

Salasika

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Stigmatized Identity in The Myth of *Dewi Ontrowulan*

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ABSTRACT

The dissociation of *Dewi Ontrowulan* from the pilgrimage site of Mount Kemukus and the participation of women in the sex ritual excite me to explore her myths. Surveying the various myths about *Dewi Ontrowulan*, this paper seeks to sketch the possibly dominant characterization of her. Besides her absence in providing blessings to pilgrims, her presence at the pilgrimage ritual greatly contributes to the brokenness of women's bodies there. I apply feminist phenomenology to unveil the hiddenness of crimes against women. Reconstructing a liberating myth of *Dewi Ontrowulan* necessitates the de-stigmatization of her stigmatized character. The de-stigmatization in this research refers to the recovery of *Dewi Ontrowulan* humanity as a woman. This will possibly redeem a great number of women who participate in the pilgrimage at Mount Kemukus from becoming victims of sex ritual. A feminist re-reading on her myths hopefully also contributes to the liberation of these women from stigmatization.

KEYWORDS: *myth, stigmatized character, broken body, de-stigmatization*

INTRODUCTION

My initial interest in myths of Dewi Ontrowulan started after I accidentally found a signpost at the side of Solo – Purwodadi road which associated the pilgrimage site of Mount Kemukus with the mythical character of Pangeran Samodra. The identification of Mount Kemukus with Pangeran Samodra was more apparent when I arrived at the pilgrimage site. Local residents proudly associated themselves as descendants of Pangeran Samodra. Pilgrims believed in Pangeran Samodra as the one who will grant blessings upon their petitions. Local residents and pilgrims have dissociated Dewi Ontrowulan, another mythical character who

supposedly deserves an equal position, from the pilgrimage site.

“This pilgrimage site is holy. The presence of prostitutes pollutes it,” one respondent testified about it. Besides her absence in providing grace to pilgrims, her presence at the pilgrimage ritual greatly contributes to the brokenness of women's bodies there. I hypothesize that the marginal, even the waning position of Dewi Ontrowulan at the pilgrimage site correlates to the stigma attached to her character in the myths. I sense that the mythical character of Dewi Ontrowulan has shaped the attitude of women participating in the pilgrimage ritual at Mount Kemukus. I especially seek the possible connection between the

continued narration of the myth of Dewi Ontrowulan and the brokenness of *pedhotan* women's bodies (See Table 1).

TABLE 1
 Visitors and Income of Religious Tourism of Mount Kemukus

Year	Number of Visitors	Amount of Income
2001	63.833	122.929.500
2002	52.151	201.691.000
2003	43.509	196.425.000
2004	50.152	192.140.500
2005	120.643	1.251.818.000
2006	84.649	632.258.000
2007	39.295	316.129.000
2008	45.354	170.070.000
2009	42.084	159.187.000
2010	42.056	151.390.000
2011	38.687	155.282.000
2012	38.893	169.250.000
2013	39.323	193.509.000
2014	38.594	Not yet available
2015	30.815	Not yet available

Note. From Tourism Monograph of Sragen Regency 2001 - 2015.

The above table listing the number of visitors to Mount Kemukus overwhelms me as a pro-feminist who investigates the myths of Pangeran Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan, and the practice of sex ritual. Hundreds of women migrating to Mount Kemukus have worked there permanently, or at least temporarily, as basic needs providers, innkeepers, singers at karaoke booths and commercial sex workers. Thousands of women are potentially discreditable annually because they likely participate in the sex ritual after praying at the grave of Pangeran Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan. They believe in the

necessity of performing a sexual ritual with a partner other than their legitimate spouse.

Research Question

1. What is the dominant characterization underlying the various myths of Dewi Ontrowulan?
2. How does such dominant characterization of Dewi Ontrowulan shape the stigmatization of women participating in the pilgrimage rituals at Mount Kemukus?

Research Objectives

1. Deconstructing anthropology, further theology implied in the myths of Dewi Ontrowulan which discredit the identity of women.
2. Resisting the stigmatization of discreditable heredity, even discredited women participating in the pilgrimage rituals at mountain Kemukus by creating a liberating myth of Dewi Ontrowulan.

