Orality and Ritual in Collective Memory: A Theoretical Discussion[1]

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Abstraksi

Kajian ini mengeksplorasi oralitas dan ritual dalam memori kolektif dari perspektif sosiologis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pertanyaan tentang bagaimana komunitas dalam masyarakat yang berorientasi lisan kuat menjaga memori kolektif. Sementara dalam masyarakat tertulis kanon merupakan wadah ingatan kolektif. Masyarakat berorientasi lisan yang kuat mempertahankan ingatan dalam kinerja lisan dan ritual. Oralitas menciptakan memori kolektif melalui pelestarian sejarah masa lalu. Kinerja ritual, membawa masa lalu kembali ke masa sekarang untuk mengantisipasi interaksi sosial di masa depan. Oleh karena itu, perangkat *mnemonik* berfungsi untuk melestarikan nilai-nilai komunal dan untuk mengirimkan narasi komunal ke generasi berikutnya. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kepustakaan melalui perspektif Durkheimian untuk menjadi batu ujian untuk memahami ritual keagamaan dan memori kolektif dalam masyarakat yang berorientasi lisan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa ingatan kolektif dalam masyarakat yang berorientasi pada lisan kuat diciptakan secara kultural melalui bentuk-bentuk oralitas seperti narasi, simbol lisan serta pertunjukan ritual keagamaan.

Kata kunci: oralitas, ritual, memori kolektif, interaksi sosial, perspektif Durkheimian

Abstract

This study explores orality and ritual in collective memory from a sociological perspective. The research aims to examine the question of how communities that are strong oral oriented society preserve their collective memories. Meanwhile people that are literate society tend to employ canon as their container of collective memories. It also means that strong oral oriented society maintains memory in orality and ritual performance. Orality creates collective memory by preserving past history. Ritual performance brings about the past back to the present attempting to anticipate future for social interaction within society. Therefore, the *mnemonic* devices functioned to conserve communal values and thus to transmit communal narratives for the next generation. Employing a literature research that refers to Durkheimian perspectives, this study exploration addresses to an understanding of religious ritual and collective memories, particularly in oral oriented society. The study concludes that collective memory in a strong oral oriented society is culturally manufactured through forms of orality such as oral narratives and symbols, as well as religious ritual performances.

Keywords: orality, ritual, collective memory, social interaction, Durkhemian perspectives

A. Introduction

People remember the past through different ways in the multicultural society. People living in a strong literacy society remember the past through a canon. By reading and writing, people maintain the collective memory of their society. Other people in society can preserve the memory of the community through painting or sculpture. Here, in many Indonesian ethnic groups, by looking at symbols in paintings or in sculptures, people can remember the past and move toward the future. Yet, in a strong oral society, mnemonic devices are oral. Oral methods,

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such as songs and poems, help people to remember their communal story and identity.

Every society is unique due to the different experiences and the ways people use to remember the past and to cope with social difficulties. A sense of experience creates people's understandings of collective memory and representation. What is the best way to preserve collective memory? The study has no intention to judge the proper approach. Rather, the research asserts that every community develops its own uniquely proper way to remember the past. For oral communities, orality is an appropriate way to keep the mnemonic alive and to transmit the communal narrative to the next generations.

Using sociology of religion and folklore studies perspective, the study argues that in an orally strong society, orality is the most effective device for people to pass on their communal narrative from one generation to the next. Orality creates collective memory through preserving past history. In writing this as a theoretical study, this research focus on the sociological perspective of orality in collective memory. In this sense, Durkheim and Durkheimian scholars, such as Maurice Halbwachs, Eviatar Zerubavel, Massimo Rosati, and Jeffrey Olick, are my focal touchstones in this study. In a nutshell, conclude with the note that collective memory in a strong oral society is created through ritual performance and oral narrative.

