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From Qur'anic narrative to Javanese literary imagination: Cultural translation in Serat Ambiya

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Abstract: *The circulation of sacred narratives across cultural boundaries involves not only textual transmission but also transformations through which narratives acquire new meanings within receiving cultures. This study examines the cultural translation of Qur'anic narratives in Serat Ambiya through the stories of the Prophets Nuh, Yusuf, Musa, Yunus, and Daud. Employing a qualitative approach, the study uses comparative textual analysis within the framework of comparative literature. Intertextual relations are examined through Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, while cultural transformations are interpreted through Doris Bachmann-Medick's perspective on cultural translation. The findings reveal three interrelated mechanisms. First, cultural recontextualization occurs through narrative elaboration and the repositioning of prophetic narratives within Javanese cultural horizons. Second, cultural negotiation preserves Islamic ethical and spiritual orientations while articulating them through local systems of meaning. Third, cultural mediation operates through literary and visual representations, particularly wayang visual idioms, colors, clothing, gestures, and spatial representations that render prophetic figures intelligible within a Javanese aesthetic vocabulary. These mechanisms reveal a reciprocal process: Islamic narratives acquire Javanese articulation, while Javanese cultural repertoire is resemanticized to represent prophetic meanings. Thus, Serat Ambiya emerges as a site of meaning production that demonstrates the agency of Javanese literature in recreating narratives across cultural boundaries.*

Keywords: *cultural translation, Serat Ambiya, Qur'anic narratives, comparative literature, Javanese literature*

INTRODUCTION

The circulation of sacred narratives across cultural boundaries not only shows the transfer of texts, but also shows the way in which a society receives, interprets, and recreates these narratives within its cultural horizon. In this process, meaning does not move completely and mechanically from one context to another, but rather undergoes negotiation and recontextualization through language, social structures, literary conventions, and symbolic systems of the receiving society. Bachmann-Medick places translation in a broader sense as both a concept as well as a model for understanding the process of cultural encounter. Translation thus is not limited to interlinguistic relations, but includes a process of transfer and mediation that allows representation to move across cultural boundaries while acquiring new meanings (Neumann et al., 2012). This perspective becomes relevant when the Qur'anic narrative moves into the Javanese literary tradition.

The relationship between the Qur'an and Javanese culture has a long textual history. Acceptance of the Qur'an takes place through various forms, both oral, written, action, and visual representation (Misbah, 2023). In the textual tradition, these

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encounters give birth to translations, interpretations, songs, fibers, and various literary works that bring together Islamic sources with local language and aesthetics. The use of Javanese and the Pegon script, for example, shows how Islamic knowledge is transmitted through a medium that is close to the recipient community (Zuhri, 2022). In the translation of the Qur'an in the form of a macapat, the process even involves adjustments to the teacher of the Qur'an, the teacher of song, and the level of speaking of the Javanese language (Hidayat et al., 2024). This shows that the acceptance of religious texts is at the same time an aesthetic and cultural process.

Serat Ambiya occupies an important position in the process because it represents the stories of the prophets in the world of Javanese literature. The tradition of the prophet's story is part of a vast textual network in the Islamic world, while various Ambiya manuscripts produced and copied in Javanese show how fundamental Islamic stories were received and transmitted in the local environment. Ricci's study of Layang Ambiya from a nineteenth-century pesantren environment shows that the text is part of the tradition of transmission of prophetic stories that allows reading of the way Javanese people understand Islamic stories and messages (Ricci, 2021). Its textual diversity is also seen in Serat Ambiya Pelemgadung which shows certain socio-cultural characteristics and content in its manuscript variants (Maulana et al., 2021). Thus, Serat Ambiya is not only important as a documentation of prophetic stories, but also as a trace of the encounter between Islamic narrative traditions and Javanese literary creativity.

A number of studies on Islam and Javanese literature have shown that these encounters are productive. The representation of Islam in Javanese literary works is related to the poetic strategies and aesthetic imagination of the authors and the cultural environment that shapes the text (Fawaid et al., 2022). Studies on the translation of the Qur'an in the form of macapat also show that the message of the Qur'an has undergone adjustment to the literary form and knowledge horizon of the Javanese people (Azizah et al., 2024). In fact, Serat Yusup, which departs from Surah Yusuf, shows a significant narrative development of its inspirational text and brings together Islamic teachings with the culture and idealization of Javanese people (Pudjiastuti et al., 2025). The entire study shows that Javanese literature is not a passive medium for the transmission of Islamic narratives, but rather a space where religious materials acquire new linguistic, narrative, and aesthetic articulations.