Providing literacy for the wider community about the danger of abusing the myth of Dewi Ontrowulan to strengthen, and further perpetuate stigma, this study is a literacy of the dangers of mastery in the separation and interpretation of the myths which strengthen, even perpetuate the stigmatization starting from Dewi Ontrowulan to present-day *pedhotan* women.

The methodology of this research is close to Ivone Gebara's feminist phenomenology. Feminist phenomenology promises to unveil the hiddenness of crimes against women. This concealment affects women more than men. Feminist phenomenology gives special attention to the testimony of poor and oppressed women.¹ At the depth of their experience, we can find,

meaning of evil and try to understand its power. But in that effort, we need to listen to the voices in many tones, calculate the nuances in their cries, and note the differences in their grievances and sufferings. We need to identify new sites, which have not adequately identified them, breeding crime.²

The following is the recapitulation of the number of respondents that I interviewed for discussing the research theme.

TABLE 2
Recapitulation of Respondent

Respondents	Total
1. Caretaker of the grave	5
2. Local People (The Owners of Stall and Lodging House)	19
3. Pilgrims	19
4. <i>Pedhotan</i> Women	36

Note. Personal Documentation

As with many other local pilgrimage sites, the availability of transmitted oral traditions into

written documents about mythical characters of Pangeran Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan is considerably rare. F. Rahardi in his *Ritual Gunung Kemukus* (2008) brings me close to abundant myths of Pangeran Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan circulated among local residents and pilgrims. It impels me to listen particularly to local residents, pilgrims, and *pedhotan* women in relating with the mythical character Dewi Ontrowulan. I also examine their receptivity toward Dewi Ontrowulan as a paradigmatic character. I make use of new materials about Dewi Ontrowulan to deconstruct the stigmatized identity in most of her popular myths.

The local government of Sragen, Pendem villagers, and pilgrims have narrated various myths about Dewi Ontrowulan. It is extremely difficult to determine the more orthodox myth of Dewi Ontrowulan. This difficulty complicates the academic effort to investigate the dominant characterization of her in these myths. I object to the stigmatized image of the Dewi Ontrowulan who attaches her body to sexual immorality. In contrast to the popular versions featuring Dewi Ontrowulan as a beautifully conceited king's concubine or stepmother who failed to tame her sexual libido, Dewi Ontrowulan is in fact a suffering woman whose body is broken. I see the importance to narrate Dewi Ontrowulan anew as a *pedhotan* woman.

It is difficult to recognize the first author of myths of Prince Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan. It is also difficult to confirm the first time of telling them and to recognize the redactional changes to myth until the definitive form now

¹ Gebara, Ivone. (2002). *Out of the Depths: Women's Experience of Evil and Salvation* (pp. 14 - 15) (Ann Patrick Ware, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.

² Gebara, Ivone. (2002). *Out of the Depths: Women's Experience of Evil and Salvation* (p. 13) (Ann Patrick Ware, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.

circulating among local residents and pilgrims. Myths do not have an author. They belong to

the common wisdom of humanity, which is preserved by the collective unconscious in the form of great symbols, archetypes and of exemplary figures. In each generation this wisdom emerges to the conscience in the form of a thousand facets, and through these many facets it always transmits the same essential message. It enlightens pathways and it inspires practices.³

I compiled myths of Pangeran Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan. All portray Dewi Ontrowulan as a mute character. In most myths authors depict her as a licentious woman whose sexual appetite disturbs social order. I inquire the availability of other myths of Dewi Ontrowulan among local residents and pilgrims to challenge such stigmatized characterization of her. I seek a path that allows observation on her life as a mute, even muted woman. I also examine the possible effect of her myth transmitted orally in modelling the lives of pedhotan women at Mount Kemukus. Feminists have contributed greatly in opening an alternative path to this interpretation by paying attention to the broken bodies of women around the world.

