehidupan kita nanti meraih kesuksesan baik di dunia maupun di akhirat.

Kata kunci: *Folklor; Etnografi; Aksara Jawa; Pendidikan Islam; Moderasi*

Introduction

Humans as individuals as well as social beings make interactions between them. The communication seeks to create understanding between humans to know each other's desires in the community of a society (Ramala, 2020, p. 2). This communication can build a culture that will eventually become a civilization. According to the author's opinion, culture is a

lifestyle that exists in society and is formed by itself due to the repetition of activities and behaviors carried out by individuals continuously for a long time.

One way to inherit culture is through writings or manuscripts. Most manuscripts are decorated beautifully and diversified (Sharif, Fiyanto, & Harto, 2019, p. 44). Writing is a graphic sign used to represent a specific linguistic sound symbol. Writing is a form of culture that is created through a process. Because in the beginning, people all over the world lived in a conversation culture that required them to meet. Then came the invention of sound symbols, whose final form is writing, an intellectual achievement humans in their civilization (Hazmirullah, 2020, p. 38). The transition of the communication system from the talk tradition to the written tradition dramatically affects the development of human culture as a whole (Inayatussalihah, 2017, p. 24).

Various types or models of writing have been formed and spread throughout the world, where these differences are influenced by ongoing social and economic conditions (Fakhrudin, Sachari, & Haswanto, 2019, p. 2). One of the unique forms of writing is the Aksara Jawa. Besides its unique shape, the Aksara Jawa is also full of high aesthetic value, making it enjoyable to learn (Wahyuni, 2018, p. 5). However, many people have difficulty learning this Aksara Jawa due to its shape and writing, which is different from Latin, Arabic, and others (Ramadani & Huda, 2020, p. 87; Wahyuni, 2018, p. 3).

Currently, to preserve the Aksara Jawa for the younger generation is through learning in schools. Aksara Jawa is generally only used during Javanese language lessons and these subjects are only taught in some regions because they are included in local content subjects. However, because Javanese is a local subject, the teaching portion is quite small compared to other compulsory subjects such as mathematics and English (Rasyidi, Bariyah, Riskajaya, & Septyani, 2021, p. 1308). Even though the scope is relatively narrow, it does not make the inheritance worthless, but unfortunately these contents are not widely known by the general public. They only think that Aksara Jawa is only a complement to the culture. Because of the reality, many people are starting to realize the existence of Aksara Jawa through various research and development of learning media to make it more interesting. By utilizing various existing sources, the Aksara Jawa is expected to reinforce the identity of the Javanese people and strengthen our identity as Indonesian citizens.

Based on the problems above and the diversity of regional scripts in Indonesia, this study has the opportunity to be used as reference material for research based on other regional scripts research spread across various regions in Indonesia. Because along with the times, this script seems to be one of the cultural heritages that is increasingly being forgotten (Arismadhani, Yuhana, & Kuswardayan, 2013, p. 4; Fakhrudin et al., 2019, p. 22; Ramadani & Huda, 2020, p. 87; Supriyono, Rahmadzani, Adhantoro, & Susilo, 2016, p. 1; Wahyuni, 2018, p. 3). Therefore, the Aksara Jawa must be preserved to strengthen the nation's culture, which will make Indonesia proud (Azmi, Taufik, & Susilo, 2018, p. 214).

Method

This study uses an ethnographic approach that departs from the phenomenon of community culture about the existence of Aksara Jawa, which is increasingly being abandoned. The object of this research is the Aksara Jawa. This research includes two steps, namely the steps of exploration and analysis. The exploration step includes collecting data through literature studies and ethnographic interviews with puppeteer as a resource person. The results of data collection were then analyzed to determine the content. The data analysis process is fundamental in research because it can reveal the research results from the proses of observation and documentation. Data analysis is a process of processing and interpreting

data with its functions so that it has a precise meaning according to the type of data collected (Larasati, 2019, p. 48).