Nevertheless, the process that allowed the prophetic narrative of the Qur'an to acquire the configuration of Javanese literature in the Serat Ambiya still requires further explanation. The problem lies not only in the existence of local elements in the text, but in the mechanism of movement of meaning when a narrative crosses two cultural systems. In the manuscript that is the object of this study, the stories of the prophet Noah, Joseph, Moses, Jonah, and David appear dominant. The dominance of these five figures provides an important comparative terrain because their narratives are also present in the Qur'an, thus allowing a trace of what happens when Qur'anic episodes are rerepresented through the narrative structure and cultural horizons of Javanese. The comparison is not directed to measure the fidelity of Serat Ambiya to the Qur'an as a source text, but to identify how the story is chosen, developed, replaced, and culturally articulated in literary texts.

On that basis, the novelty of this research lies in the reading of Serat Ambiya as a space for cultural translation that reproduces the meaning of prophetic narratives

through recontextualization, negotiation, and cultural mediation. Recontextualization explains how prophetic stories are placed into the horizon of Javanese understanding through social relations, communication patterns, and cultural imagery recognized by the recipient community. Negotiation shows how the ethical and spiritual values brought by Islamic narratives interact with Javanese cultural sensitivities, while mediation shows the function of literary representation as an intermediary space that allows sacred narratives to gain cultural acceptance as well as local aesthetic forms. These three mechanisms are used as analytical categories to read the movement of meaning between the Qur'an and Serat Ambiya within the framework of Bachmann-Medick cultural translation, which views translation as a cultural practice that goes beyond linguistic transfer (Neumann et al., 2012).

With this perspective, this research focuses on comparing the narratives of the Prophets Noah, Joseph, Moses, Jonah, and David in Serat Ambiya with related narratives in the Qur'an to reveal the mechanisms of cultural translation that work between the two. This focus places Serat Ambiya not as a form of derivative of its religious sources, but as a space for the production of meaning where narratives that circulate beyond cultural boundaries gain local literary life. This study is ultimately directed to show the agency of Javanese literature in receiving, negotiating, and recreating cross-cultural narratives, while placing Indonesian literature in a broader dynamic regarding the circulation and transformation of world literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Comparative Literature and Intertextuality

Comparative literature is a framework for placing literary works in relationships that transcend the boundaries of one language and cultural tradition (Wulandari, 2016). Remak views comparative literature as a literary study that transcends the boundaries of a country and the study of the relationship between literature and other fields of knowledge and belief (Remak, 1961). This understanding expands comparison from simply searching for similarities between two works to literary relationships that take place across cultural and disciplinary boundaries. The development of comparative literature further shows a shift towards cross-cultural issues, translation, and encounters of various literary traditions (Nugraha, 2021). In this framework, comparative literature is relevant to bring together prophetic narratives in the Qur'an and Serat Ambiya as two representations that are in different textual and cultural systems.

The relationship between texts is emphasized through Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality. Through her reading of Bakhtin's dialogism, Kristeva views text not as a stand-alone entity, but as a meeting space for various speeches and other texts. Texts are formed through the process of absorption and transformation so that their meanings are always relational (Kristeva, 1980). This concept provides a foundation for understanding the re-presence of the narratives of Noah, Joseph, Moses, Jonah, and David in the Ambiya Fiber as a transformational textual relationship. Comparative literature thus becomes a relational framework for the two texts, while intertextuality helps explain the relationship and narrative transformation that takes place between the two. The cultural dimension of the transformation is further explained through the perspective of cultural translation.

Cultural Translation

These intertextual relationships are further placed in the perspective of Doris Bachmann-Medick's cultural translation to understand the cultural dimension of narrative transformation. Cultural translation extends translation from the transfer of meaning between languages to the process of transfer and mediation of representations, concepts, and meanings among cultural systems. Bachmann-Medick places translation as a category of practice as well as an analytical category to understand cultural encounters that are not limited to binary relationships between languages or national literature (Neumann et al., 2012).