As a novice in the study of mythology, I am particularly indebted to the works of Mircea Eliade which introduce me to the world of myth. "Myths, that is,

narrate not only the origin of the world, of animals, of plants, and of man, but also all the primordial events in consequence of which man became what he is today-mortal, sexed, organized in a society, obliged to work in order to live, and working in accordance with certain rules."⁴ Culture manifests limitedly in the structures and styles conditioned by history.⁵ Eliade underlines the complexity of myth as a cultural reality. People living in an oral culture or mythographers approach and interpret myth from various and complementary viewpoints. They modify, adjust, and systematize it throughout the ages.⁶

Myth is a form of mental support of the ritual. Meanwhile, ritual is a physical reenactment of myth. It serves to "give form to the human life, not the order on the surface, but to the depth". Human beings are open to social imprinting from century to century. Rituals are a means of social recording in the lives of individuals by absorbing myths and engaging in them.⁷ Karen Armstrong enlightens me with her notion about the absence of a single version, further an orthodox one of a myth. When the situation changes, human beings as the creator of the myth need to tell the myth

³ Boff, Leonardo. (2008). *Essential Care: An Ethics of Human Nature* (p. 23) (Alexandre Guilherme, Trans. and Notes). Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.

⁴ Eliade, Mircea. (1956). *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (p. 11) (Willard R. Trask, Trans.). New York, NY: Harvest Book.

⁵ Eliade, Mircea. (1956). *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (p. 16) (Willard R. Trask, Trans.). New York, NY: Harvest Book; Ibid, (1961). *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism* (p. , 173) (Philip Mairet, Trans.) New York, NY: Sheed and Ward.

⁶ Eliade, Mircea. (1956). *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (pp. 4-5) (Willard R. Trask, Trans.). New York, NY: Harvest Book.

⁷ Joseph Campbell, Joseph. (1973). *Myths to Live By*. New York, NY: Bantam Books..

differently to reveal its eternal truth. Every time taking a big step forward, humans review myths in order to speak in a new context.⁸

In a literal sense, stigma is a sign on the body. Now stigma is mainly used to denote disgrace of the person. The term refers to the attribute, more precisely the normal group relationship which discredits the stigmatized person. Erving Goffman distinguishes the differentness that other people already know (discredited heredity) and that others do not know (discreditable identity) when meeting with him. The most severe types of stigma are damaged body, defective character, and belonging to a certain race, nation and religion. The 'normal' group assembles theory, ideology to justify low status and stigmatized dangers. They reinforce it with norms which effectively limit the lives of stigmatized people.⁹

Ivone Gebara helps me to see the initially disguised link between myth of Dewi Ontrowulan and present stories of the pedhotan women. According to Gebara, we deal with:

the division of crime at once now and comes from the past. When suffering is described even if it lasts, it contains something of the past when we now call it. The wound when we talk about it here has a certain distance from the event. It is there as a narrated memory, and as such it contains an interpretation.... We are the

people who always narrate the story, and every time we do, we take care of the past and light traces of the present.¹⁰

Developing body theology, feminist theologians Lisa Isherwood and Elizabeth Stuart emphasize the importance of appreciating women anew as embodied humans, not just humans who live in the body. The body theology places woman's experience as embodied human at the center of theological narrative. It erodes prejudices, stereotypes, and even the stigma attached to the woman body in religion. In this theology, the body becomes the site of ongoing theological reflection and revelation of God.¹¹ Owing to Leonardo Boff's idea that myth implies a certain anthropology, I encourage further academic discussion by arguing that the *pedhotan* woman's narrative at the mountain of Kemukus implies a certain feminist theology.

THE MYTHICAL CHARACTER OF PANGERAN SAMODRA

A caretaker of the grave believes that Prince Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan are historical figures living in the eras of the Hindu kingdom of Sanjaya and Buddhist Syailendra, long before the birth of the Islamic kingdom of Demak. Local residents saw a supernatural sign of white smoke rising from the mountain area where his grave is. An anonymous prince of the Surakarta

⁸ Armstrong, Karen. (2005). *A Short History of Myth* (pp. 9-10, 1st ed.). Edinburgh: Canongate U.S.

⁹ Erving Erving Goffman. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (pp. 1 – 6). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

¹⁰ Gebara, Ivone. (2002). *Out of the Depths: Women's Experience of Evil and Salvation* (pp. 16 – 17) (Ann Patrick Ware, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.