The data relating to the resulting Aksara Jawa is then analyzed according to the theory of aesthetics, culture defusion, history, and letter semiotics so that the elements in each script are obtained, which states that like humans, letters have different organs. Moreover, the combination of all elements of a letter form is a visual identity that can distinguish one letter from another (Fakhruddin et al., 2019, p. 4). Finally, data analysis is put down in a comprehensive and systematic framework. The framework steps are data reduction, data preparation, and make some conclusions (Sharif et al., 2019, p. 44)..

Result and Discussion

1. Aksara Jawa , Its History, and Transformation

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with thousands of islands stretching from Sabang to Merauke, which makes Indonesia has a variety of customs and cultures. We can see this through the quantity of cultural heritage owned by each region, one of which is the Javanese. This tribe has a cultural heritage/folklore such as the *tingkeban*, *kolak ayam gumeno*, *wayang*, *ludruk*, *reog*, *Aksara Jawa*, and many more. Aksara Jawa is also known as *hanacaraka*, *carakan*, *dentawyanjana*, or *adi anta wyanjana*. Endraswara stated that the term *hanacaraka* means 'there is a messenger, used as a common designation according to the order of the Aksara Jawa. The five characters are a manifestation of the religiosity of the Javanese people who view that life is ruled by the meaning of *hanacaraka*, namely the inner messenger or spirit who strengthens the birth of the Javanese conscience. Meanwhile, the use of the word *carakan* according to *Bratahiswara* is based on the meaning of *caraka* which means "messenger", "ambassador", and "servant" from Ajisaka's story which is the background of the story of the arrangement of Aksara Jawa, while *dentawyanjana* or *adi anta wyanjana* contains the meaning of the consonant arrangement of *adi* (beginning) to *anta* (end) (Sari, Suwandi, & Supana, 2018, p. 48).

The oldest evidence of the existence of Aksara Jawa in the archipelago are seven *yupa* (stone pillars) bearing inscriptions regarding the Waprakeswara ceremony held by Mulawarman, the ruler of the Kutai Kingdom (now including the province of East Kalimantan). The inscription contains text written using the Pallawa script and Sanskrit. Experts conclude that the inscription was written in the 4th century AD, coinciding with the reign of the Pallawa dynasty in southern India (Hazmirullah, 2020, p. 38). Although the artifacts were only discovered around the 19th century, the use of Aksara Jawa has existed since the days of the Mataram Sultanate, precisely in the 17th century AD (Arismadhani et al., 2013, p. 94; Fakhruddin et al., 2019, p. 2; Larasati, 2019, p. 14).

Indian models influenced the literature of the old Javanese period like subject matter and form; all these elements were changed when adopted to old Javanese literatures. The core of the Aksara Jawa is the Brahmi script which was first discovered in India. Then the Brahmi script evolved into the Pallawa script as the first script to enter the territory of Indonesia (Arifiyanto, 2016; Fakhruddin et al., 2019, p. 2; Larasati, 2019, p. 31; Ramadani & Huda, 2020, p. 87). After that, the script underwent development and modification into Kawi script, which later transformed into a Aksara Jawa. Like its predecessors, the Aksara Jawa is included in the 'abugida' script type, namely scripts whose vowel sounds can change due to the addition of sandhangan swara or vowel modifiers. Aksara Jawa is written from left to right (Azmi et al., 2018, p. 214).

Picture 1. Aksara Jawa

AKSARA JAWA				
 ha	 na	 ca	 ra	 ka
 da	 ta	 sa	 wa	 la
 pa	 dha	 ja	 ya	 nya
 ma	 ga	 ba	 tha	 nga

In its development, Aksara Jawa has been transformed dozens of times until its shape became what we know now as *hanacaraka* or *carakan*. Where in ancient times, Aksara Jawa functioned as a writing system for the benefit of correspondence in the palace/sultanate and various royal purposes, books, old javanese manuscripts, javanese songs, and inscriptions. The Aksara Jawa was not only focused on the palace environment but was also used throughout the Javanese community at that time, including in coastal and mountainous areas (Fakhruddin et al., 2019, p. 2). Aksara Jawa is also used to write Sanskrit, Sundanese, and Sasak (Ramadani & Huda, 2020, p. 88).