In this study, cultural translation is understood through three interrelated concepts, namely recontextualization, cultural negotiation, and mediation. Recontextualization refers to the repositioning of a narrative into a new cultural horizon so as to obtain a context of meaning that is appropriate to the recipient's environment. Cultural negotiation refers to the meeting between systems of meaning when values and representations from different cultures interact with each other without assuming the elimination of one of them. Meanwhile, mediation is an intermediate process that allows representations from one cultural horizon to be present and gain understanding in another cultural horizon. Translation in the Bachmann-Medick perspective thus becomes a medium that can show cultural differences as well as the process of transfer and mediation that occurs in the encounter (Neumann et al., 2012).

The interconnectedness of comparative literature, intertextuality, and cultural translation provides a conceptual foundation for understanding the movement of prophetic narratives from the Qur'an to Serat Ambiya. Comparative literature provides a relational framework between texts, intertextuality explains the absorption and transformation of narratives, while cultural translation explains the movement of meaning that accompanies this transformation in the encounter between the narrative horizon of the Qur'an and Javanese culture.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative research with a textual-comparative analysis method in a comparative literature framework. Qualitative research was chosen because the study is directed at the interpretation of relationships, transformations, and meanings built through textual data. In literary studies, textual analysis through close reading allows texts to be interpreted in depth by paying attention to the relationship between textual elements and the theoretical framework used (Kelly, 2013). Close reading also remains one of the important practices in contemporary comparative literature studies (Baetens & Meneghelli, 2024) . The primary data source of the research is in the form of Ambiya Fiber from the collection of the Sonobudoyo Museum L 12 PB A. 180 in the results of the study (Syahrazad, 2024) and the Qur'an with a corpus focused on the narrative of the Prophet Noah, Joseph, Moses, Jonah, and David who appear dominant in the manuscript. Data in the form of textual units in the form of events, dialogues, characterizations, relationships between characters, settings, and representations of values and cultures that show the connection and transformation between the two texts.

Data was collected through documentation and close reading by identifying and pairing episodes in Serat Ambiya with related narratives in the Qur'an based on

characters, events, motives, and story context. Analysis was carried out through three stages. First, the two narratives were compared to identify textual continuity and differences. Second, the relationship was read through Kristeva's intertextuality to find the absorption and transformation of the narrative. Third, the transformations found were interpreted through Bachmann-Medick's cultural translation based on three analytical categories, namely recontextualization, cultural negotiation, and mediation. Recontextualization is related to the placement of narratives in the Javanese cultural horizon; cultural negotiation is related to the meeting of values and meaning systems; while mediation is related to the role of literary representation in mediating prophetic narratives with the cultural environment of the recipient.

The validity of the data and interpretation is maintained through repeated reading, narrative context checking, and triangulation of sources and theories. Each interpretation is retraced to textual evidence in Serat Ambiya and related narratives in the Qur'an and reinforced with sources regarding the Javanese cultural context. Interpretive reliability is maintained through the application of comparative procedures and analytical categories that are consistent with the five prophetic narratives. With these procedures, the findings of cultural translation are based on a pattern of textual transformation that can be systematically traced between the two texts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

A comparison of the narratives of the Prophet Nuh, Yusuf, Musa, Yunus, and Daud. shows that the relationship between Serat Ambiya and the narrative of the Qur'an does not stop at the reproduction of the core prophetic story. The narrative undergoes an expansion of episodes, the development of characters and story space, and a re-representation through Javanese literary and visual idioms. This is relevant to the character of the script used, namely the Serat Ambiya collection of the Sonobudoyo Museum L 12 PB A. 180, a pesantren manuscript in the Pegon script written in 1844 and contains about 90 color illuminations. Syahrazad also noted that the Javanese Ambiya script is part of the tradition of adapting Arab-Persian stories that has developed widely in the Javanese Islamic environment.

The results of the comparison show three main patterns, namely cultural recontextualization, negotiation of meaning, and cultural mediation. Recontextualization appears in the development of Qur'anic episodes into more elaborate storylines, such as Noah's conversation with Satan, Moses' encounter with Pharaoh's palace guard tiger, and the development of David's relationship with Goddess Wuryan. Negotiation occurs when prophetic meaning is maintained but articulated through moral and symbolic categories that can be recognized in the Javanese environment. Meanwhile, mediation is most evident in visual representations: Joseph is associated with the Guide/Arjuna type of figure, Moses with the puppet protagonist figure, Pharaoh with the Kurawa type, and clothing, batik, buildings, and puppet forms become devices to present Islamic figures in the Javanese visual imagination. Here is Table 1. Cultural Translation of the Prophetic Narrative of the Qur'an in Serat Ambiya.