B. Conceptual Framework: Orality in Oral Oriented Society

There are huge numbers of definitions for "orality". I refer to the definition from Graham Furniss (2004: 2) as he provides a broad sense of orality. "Orality", in Furniss's perspective, is a "set of communicative conditions inherent in oral situations common to all human societies whether literacy is absent, restricted or general." This definition covers orality in traditional societies as well as in the contemporary information society. Furniss's concept of orality also touches upon Walter J. Ong's concept of orality. Ong (1980: 197–204) distinguishes between primary orality and secondary orality. Orality at its primary level is part of the society that preserves the mnemonic by using oral devices. Since written language is not the foremost vehicle of primary orality, people interact mostly through the oral mode of communication. Primary orality reflects a purely characteristic of orality. The electrical age is also the age of secondary orality (Ong,1980: 2). In the second type of orality, literacy enters into an oral society but the written model of communication does not remove the significance of the oral tradition. It rather enhances orality through the invention of modern technology that strengthens oral tradition through modern forms of communication.

Orality and literacy are not necessarily in conflict with one another. The two modes of communication can possibly strengthen each other in a strong oral society. In the context of writing and oral tradition relationships, orality and literacy, can be reconciled. Walter J. Ong states;

"Thus writing from the beginning did not reduce orality but enhanced it, making it possible to organize the 'principles' or constituents of oratory into a scientific 'art', a sequentially ordered body of explanation that showed how and why oratory achieved and could be made to achieve its various specific effects" (Ong, 2003: 9).

Here, when writing enters a strong oral society it does not reduce the level of orality, but instead, it strengthens the level of orality.

My study on Islam leads to an understanding of the function of orality in Islamic perspective. Islamic scholars, from an exclusivist like Maududi to a current pluralist such as Nasr, strengthen Ong's argument that writing helps to foster orality in collective memory. Qur'an as the Holly Book and highest law in Islam was developed from oral tradition (Souaiaia, 2006: 16). Muslims believe that God sent a revelation to Muhammad who became the last Prophet of Islam and the "device of God's word" (Maududi, 1979: 57). The Prophet Muhammad memorized the revelation then recited (*iqra*) it to his companions, *sahaba*. From the collective memory of the companions, Muslims transferred the orality of Qur'an into canon. On this canonization Seyyed Hossein Nasr says:

"During the Caliphate of 'Uthman a few years after the death of the Prophet, the definitive text was copied in several examples and sent to the four corners of the newly established Islamic world. There exists only one version of the text of the Quran, one that is agreed on by all schools of Islam, a text considered to be sacred in its entirely, not only in meaning but also in form" (Nasr 2003 : 37 – 38).

The lives and sayings of Sufi scholars are another example of orality and literacy relationships in Islamic tradition. Farid al-Din Attar describes the memory of lives and sayings of Islamic Sufis as the transmission from orality to written text. He argues that collective memory of *ummah*, the Muslim community, preserved the *magnum opus* in Sufism in orality, such as "*al-luma*" (Nicholson, 2002) and "*Kasf al-Mahjub*" (Nicholson, 1996) which bear the lives and sayings of the Sufi scholars such as al-Ghazali and Jalaludin Rumi, before it was shaped in the canon (Attar, 1966 : 45).

Concerning the uniqueness of orality and its distinction from literacy, Ong provides nine traits of orally based on expression and knowledge (Attar, 1966: 37 – 57). Characteristics of orality from his perspective include: additive rather than subordinative, aggregative rather than analytic, redundant or 'copious', conservative or traditionalist, close to the human lifeworld, agonistically toned, empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced, homeostatic, and situational rather than abstract (Ong, 1990: 128).

Orality, for Ong, is additive rather than subordinative because it is produced in a culture with a continuing massive oral residue. It uses additive words such as "and" in sentences. Therefore, one can conclude that oral structure still exists strongly in oral-based literature. Ong points out that aggregative as a characteristic of "orality since it closely tied to reliance on formulas to implement memory" (Ong, 1990: 129). Regarding orality's aggregative weight, Ong mentions, "*oral*

expression carries a load of epithets and other formulary baggage which high literacy rejects as cumbersome and tiresomely redundant because of its aggregative weight" (Ong, 1990: 129). Redundancy is important in oral tradition because repetition encourages a person to concentrate on meaning. Orality is closer to the human life world because orality shapes its meaning and its structure from real social life experiences (Ong, 1990: 130). Ong advances the conclusion of Matija Murko's research on the singers and epic songs of the Muslim communities in Herzegovina, Slovenia, and Croatia. Murko concludes, *"the singers who learn a song that is read to him must have it repeated more times in order to know it"* (Murko, 1990: 13). The repetition enables the song to travel from mouth to mouth around the Balkan countries. The songs were sung among family members, in festivals, rituals, even by wagon drivers. The repetition locates the narrative of folksong simply in the heart of collective memory among people of the Balkans (Murko, 1990: 17 – 18).