Although most of the manuscripts containing Javanese characters are in good condition, unfortunately there are still some pages that have faded the color of the paper, and some are even torn. That is because the paper is more than ten years old and the paper material is not good. In addition, due to inadequate maintenance (Arifianto, 2016, p. 2). That is what causes the Aksara Jawa to be included in the priceless cultural heritage of the ancestors. Another reason is that the Aksara Jawa contains the nation's philosophy and teachings of noble character which can be the foundation of Javanese society in addition to the Qur'an and hadith. This script has 20 main characters which are syllabic, meaning that every two or three Latin letters can be written together to form one character/shape, so that one character/script when combined with other characters, can form one syllable (Wahyuni, 2018, p. 8).

The letters in the Aksara Jawa did not appear by themselves, but in some stories it is said that this script was formed because of Ajisaka's history. This story begins when Ajisaka is a young and robust who lives on the island of Majethi with his two loyal retainers, namely Dora and Sembada. These two courtiers are both loyal and powerful. One time Ajisaka wanted to leave Majethi Island and he entrusted his flagship heirloom in the care of Sembada. He made a will not to give the heirloom to anyone, other than Ajisaka. After Ajisaka's victory over Dewata Cengkar he came to power in Medang Kamulan and asked his courtier, Dora, to take back his heirloom.

When Dora arrives on the island of Majethi, she meets Sembada and intends to take an heirloom. However, Sembada remembered Ajisaka's message that no one should be authorized to take the heirloom except the owner, Ajisaka. Because of the miscommunication, the two fought because they felt trusted by Ajisaka. The fierce battle killed both of them and made Ajisaka regret that he spilled his story in Aksara Jawa (Larasati, 2019, p. 32). The story above contains many meanings and philosophies about various noble teachings, about carrying out the mandate, chivalry, upholding honesty, and many other philosophies contain (Arismadhani et al., 2013, p. 95).

It is the story that has survived by word of mouth to this day, developed in Java, and became the inspiration for their inner life. With this story's existence, Ajisaka was ordained

as the prototype of the creator of the Aksara Jawa. Ajisaka is predicted to be a figure who *medhangake kawruh* means a person who spreads knowledge and intelligence to the Javanese tribal society. Because through the figure of Aji Saka, the Javanese who initially knew nothing and did not have knowledge (*pabengkong*) were then able to read nature and have extensive knowledge (Awalin, 2017, p. 294).

The Aksara Jawa that we know today is a development of the Pallawa script. This development began with the early 5th century AD Pallawa script, late Pallawa in 732 AD, early Kawi 750-925 AD, late Kawi 925-1250 AD, Majapahit Aksara Jawa 1250-1450 AD, and Aksara Jawa from the 15th century AD. Various evidence confirm the existence of Aksara Jawa, such as: (1) the Yupa inscription in East Kalimantan and the Tarumanegara kingdom inscription in West Java which depicts the early pallawa script, (2) the late pallawa model is found in the Sriwijaya royal inscription and the Canggal inscription in Central Java, (3) Early Kawi models in the Dinoyo, Plumpunga inscriptions, inscriptions from Kings Rakai Kayuwangi and Rakai Belitung, (4) late Kawi models written on Raja Airlangga and Kediri inscriptions, (5) Majapahit Aksara Jawa models in Kawali inscriptions (Awalin, 2017; Hazmirullah, 2020, p. 38)

At the time of the Aksara Kawi, to be precise around the 14-15th century AD, the form of writing transformed to become more flat and thin as found in the Kebantenan inscription. Furthermore, the shape evolved again to become more rounded with accented curves throughout the character's body. This type of script was used until the 16th century AD, gradually changing the script's body to become flattered with closer characters (Fakhrudin et al., 2019, p. 5).