Table 1. Cultural Translation of Qur'anic Prophetic Narratives in Serat Ambiya

Prophet	Comparative Qur'anic Narratives	Transformation in Ambiya Fiber	Mekanisme utama
Nuh	Revelation, the ark, and the flood punishment (QS. Hud 11:36–37)	The ark is visualized; the episode of Noah–Satan talks about Qabil; the illustration also presents three figures that Sharazad interprets as Sam, Ham, Yafits	Recontextualization
Yusuf	Yusuf's journey, family conflicts, wells, moral tests (QS. Yusuf 12)	Yusuf in the well is visualized to resemble the Pandu/Arjuna type; Goddess Juleka and the palace chamber are visually developed	Mediation and recontextualization
Musa	Prophetic calls and miracles (QS. Taha 20:9–36)	Confrontation with Pharaoh; tiger guarding the gate; the staff becomes a snake with eyes "like twin suns"; Moses and Pharaoh are visualized through the opposition of the protagonist–antagonist of the puppet	Recontextualizatio, negotiation, mediation
Yunus	Errors, prayers, and salvation (QS. Al-Anbiya 21:87–88)	Yunus's departure was associated with preaching fatigue; the experience in the belly of the fish was visually developed	Recontextualization and mediation
Daud	Obedience, power, wisdom, justice (QS. Sad 38:17–20)	Daud was met by Dewi Wuryan who in the Serat is called his wife; the two are married and live happily	Recontextualization and negotiation

Discussion

Cultural Recontextualization: Expanding the Qur'anic Narrative

Recontextualization shows that the transfer of the prophetic story from the Qur'an to the Ambiya Fiber does not take place through the literal reproduction of the story, but rather through the repositioning of the narrative into a more elaborate world of storytelling. QS. Hud [11]: 36–37, for example, places Nuh in the context of the revelation concerning his people and the command to build the ark. In the Ambiya Fibers, Nuh's narrative world is expanded through the episodes of his conversation with Satan regarding Qabil. The caption on the illustration read by Shahrazad mentions "this is when the Prophet Nuh atakon dhateng Satan...", which shows the event when the Prophet Noah asked Satan. Thus, the essence of the prophetic identity is retained, but the characters are placed in a broader network of events than the Qur'anic narrative units that are comparative.

A similar, but more complex, pattern is found in Moses. QS. Taha [20]: 9–36 centers the narrative on the divine call in the Elder, the affirmation of monotheism, the miracle of the rod, and Musa' supplication to God. The Ambiya Fiber develops the world through the episode of Musa' encounter with the tiger guarding the gate of Pharaoh's palace and the transformation of the staff into a "twin sun-like" serpent-like serpent. When Pharaoh considers the event to be a magic game, Musa asserts that the ability comes from God. This transformation shows that recontextualization does not have to change the theological core of the story; what changes is the narrative environment used to articulate it.

This elaborative character needs to be placed in the context of the production of 19th-century Javanese manuscripts. Behrend points out that the nineteenth century was a very important period of Javanese manuscript production and was marked by a diversity of versions and textual redactions (Behrend, 1993). Because Serat Ambiya L 12 PB A. 180 itself is dated 1844, the development of its narrative can be placed in a literary environment that allows the stories circulating to obtain local articulation. This is also in line with research on the manuscripts of the 19th-century Sultan Ngarum which found that the encounter between Java and Islam emerged through characters, character symbolization, and dialogue (Ardiyanti & Christomy, 2020). Thus, recontextualization in Serat Ambiya can be understood as part of the capacity of the Javanese manuscript tradition to provide a new narrative environment to materials that move across cultural boundaries.

Yunus and Daud show variations of the same mechanism. Yunus's experience in the belly of the fish acquires narrative and visual elaboration, while Daud's story develops through the presence of the Goddess Wuryan who is referred to as his wife as well as the narrative of their marriage and happy life. This variation is important because it shows that recontextualization does not result in a uniform pattern of transformation. Each narrative acquires a different level and form of elaboration according to the representational possibilities available in the Ambiya Fiber. In the sense of cultural translation, what moves thus is not a frozen structure of the story, but narrative material that can acquire a new context of meaning.