¹¹ Isherwood, L., & Stuart, E. (1998). *Introducing Body Theology* (pp. 33 – 51). Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press.

palace became one of the earliest pilgrims. He deeply meditated to receive supernatural illumination for solving his existential problem. There he met with a female pilgrim and built an intimate, even sexual relationship with her. Receiving the abundant blessing of Pangeran Samodra, he and his family sacrificed animals in the graveyard of his tomb.¹²

Mystery shrouds the life story of Pangeran Samodra. Especially on the eve of Friday Pon and Kliwon, Prince Samodra is pleased to move from the cemetery. Leaving the grave through the back road, he walks on the roots of Nagasari trees which spread over the ground. Unbeknownst to the pilgrims, he joins in conversation among those who are observing the tomb. Pangeran Samodra will immediately answer their petitions if pilgrims have the privilege of meeting him privately. Besides the back door of the graveyard building, one local resident believes that a mysterious tunnel at his inn is connected to the grave. Pangeran Samodra often leaves the grave through it to meet pilgrims.¹³

Local residents believe that Pangeran Samodra protects residents from both natural and human disasters. One resident told a story of an aging Nagasari tree at Mount Kemukus which collapsed on the ground. The falling direction of the tree was supposed to befall the resident's house right below it. Prince Samodra used his supernatural power to turn the

direction of the falling tree to save the life of the resident. Moreover, Pangeran Samodra sustains their lives economically by bringing pilgrims to Mount Kemukus. Believing in Pangeran Samodra as the village protector, even the blessing provider to residents, one sub-village leader mobilizes residents under his authority to clean the tomb of Pangeran Samodra regularly.

Pangeran Samodra distributes blessings toward wider society beyond the geographical boundaries of Mount Kemukus. An elderly woman who runs the food stall and inn expresses her anger at the assistant of the bus driver who takes the route of Solo – Purwodadi. He underestimates her as soon as he learns that her final destination will be at Mount Kemukus. She scolds the assistant of the bus driver, "Do you forget that the autobus company you work with now can survive because Pangeran Samodra blesses it? How many passengers whose arrival at and departure from Mount Kemukus fill the bus seats? How dare you despise us, descendants of Pangeran Samodra?" She almost kicked his groin if only he refused to ask her forgiveness.¹⁴

A pilgrim living in the city of J who has a sand mining business in the city of B and rice mills in the city of W had started pilgrimages to Mount Kemukus since 1979. Restlessness overwhelmed him in choosing the most profitable business. His wife predicted that establishing an auto-bus company prospectively will give them material wealth. On a pilgrimage at Mount Kemukus, he received a

¹² Interview with caretaker of the grave on June 26, 2016.

¹³ Interview with Innkeeper on May 29, 2014;
Interview with innkeeper on February 12, 2017.

¹⁴ Interview with Innkeeper on May 29, 2014.

supernatural illumination from Pangeran Samodra about the great risk of establishing an auto company. It takes a high rate of cost to repair a damaged bus. Sand mining is economically more promising than an auto-company. From the sand mining business, he gets money to buy land he uses for establishing a rice mill.¹⁵

Advances in information and communication technology accelerate transmission of the myth of Prince Samodra who provides material blessings to pilgrims. Pangeran Samodra personally called them to visit his grave. When one of my fellow travelers tells about this pilgrimage site, like a leaf blown by the wind,

the direction of our trip mysteriously turns to Mount Kemukus. In fact, this location is not on the list when we leave the city of B. The timber business fell in the last half of the year. Knowing my husband lives extravagantly with the family wealth, I lost reason to take care of our businesses. Visiting Mount Kemukus only once, I regain my spirit to manage the collapsing wood business.¹⁶

Pilgrims who visit the pilgrimage site of Mount Kemukus have tried all human efforts, but failed in business. A pilgrim from the city of B came to the grave of Pangeran Samodra would do everything Pangeran Samodra asked for her business.