2. Islamic Values Contained in Aksara Jawa

We can generally understand culture as human creation, taste, and initiative. Humans live and develop because of their curiosity about the influences that come on them (Ramala, 2020, p. 10). That way, we must be sensitive to changes and try to dig up various information that is rarely discussed by ordinary people, for example only the philosophical contents of Aksara Jawa that are hidden and not many know. Furthermore, studying Aksara Jawa in depth will help to find and understand the philosophical meanings as the embodiment of the identity of the Javanese people contained in Aksara Jawa and texts from the past. Because if you only rely on the style of preserving the past, it is feared that the existence of the Aksara Jawa will be lost and no longer be recognized (Arismadhani et al., 2013, p. 94; Fakhrudin et al., 2019, p. 3).

Aksara Jawa is one of the many spoken languages derived from the influence of Hindu-Buddhist culture and Islamic culture (Ramadani & Huda, 2020, p. 88). Widyatmoko said about 20 philosophical interpretations of Aksara Jawa had been carried out. This interpretation is inseparable from the tendency of Javanese philosophy which explores the concept of divinity/ oneness, human life and obligations as God's creation, as well as social society in general. This meaning is embodied in Javanese heritage texts such as "Serat Saloka Jiwa" (R. Ng. Ranggawarsita) and "Serat Sastra Gending" (Sultan Agung).

Aksara Jawa is not only used as a written instrument or Aksara Jawa traditionally according to the views of some Javanese, Javanese recitations and people familiar with Aksara Jawa because for them, Aksara Jawa has spiritual and historical value. According to Weir, each letter/character in Aksara Jawa has a symbolic meaning, as follows: (Awalin, 2017, p. 298):

1. Ha: *Hana (Ana) hurip wening suci*, it means that the existence of life is the will of the Most Holy.
2. Na: *Nur Candra, Gaib Nur, Warsitaning Candra*, meaning that human hope is only in God.

3. Ca: *Cipta wening, cipta mandulu, cipta dadi*, meaning one direction and purpose to the Almighty One.
4. Ra: *Rasaningsun handulusih*, that is, true love arises from the love of conscience.
5. Ka: *Karsaningsun memayu hayuning bawana*, that is, all desires are aimed at the welfare of nature.
6. Da: *Dumadining Dzat kang tanpa winangenan*, can be translated as accepting life as it is.
7. Ta: *Tatas, tutus, titis, titi lan wibawa*, namely fundamental, totality, having a vision, and looking at life carefully so as not to go the wrong way.
8. Sa: *Sifat ingsun handulu sifatullah*, which is to build love like God's love.
9. Wa: *Wujud hana tan kena kinira*, it means human knowledge is limited but the implications can be unlimited.
- 10.La: *Lir handaya paseban jati*, that is to live solely on divine guidance.
- 11.Pa: *Papan kang tanpa kiblat*, means the essence of God that exists in all directions.
- 12.Dha: *Dhuwur wekasane endek wiwitane*, that is to get to the top of course starting from the bottom. In order to achieve success, you have to struggle first.
- 13.Ja: *Jumbuhing kawula Gusti*, means constantly trying to unite and understand His will.
- 14.Ya: *Pitados marang samubarang tumindak kang dumadi*, namely faith and belief in the divine decree/nature.
- 15.Nya: *Nyata tanpa mata*, understanding without being measured, the meaning is understanding the nature of life.
- 16.Ma: *Madhep mantep manembah maring Ilahi*, means sure and steady in worshipping God.
- 17.Ga: *Guru sejati sing muruki*, can be interpreted learn from the conscience teacher.
- 18.Ba: *Bayu sejati kang andalani*, which builds harmony between oneself and the movement of nature.
- 19.Tha: *Thukul saka niat*, means something must start and grow from intention.
- 20.Nga: *Ngracut busaning manungso*, which is to let go of the selfishness of the human person.

From the description above, it can be concluded that the Aksara Jawa implies the origin of man, the task of life, and the purpose of his life. The Aksara Jawa also contains a philosophical meaning, namely "*hanacaraka*" which means there is a messenger, namely the messenger of life, in the form of breath which is obliged to unite the soul with the human body with the mission of *inna ja'ilun fil ardi khalifah*. The point is that there are living humans who trust and are entrusted with managing and living life. Humans are equipped with creativity, taste, and intention that are natural, do not deviate from the practice of the *laku jantra* of life (*pantarei*) and will get enlightenment of the soul in life if they know and know the nature of the reflection of God's manifestation (Ilahiah) in the universe as the reality of His creation (Awalin, 2017, p. 299).