Cultural Negotiation: Preserving and Rearticulating Sacred Meaning

Cultural negotiation appears when the transformation of form and expansion of the story does not necessarily eliminate the religious orientation of the narrative. The episode of Musa is a clear example. The addition of a tiger, the gate of the palace, and the dramatization of the miracle expand the story, but the theological opposition between Musa and Firaun is maintained. When Firaun interprets miracles as magic, Musa affirms their divine origin. Thus, there is a difference between the transformation of representation and the transformation of theological orientation: the former is quite intensive, while the latter shows continuity.

These findings are important to avoid reading the Islamic-Javanese encounter as a fusion of two systems that automatically produce syncretism. Florida, in her study of Islamic traditions in Java, proposes an understanding of "dialogic encounters", namely historical encounters between Javanese Muslims, revelatory experiences, and broader Islamic traditions(Florida, 2026). This perspective supports the findings of this study: the presence of Javanese elements should not be read as a reduction in Islamic identity, but can be understood as a dialogical process that allows two cultural repertories to be present in one space of representation.

The negotiation takes place not only through the story, but also through the visual construction of the characters. In the scene of Nuh and the Daud, Nuh is depicted as physically smaller but in a higher position, while the Devil is large, red, and has a visual character associated with fire and an antagonistic figure. The representation shows how the moral-religious hierarchy is translated through visual conventions: the superiority of the prophet is not manifested through body size, but rather through symbolic positions and codes.

The findings of Syahrazad, Margana, and Marianto themselves reinforce this pattern. In a special study on female figures in the same Serat Ambiya manuscript, they found that the illustrations combine Islamic and Javanese elements: the figures adopt local puppet shapes and clothing, but certain colors acquire religious meanings different from the original puppet conventions (Syahrazad et al., 2023). The findings are crucial for the concept of negotiation because they show that local cultural codes are not only borrowed, but can be given new meanings. In other words, cultural translation takes place in two directions at the level of representation: Islamic narratives acquire Javanese forms, while Javanese forms can undergo resemantization through Islamic values.

Cultural Mediation: Wayang as a Javanese Visual Vocabulary

The most obvious mediation mechanism is found in the way Serat Ambiya presents prophetic figures through Javanese visual vocabulary. Yusuf, for example, when he is in the well is visualized through the type of Pandu figure that resembles Arjuna, with a small face, a pointed nose, and piercing eyes. Syahrazad attributes this choice to the parallel of the handsomeness of Yusuf and Arjuna, while the golden color of Yusuf's body represents his glory. Thus, the quality of the character derived from the Islamic narrative tradition acquires readability through figures that have had aesthetic and characterological resonance in the Javanese imagination.

The Musa-Firaun case shows that the mediation works as a system. The Firaun is visualized to resemble the Kurawa type through a red face, round eyes, crown, and gestures that mark power and antagonism, while Musa uses the Pandu type which is associated with the protagonist and is equipped with a turban, green clothes, gold scarf, and batik cloth. This transformation does not make Musa a puppet character by identity; the form of puppet functions as a representational vocabulary that translates the moral position of the character to Javanese readers.

This interpretation is supported by the study of Javanese visual history. Adisasmito found that the illustrations of Javanese manuscripts in the period 1800–1920 have narrative and symbolic characters, two-dimensional forms, simplification of natural forms, and stylization that are closely related to the visual concept of wayang (Adisasmito, 2014). Thus, the use of wayang idioms in Serat Ambiya does not stand as an individual anomaly, but is related to the visual language of Javanese manuscripts in that period.

Furthermore, the function of wayang as a mediator also has a precedent in the history of Islamic relations and Javanese culture. Suhardjono shows that wayang undergoes a number of adaptations when interacting with the process of Islamization, but still retains the aesthetic character of Java (Suhardjono, 2016). In a more contemporary context, Setiawan found that wayang and gamelan are still used as a medium of da'wah because familiar cultural forms are considered effective in conveying Islamic messages to the community (Setiawan, 2022). These two studies help explain why the wayang idiom in Serat Ambiya can be understood as a mediation mechanism, not just ornamentation.