Although it is a black ritual, if Pangeran Samodra requires me to perform sex ritual with my

pilgrimage partner, I will do it. Because it is a black ritual, it should not break relationship in the respective family. Each must keep the relationship that happened at Mount Kemukus as secret. After returning home, we should restrict ourselves from contacting with each other. Because we are foreign to each other, the risk of breaking the family relationship is minor.¹⁷

In addition to the reciprocal promise by the couples over the grave, "mystical marriage" between pilgrims takes place covertly on Mount Kemukus. In front of the caretaker of the grave, the couples pronounce vows to live together as husband and wife. Pangeran Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan become witnesses and role models as well for the new family. They promise to serve their pilgrimage spouse at Mount Kemukus better than the legitimate spouse at home. Pilgrims who first reach success in running business also commit to share blessings with their partners. Pangeran Samodra will withdraw his blessings from pilgrims who break the commitment. They will move back in their initial economic condition at Mount Kemukus, even in worse condition.¹⁸

The couple from city of K city who runs a grocery store and an inn for pilgrims believes that their business survives, even makes profit because Pangeran Samodra blesses it. He also protects their business from greedy competitors who cheat in making profit. According to the husband's acknowledgment, Pangeran Samodra loves his wife

¹⁵ Interview with pilgrim on December 24, 2015.

¹⁶ Interview with pilgrim on June 14, 2016.

¹⁷ Interview with pilgrim on Sunday, June 12, 2016.

¹⁸ Interview with pilgrim on March 29, 2017.

greatly by repeatedly granting her requests. When he communicates with her sternly, Pangeran Samodra immediately rebukes him. Every day his wife offers King banana, the favorite dish of Pangeran Samodra, in the family room to express gratitude upon his blessing. "In contrast to Pangeran Samodra who grants blessings for major requests, such as business and wealth, Dewi Ontrowulan involves in minor affairs."¹⁹

The practice of performing sex ritual to conclude pilgrimage at Mount Kemukus becomes the most controversial legacy of Pangeran Samodra. "If you want something, you need to yearn it the way you passionately desire your lover." The receptivity of these last words echoed by local residents and pilgrims implies their adoration toward him as the mythical character of Mount Kemukus. Despite their religious affiliations, pilgrims even reach the point of idolizing him as the one who provides blessings. They even interpret his last words literally as an instruction to perform sex ritual after praying at his grave. His words and deeds become sources of stigmatization first against Dewi Ontrowulan and second against women participating in the pilgrimage.

The local government of Sragen portray Pangeran Samodra anew as a religious figure who studied Islamic faith and who was involved in spreading it. On his way back to Demak after completing missionary work, he fell ill which led to his premature death. This version of the myth omits materials about his

intimate relationship with his mother which causes social disorder. Some pilgrims emphasize the privileged position of Pangeran Samodra as a male descendant of Raden Patah, whose Islamic faith community upholds his father as lover of God. This close relation between them drives pilgrims to visit the grave of Raden Patah first and the tomb of Pangeran Samodra afterwards. His relationship with Dewi Ontrowulan does not have this religious privilege.

THE STIGMATIZED CHARACTER OF DEWI ONTROWULAN

Local residents and pilgrims have associated pilgrimage to Mount Kemukus with the figure of Pangeran Samodra. They rarely mention Dewi Ontrowulan apart from her connection with Pangeran Samodra. They refer to her in togetherness with, even dependence on him. Her character dims when she is side by side with Pangeran Samodra. She disappears before him. She is a forgotten figure in a pilgrimage to Mount Kemukus. She often sinks to oblivion in the figure of Pangeran Samodra. This paper takes a distance from the myths which put the Dewi Ontrowulan as a person whose dignity as a woman depends on Pangeran Samodra. They portray Dewi Ontrowulan either as a biological mother, stepmother or lover of Pangeran Samodra.

My interest in the myth of Dewi Ontrowulan increases with the sex ritual attached to the pilgrimage on Mount Kemukus. Although all caretakers have socialized the absence of conditions attached to

prayer at the grave, many pilgrims have believed in the obligation of performing the sex ritual. Until the mid-1980s, they even performed sex ritual around the tomb. Pangeran Samodra would immediately grant their appeals if they performed sexual ritual close to the grave. Some believe in the obligation of having sexual intercourse with fellow pilgrims who are not their spouses on the eve of Friday Pon for seven consecutive times. Besides a few commercial sex workers disguised as pilgrims, this oblation risks a great number of women who visit the pilgrimage site.

In contrast to Pangeran Samodra whose name is free of stigmatization, the name "Ontrowulan" etymologically derives from the root words "*ontran-ontran*" (English: disorder) and "*wulan*" (English: month).²⁰ People gossiped her immoral deeds of lusting toward her biological son, at least her stepson, for a long period of time. Her taboo relationship caused social disorder in the society. Instead of observing social norm, she violated it. When authority disciplined her misbehavior, she escaped with her lover to Mount Kemukus to continue the illicit relationship. She died with a charge of violation against social norm. Stigma against Dewi Ontrowulan was started since the creation of her mythical character.