"*Datasawala*" means human after being created, which when the time comes he will be called. Humans can not sawala or evade or escape from their destiny. Humans must be willing to carry out, accept, and carry out God's will, not argue, not deny, and ready to carry out their duties. It means that humans have to surrender, be happy on the line of nature, even though humans are given the right to mewiradat, try to prevent from bad and choose the good. However, in living his life, man must have been at a point where he experienced a conflict between a pure soul and lust (*datasawala*). If they succeed in defeating their lust, then they will get success (*padhajaya*).

"*Padhajayanya*", the meaning of *padha* is the same or appropriate, *jumbuh*, single-minded fit which is reflected in actions based on nobility and virtue. *Jaya* is to win or excel. This happens when you have surrendered to God. "*Magabathanga*" comes from the word "*maga*" which means to take the road, we know it "*marga*" or by the clan. The second word is "*bathanga*", *bhatang* will eventually become a body (corpse). Because the end of human life is

death, we must prepare good deeds while living in this world. Use conscience and common sense so as not to fall into the beauty and luxury of the world.

Meanwhile, the philosophical and sufistic symbolic meanings of Aksara Jawa are contained in the Seloka in the form of the symbol of the crew (figure) Semar with the literature of *dentawyanjana* with dramatic narrative intonation, namely; "*hanacaraka*" *hananing cipta rasa karsa* (complete pattern of Semar's head), "*datasawala*" *datan salah wahyaning lampah* (stomach, shoulders, and footprints), "*padhajayanya*" *padhang jagade yen nyumurupana* (hands and back), "*magabathanga*" *marang Gambaring batara ngaton* (butt).

The concept of formulating the explanation of the Aksara Jawa Hanacaraka above is the concept of God's messenger. Humans are messengers of God on earth, namely as caliphs or leaders. Humans have natural abilities, namely creativity, taste, and intention. Creativity (*karsa*) is a human manifestation as a thinking creature. The sense of actualization of humans who have feelings or feelings, namely as religious humans. *Karsa*, humans are given the authority by God to do something or will. Thus, from the Javanese point of view, humans are whole beings. Humans are God's long arms who are equipped with various privileges that other creatures do not have, namely creativity-taste-intention (*cipta-rasa-karsa*). Armed with these privileges, God authorizes humans in the world to do things according to their nature.

The meaning of the characters is also found in Serat Manikmaya which Lasman Marduwiyoto and Pratomo translated. Fiber Manikmaya interprets that each line of Aksara Jawa has a meaning that is interconnected with the following lines. Hutomo explained that if the characters were interpreted, each letter would have the meaning of a complete discourse. The advice contains that life is indeed controlled by the creator (God), therefore humans must always be obedient and always remember what should be done and what is forbidden, and always remember the Lord. Life should always put the main character first, always doing good with others. This will be the provision of happiness in the hereafter (Yatmoko, 2021, p. 51).

Meanwhile, according to Ki Seno, the puppeteer from Mojokerto, Aksara Jawa explains the universe and the *pituntun nyembah ngarsane Allah* (guidance in worshiping Allah). Ha: *suasana* (atmosphere), *jagat raya* (universe). Na: *Nur* (eternal light). Ca: *Cahaya* (light) from Allah. Ra: *Rasa* (taste). Ka: *Karunia* (gift). *Dasawala*: *datan suwala* which means do not demonstrate, do not deny the will. Da: *Suku/perilaku* (behavior.) Ta: *Kasunyatan* (reality), actual behavior. Sa: *Sampurna* (perfect). La: *Legawa* (relief), character to God is based on relief/sincerity. In fulfilling Allah's commands, do not be *suwala* (do not refuse).