Mediation even goes beyond the body shape of the character. The tiger in the text guarding the Firaun's gate is visualized into a pair of tigers resembling a traditional gatekeeper statue. The transformation of one tiger into two shows that visualization is

not always literally subject to verbal narratives. Visual representation has its own agency in building a story space that can be recognized through local cultural experiences. This is in line with the study of the Javanese Islamic manuscript which shows that the visual element of the manuscript is not just decoration, but carries meaning and forms identity through the encounter of Islamic and Javanese elements (Triyanto et al., 2019).

These three mechanisms show that cultural translation in Serat Ambiya takes place as an interlocking process. Recontextualization works when the prophetic narrative is placed back in a narrative environment that is closer to the Javanese cultural horizon through the expansion of episodes, relationships between characters, space, and narrative details. Cultural negotiation takes place when the change brings together the Javanese representation system with an Islamic ethical and spiritual orientation without having to negate either of them. Meanwhile, cultural mediation provides a representational device that allows the encounter to acquire concrete forms through literary and visual language, especially through puppet idioms, colors, clothing, gestures, and depictions of space. Thus, one element can run more than one mechanism at a time. The visualization of Musa through the puppet protagonist type, for example, not only mediates prophetic figures through Javanese visual vocabulary, but also negotiates local codes to affirm Musa' moral-religious position. This pattern shows that the encounter between Islam and Javanese is more productively understood as a dialogical process than as a simple fusion of two traditions; research on manuscripts and other Javanese-Islamic traditions also shows that the encounter can produce new configurations through characters, symbols, dialogues, and forms of local representation (Ardiyanti & Christomy, 2020).

The relationship of these three mechanisms also shows that cultural translation in Serat Ambiya moves in two mutually forming directions. On the one hand, the prophetic narrative experiences localization when the Qur'anic world is articulated through the Javanese narrative and aesthetic repertoire; on the other hand, the Javanese repertoire itself undergoes resemantization when it is used to bring the prophetic meaning of Islam. The form of puppetry, for example, does not simply move the Prophet Yusuf or Musa into a local aesthetic, but acquires a new function as a medium to articulate the handsomeness, glory, protagonistism, and moral authority of prophetic figures. The findings of Syahrazad et al. that the visual code of puppetry in Serat Ambiya can maintain local forms while obtaining different religious meanings supports this two-way process (Syahrazad et al., 2023). Thus, Serat Ambiya not only shows how Islamic narratives are "manipulated", but also how the Javanese imagination is reconfigured to narrate Islam. It is at this point that cultural translation becomes a process of meaning production: Javanese literature acts as an agent that receives, negotiates, and recreates cross-cultural narratives so that the narrative remains connected to its religious sources while acquiring a distinctive local literary existence.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the movement of prophetic narratives from the Qur'an to Serat Ambiya is a productive process of cultural translation, not just the transfer or reproduction of religious stories. The intertextual relationship between the two texts shows that the continuity of the narrative core goes hand in hand with the

transformation of the way stories are contextualized and represented. Through recontextualization, prophetic narratives acquire a social, narrative, and imaginative environment that is closer to the Javanese cultural horizon; through cultural negotiations, the ethical and spiritual orientation of Islam is maintained as well as articulated through local systems of meaning; while through mediation, Javanese literary forms and visualities, including puppet idioms, clothing, colors, gestures, and spaces become devices that enable prophetic figures and events to gain cultural readability. The three mechanisms do not work separately, but form a layered process that connects the continuity of religious meaning with the creativity of local representation.

These findings carry the implication that locality in the circulation of cross-cultural narratives should not be placed as passive recipients. Serat Ambiya shows a reciprocal movement of translation: Islamic narratives acquire Javanese articulation, while Javanese cultural repertoire undergoes resemantization when used to represent prophetic values and figures. Thus, the relationship between the Qur'an and Serat Ambiya is not sufficiently explained through the categories of influence, adaptation, or localization alone, but needs to be understood as a space for the production of meaning between the two cultural systems. This perspective expands the comparative literary study of Javanese-Islamic literature by placing intertextual transformation as well as cultural transformation. On a broader level, these findings affirm the agency of Javanese literature in the circulation of transcultural narratives: Islamic narratives are not only "imagined", but the Javanese imagination is also reconfigured to narrate Islam. Because this study focuses on five prophetic narratives in a single corpus of Ambiya Fibers, further research can compare variants of Ambiya manuscripts from different production periods and environments to explore whether the mechanisms of cultural translation exhibit consistent patterns or instead result in diverse local configurations.

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