Dewi Ontrowulan lived during the time when society positioned women in the domestic sphere. She complied with this role division between men and women despite

her limited activities in and around the house. She spent most of her times fulfilling her duties, such as cleaning the house, preparing food for husband and caring for her body. Water is close to her because of its centrality in these household activities. She ensured that the water supply met household needs even when long draught plagued the area. Transporting water from the water spring to the house, even looking for water springs became her feminine skills. Society considered water as feminine and attached it to her. After her death, local residents named water springs after her.

Society considers water and plants as feminine, and attaches them to women. Dewi Ontrowulan cleansed herself before mourning over the dead body of Pangeran Samodra whose servants have been craved in Mount Kemukus. In the myth, on her way to the top of Mount Kemukus, Dewi Ontrowulan's wet hair parted and flew water to all directions. A variety of buds of flora magically grew from water which fell to the ground. Mount Kemukus turned into forest with large trees, such as Nagasari. Water and plants become minor symbols at the pilgrimage site of Mount Kemukus. Washing the body and offering flowers at the grave become minor activities in comparison to masculine activities attached to Pangeran Samodra.

In contrast to Pangeran Samodra who left the tomb to greet and listen to the appeals of pilgrims, Dewi Ontrowulan moved from the grave to look for her husband who was not at her side. Despite meeting pilgrims, she conceives that the tasks of greeting them and granting them blessings belong to her husband.

²⁰ Interview with one caretaker of the grave on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_INp6tvhtc. I access it on March 9, 2017 at 08.51 PM.

Granting material blessings for business and wealth lies in the public, not domestic, sphere. Although all caretakers emphasize that Pangeran Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan are equal co-intermediaries for pilgrims' appeals, pilgrims learn that Pangeran Samodra takes the role as the main, even sole, intermediary. Pilgrims convey their petitions directly through, even to Pangeran Samodra.

Myths portray Dewi Ontrowulan as a woman who performed skillfulness in caring, even beautifying her body. Dewi Ontrowulan fulfills the role at Mount Kemukus as the wife of Pangeran Samodra by granting beauty to her fellow female pilgrims. One pilgrimage couple met acquaintances from the city of J with whom they stayed at the same rental house during pilgrimage. They were amazed that their acquaintance became more beautiful than when they first met her. Instead of relating her beauty to cosmetic treatments, they connect it with the spirit of Dewi Ontrowulan. "Your beauty resembles Dewi Ontrowulan. Certainly the *khodam* of Dewi Ontrowulan follows and helps you. Your face shines beautifully because her spirit surely follows you."²¹

When the water of Kedung Ombo dam increases, local residents provide transportation services by boat and work as seasonal fishermen. In addition to installing fish traps, some seasonal fishermen catch fish by throwing themselves into the reservoir to the waist-high, even the neck. Every year at least one seasonal fisherman sinks as he plunges into the reservoir. Villagers

believe that Dewi Ontrowulan takes the fishermen's lives. The mystical tunnel connects the Ontrowulan fountain with Kedung Ombo dam. When requiring her sacrifice, the spirit of Dewi Ontrowulan pulls her victim into the tunnel until he loses breath. In contrast to Prince Samodra who provides blessings, myths stigmatize Dewi Ontrowulan as one who brings disaster, even death.²²

Instead of continuing life as a widow, she offered her life by dying prematurely at the side of her dead husband. This act symbolizes her oblation as a devoted wife. In the myth, their servants buried Pangeran Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan in the same grave. When they laid her body into the grave, it disappeared from sight. Places where his servants laid his dead body, placed his body at the grave, and other places attached to him were considered sacred for it implies "hierophany, an irruption of the sacred."²³ The mystical sign "*kukus*", fog at Mount Kemukus, sufficed to indicate the sacredness of his grave. Irruption of the sacred happened did not in places where Dewi Ontrowulan did her activities.