Because the relief became *padhajaya*. Pa: *Tindak* or *perilaku* (act or behavior). Dha: *Dada*, determined according to what is in the heart, so outwardly and spiritually must be appropriate. Jaya: *Pantangan* (taboo/prohibition). Ja: *ojo* (do not), if Allah has forbidden it then do not do it. If you promise to someone, you have to do that. Nya: *Anugerah* (grace), so if you behave well, you will get God's gift. Ya: *Karunia/pangestune Allah* (The gift of Allah), so what you wish for will be granted by Allah. *Magabathanga*, composed of Ma: *Semua* (all life, all desires). Ga: *Gunung* (mountain). B: *Badan* (body). Tha: *tanem tuwuh, tetukulan*, anything that shoots (grows). Nga: *Kawijayan* (glory). If all Javanese characters are reversed, it can be interpreted that there is a life after death.

According to Ki Seno, Aksara Jawa contains *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti*. Because the Creator and the creature are one, the body is the only thing that is separated. *Gusti* (Allah) is in our hearts and life belongs only to Allah. We must surrender (wealth, ability, and intelligence) to Allah because all that belongs to Allah. That is the way to get to the state of *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti*. Allah, *Gusti*, is most holy. Clean your heart before facing Him, not only your body but also your behavior. So as a whole, *hanacaraka* is a life guide so that we don't make mistakes. Do not deviate your behavior from the human.

Halintar Cokro Padnobo said that basically the meaning of Aksara Jawa does not only tell the story of two servants who die together but suggests that the mind and thoughts need to be understood so that they do not make the wrong choice, good actions or ideas are exemplary, must take care of each other, cooperation, instilling tolerance and peace, and should not be selfish. The meanings above show that Aksara Jawa contains meaning about human life. Humans, in the context of Aksara Jawa means that living in the world cannot be separated from a messenger from God. With His power, humans are obliged to maintain the peace of fellow living creatures (Yatmoko, 2021, p. 52).

Javanese people are familiar with the terms macrocosm and microcosm or the *jagat gedhe lan jagat alit*. The result is the harmonization between them and no contradictions. God is the center and God is the main goal in human life. God as *sangkan* as well as *paran*, then formulated into the concept of *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi*. *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi* is a traditional Javanese belief about how humans react to life. In the ancient Javanese language, *sangkan* means origin, *parang* is the goal, and *dumadi* means to be, the one who makes or the creator. So what is meant by *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi* is knowledge of "where humans come from and where they will return to." The concept of Sangkan Paran Dumadi in Islamic terminology is the concept of *Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rojiun* (Awalin, 2017, p. 307).

In some literature, it is written that Ajisaka wears a headband. The meaning contained in the headband also reflects the value of religious character education because it reminds people that humans must have a strong mind. Strong thinking can be interpreted as thinking that is based on the truth so that circumstances do not easily sway it. People who stand firmly for the truth are close to religious behavior. On the other hand, someone who is religious and sticks to religious norms tends to be calmer in living life, has more firmness on the principles of life so that they are not easily swayed (Sari et al., 2018, p. 57).

So that is what is explained in the gending literature about the philosophy of Aksara Jawa. There are also several other interpretations of Aksara Jawa, but the real meaning is generally the same. We must follow the inner path and walk the path of death by surrendering to God's will because we are only His messengers so that we will be the *padhajaya* (equally victorious) in the end. All the doctrines or teachings conveyed in the ancient Javanese manuscripts show the esoteric religious aspects of Islam that developed at that time (Iswanto, 2018, p. 200). Given the importance of the younger generation to always love the nation's culture as a form of love for the homeland through learning without leaving the purpose of Islamic education itself, namely the cultivation of faith in the noble character, it is necessary to instill in children early (Wahyuni, 2018, p. 9).

The results showed that the values of character education in the semiotic meaning of the Aksara Jawa include the values of character education: (1) religious, (2) hard work, (3) democratic, (4) curiosity, (5) appreciating achievement, (6) peace-loving, (7) social care, and (8) responsibility. These characters are relevant to the character education values set by the Ministry of National Education. Therefore, the value of character education contained in the meaning of the legend of the Aksara Jawa can be used as learning material for Javanese material in schools. As stated by Setyawan, the values of character education in folklore will be much more helpful when used as teaching materials in schools (Sari et al., 2018, p. 61).

Desyandri said that education as a civilizing process is not only a knowledge transformation process that focuses on mastering intellectual abilities alone but also plays a role in inheriting positive cultural values and local wisdom as guidance in giving birth to actions and behaviors. This is in line with UNESCO's recommendation that exploring the values of local wisdom as the basis for character education and other general education will encourage mutual respect between ethnicities, ethnicities, nations, and religions, so that diversity can be maintained. Thus, character education is an effort to realize comprehensive

intelligence so that students have intellectual intelligence, behave well, and respect local cultural wisdom.

Based on the research background, extracting the values of character education contained in the semiotic meaning of the Aksara Jawa legend is needed so that the public can know the values of character education so that the Aksara Jawa legend can be interpreted as an ancestral literacy heritage that contains meaning, message, and the value of character education (Sari et al., 2018, p. 50). Furthermore, according to UNESCO, one of the benefits of cultural literacy is that it can preserve cultural diversity and be critical and evaluative in the face of cultural change (Iswanto, 2018, p. 202).

3. Aksara Jawa and Religious Moderation

Education by including cultural literacy according to the author can dispel rigid Islamic doctrines. Because most people with liberal and radical ideologies in practicing worship only stick to one thought, are intolerant of other thoughts and are selfish in labeling people who have different beliefs from them. Therefore, when drawn from the values contained in the Aksara Jawa "*Ta: Tatas, tutus, titis, titi lan wibawa*, namely fundamental, totality, having a vision, and looking at life carefully so as not to go the wrong way" and "*Sa: Sifat ingsun handulu sifatullah*, which is to build love like God's love" means that rigid attitudes of understanding Islam are not appropriate.

To avoid this attitude, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia incorporates the principle of religious moderation. Moderate is an adjective, a derivative of the word moderation, which means not excessive or moderate. The word moderation itself comes from the Latin *moderatio*, which means moderate, not excess, and not lacking, aka balanced. In the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), the word moderation is defined as reducing violence or avoiding extremes. So, when the word moderation is juxtaposed with the word religion, it becomes religious moderation, the term refers to an attitude of reducing violence or avoiding extremes in religious perspectives, attitudes, and practices.

In Arabic, the equivalent of moderation is *wasath* or *wasathiyah*, which means middle. This word contains the meaning of *i'tidal* (fair) and *tawazun* (balanced). The opposite of moderation is *tatharruf*, which in English means extreme, radical, and excessive, it can also mean excessive. In the context of religion, the notion of "excessive" can be applied to refer to people who have extreme attitudes, namely exceeding the limits and provisions of religious law. So, not extreme is one of the most important keywords in religious moderation because extremity in its various forms is believed to be contrary to the essence of religious teachings and tends to destroy the order of life together, both in the religious life and in the state (Purbalingga, 2021).

Therefore, if you want to formulate it, religious moderation is a religious perspective, attitude, and practice in living together, by embodying the essence of religious teachings that protect human dignity and build public benefit, based on the principles of fairness, balance, and obeying the constitution as a national agreement. Departing from this understanding of moderation, a common thread can be drawn with the Aksara Jawa "*Nga: Ngracut busaning manungso*, which is to let go of the selfishness of the human person". Therefore, where in carrying out our lives we must not be selfish, be strict in religion without thinking about tolerance.

Conclusion

Aksara Jawa is used as the philosophical basis for the concept of divinity and as the center of Javanese mysticism. So that the Aksara Jawa reflects the Javanese human process in understanding the relationship with their environment, namely God and the Universe and

realizing their unity. Man and God signify a vertical relationship and human and nature relationships horizontally. This can be understood as harmonization. Symbolization in Aksara Jawa makes it easier for Javanese people to understand the concept of divinity and get closer to their God. Aksara Jawa contains Islamic values such as must take care of each other, cooperation, instilling tolerance and peace, and should not be selfish. Aksara Jawa also teaches religious moderation

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