The phenomenon of women migrating to Mount Kemukus closely links to the myth of Dewi Ontrowulan. The accepted necessity for pilgrims to perform ritual around the tomb of these two mythical figures demands the availability of women to accompany the pilgrimage, even to provide sexual services for pilgrims who go

²² Interview with innkeeper on June 25, 2016.

²³ Eliade, Mircea. (1956). *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (p. 26) (Willard R. Trask, Trans.). New York, NY: Harvest Book.

²¹ Interview with pilgrim on March 28, 2017.

without partners. I use the term "*pedhotan*" woman to capture this phenomenon. The term emphasizes the violation against a woman's body, and uplifts the humanity of women who become victims in the sex ritual on Mount Kemukus. Bodily damage may take the form of overdose because of alcohol consumption, the provision of sexual services, and the vulnerability to sexually transmitted disease from unsafe sexual intercourse.

Erotic words, body exposure of *pedhotan* women often disguise stigmatization against their identity. At the surface they seem lighthearted, even are full of jokes, while offering sexual services to pilgrims such as from a waitress peddling instant noodle, coffee, cigarettes or beer to visitors. They see the need to expose their beautiful bodies to ignite the visitors' lust as part of a marketing strategy in selling products. They serve leaky conversations full of erotic content to attract guests into the booth inn. They wait for customers who order food and drinks at the food stalls where they help the owners. Ordering food and drinks often serves a preliminary negotiation for having sex with some stall owners who work part time as commercial sex workers.

The more fragments which form her myths, the clearer I see the linkage between Dewi Ontrowulan and *pedhotan* women. I see life fragments of *pedhotan* women in myths of Dewi Ontrowulan. Some fragments of myths of Dewi Ontrowulan have survived in the lives of *pedhotan* women. Dewi Ontrowulan whom society discredited as one breaking social order died bearing stigmatized

identity. *Pedhotan* women, whose identities are discreditable by society because by their migration to Mount Kemukus, they suffer vulnerability of bearing stigmatized identity as well. I come to the belief that Dewi Ontrowulan to some extent is a *pedhotan* woman, and *pedhotan* women are today's Ontrowulan.

A local resident who runs a small grocery store and rents rooms opens his eyes to the fact that boat crews, motorcycle taxi drivers, parking attendants, florists, cooks who prepare food for Slametan, receive blessings from Mount Kemukus. However, he points his finger at the Sragen regency government as the most responsible institution for allowing the establishment of a karaoke booth and the prostitution which have polluted the pilgrimage ritual on Mount Kemukus. "From many points of view the sex ritual among pilgrims after pleading blessing at the grave of Pangeran Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan violates the three following institutions at once. It violates marriage. It violates law. It violates religion."²⁴

The mythical authors portray Pangeran Samodra as a powerful symbol that crystallizes the dreams of pilgrims to live in abundant wealth. Listening to his existential saga, pilgrims find themselves and the fullness of their dream. On the contrary, they find it difficult to find a person who "lives a biography, a story or an existential saga, so that many people rediscover themselves in it or through it find the fullness of

²⁴ Interview with innkeeper on June 11, 2016.

their dreams"²⁵ in the character of Dewi Ontrowulan. The mythical authors display Dewi Ontrowulan in contrast to Pangeran Samodra who "transforms himself as a powerful symbol capable of crystallizing the collective dreams, connecting them directly with the masses and mobilizing them".²⁶ Her figure suffers marginalization completely both in myth and ritual.

The connection between Dewi Ontrowulan and *pedhotan* women has not been comprehensively explored in the reading and interpretation of myths about her. In contrast to Pangeran Samodra, Dewi Ontrowulan is a muted character. More than just becoming a flat character, the pledge of Dewi Ontrowulan copulates her identity as a woman. In myths, she becomes a character who suffers stigmatization, even loses her identity. Similar tragedy overshadows the lives of *pedhotan* women. While muteness characterizes Dewi Ontrowulan in myth, their broken bodies characterize *pedhotan* women in their lives. The more pilgrims perform ritual on Mount Kemukus, the more bodies of the *pedhotan* women suffer brokenness.

The broken bodies of *pedhotan* women contradict popular beliefs about the absence of risk, further sacrificial victims in the ritual at Mount Kemukus.

If you desire success and richness instantly, you will come to Mount Kemukus. If you go to Mount Kawi, one of your children,

nephews, grandchildren, or grandchildren's nieces will be born as idiot. If you pet tuyul, and he is caught, then one of his hands was nailed, then your hand will wound. If you come to Jimbung, and pet turtle, then your skin will be exposed with white dots. When all white dots connect, you will die and turn into turtle... The safest location is Mount Kemukus. There is no risk, no sacrifice.²⁷

CONCLUSION: DE-STIGMATIZING THE CHARACTER OF ONTROWULAN

Local residents and pilgrims have preserved Pangeran Samodra's favored position of Pangeran Samodra as a mythical character. His words and deeds have become "instructive", even "hegemonic" toward local residents and pilgrims. Separating pilgrimage at the grave from performing sex ritual becomes an almost impossibility because they will need to ignore his final instructions. The official myth of Pangeran Samodra which lacks "mythical substance" only becomes "literature."²⁸ It fails to address the pilgrims' timeless agony in living unbearable poverty and pleading to live abundantly. It takes for granted the patriarchal religion-culture which mutes women's voices, while even worse sacrificing their bodies.

²⁵ Boff, Leonardo. (2008). *Essential Care: An Ethics of Human Nature* (p. 29) (Alexandre Guilherme, Trans. and Notes). Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Rahardi, F. (2008). *Ritual Gunung Kemukus: Sebuah Novel* (p. 1). Bantul, YK: Lamalera.

²⁸ Eliade, Mircea. (1956). *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (p. 4) (Willard R. Trask, Trans.). Trask. New York, NY: Harvest Book.

The inflection of patriarchal religion-culture in myths of Dewi Ontrowulan takes the form of institution which claims authority to stigmatize her. It gives juridical justification to punish her abnormal act, even execute her life in the most extreme way. In the exile, hegemonic culture takes the form of labor division within society that limits her freedom to involve in public sphere. Labor division embodies social stratification that depreciates her presence in the domestic sphere and the symbols related to it. Her premature death exposes the hegemonic power of patriarchal culture which dehumanizes women starting from birth. Reconstructing a liberating myth of Dewi Ontrowulan necessitates de-stigmatization of her character.

The de-stigmatization of this research recovers the humanity of Dewi Ontrowulan as a woman. It potentially redeems a great number of women who participate in the pilgrimage at Mount Kemukus from becoming victims of sex ritual. They often articulate powerlessness when fellow pilgrims offer them money for becoming a partner in sex ritual during pilgrimage, and becoming a wife in a mystical wedding. Moreover, the local government of Sragen at best persuades pilgrims through the caretakers of the grave about the absence of requirement to perform sex ritual. Despite the provision of official myth about Pangeran Samodra and Dewi Ontrowulan which removes sex ritual from the pilgrimage, many women plunge from discreditable heredity to discredited identity.

Learning from the failure of official myth by the local

government of Sragen in providing "mythical substance", any attempt to reconstruct a new myth of Dewi Ontrowulan also necessitates literacy about "demythogized world" which contrasts *mythos* with both *logos* and *historia*. This paper reconstructs a new myth of Dewi Ontrowulan in a society "in which myth is--or was until very recently-"living," in the sense that it supplies models for human behavior and, by that very fact, gives meaning and value to life."²⁹ As the narration of her myth has moved from more oral to more literate culture, I see the need to take into consideration of the myth more appropriately as "a sacred story, and hence a "true history," because it always deals the realities."³⁰

Deconstructing myths of Pangeran Samodra in our "demythologized" world requires great efforts in introducing Dewi Ontrowulan as a new mythical character. As society has become literate about a great number of women becoming victims of sex ritual because of their discreditable heredity, further discredited identity, we see both the urgency and necessity of telling a new myth of Mount Kemukus. I portray Dewi Ontrowulan anew as a courageous woman who challenges hegemonic powers which stigmatize her identity. The de-stigmatization of her character for living abundantly as a human being provides a life model that potentially inspires local residents, pilgrims, and *pedhotan*

²⁹ Eliade, Mircea. (1956). *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (p. 2) (Willard R. Trask, Trans.). New York, NY: Harvest Book.

³⁰ Eliade, Mircea. (1956). *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (p. 6) (Willard R. Trask, Trans.). New York, NY: Harvest Book.

women to animate their present lives.

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