Primary oral cultures tend to exhibit certain characteristics that are difficult for those people living in literate cultures to grasp. Lord asserts in his book that primary oral cultures regard highly original forms of primary oral cultures and authorship of oral materials, which must be considered in interpreting the historicity of the society (Lord, 2000). Lord continues Parry's study on Slavic tradition where Lord learns from South Slavic singers "mechanics of oral composition of traditional narrative verse or song" (Lord, 2000: 39). The South Slavic singers created the collective memory of South Slavic society through oral narrative of song. By the same token, Matija Murko

argues, based on his study on Serbian singers, that "the greatest enemy of epic singer is modern instruction" (Murko, 1990: 27). Modern writing and recording devices tend to diminish the folksong because people lose their interest in the performance of the folksong by a living dynamic means.

In oral societies, communication and local knowledge have been stored orally. There are no written texts. Even in the realm of the contemporary influence of written production, the written version of local knowledge is only a residual of orality (Ong, 1990: 41). Without writing, oral culture maintains its knowledge by repeating it (Ong, 1988: 259 – 269). Regarding the important position of redundancy in oral society, Ong identifies replication as an orality characteristic. Redundancy, or repetition of that which has been just said, keeps both the speaker and the hearer surely on track (Ong, 1990: 40). Drawn from his study of the Malay' orality and literacy, Amin Sweeney concludes that redundancy helps memory stay on the track of meaning (Sweeney, 1987: 215). The use of the same word, furthermore, has the rhythmic and mnemonic advantages of producing an anaphoric parallelism (Sweeney, 1987: 221).

Scholars are divided in their understanding of the concepts of oral society. Oral specialists, such as Finnegan, perceive oral society as a culture without writing. *"Orality has been seen as characteristically and essentially found in cultures without writing…"* (Finnegan, 1988: 140). On the other hand, Jack Goody, who focuses on the politics of writing, points out that oral society has written literature as well, yet *"oral society has a different*

approach to language than when writing intervenes" (Goody, 2010: 54). Writing, for Goody, " *does not supplant oral communication; it is merely another channel of communication, substituting for the oral only in certain contexts."* He adds, in non-literate society, "*oral tradition handed down through the oral channel*" (Goody, 1992: 12 – 13). By the same token, Sweeney adds that in an oral society written texts belong to the elite, whereas common people communicate orally (Sweeney, 1987: 124). Along the same line, Ong insists, "*Writing, moreover, as will be seen later in detail, is a particularly pre-emptive and imperialist activity that tends to assimilate other things to itself even without the aid of etymologies*" (Ong, 1990: 11). From a folklore point of view, Alan Dundes supports Ong, Goody, and Sweeney perspective of literate and oral society differences. On oral and written differences, Dundes points out, *"a word may look right on written material but sound wrong orally"* (Dundes, 2007: 59).

C.   Theoretical Analysis: Durkheim and Durkhemian's Collective Memory

The study of collective memory is not new in the midst of the study of social cohesion. Modern studies of collective memory emerged at the time of Maurice Halbwachs, *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Memoire* (Social Framework of Memory) in 1925 and continued with scholars, such as Pierre Nora in *Les Lieux de Memorie* (Sites of Memory) in 1984. Nora explains the relationship between memory and social cohesion in community. From Nora's perspective, *"memory is life and borne by a living society. Because of its representation of the past,* collective memory fosters community and traditional knowledge" (Nora, 1998: 81 - 92).

However, Ancient Greek scholars such as Plato and Aristotle started the study of memory as a social remembrance. In The Republic Book 6, Plato writes, *"good memory belongs to philosophers"* (Plato, 2004: 68). The process of developing a mimetic method has, therefore, enabled philosophers to have good memories. His study of memory links closely to the use of poetry as a medium to move people in their social feelings and emotions. Unlike his teacher, Plato, Aristotle wrote a special publication on the study of memory. In *De Memoriaet Reminiscientia*, Aristotle differentiated between people and animals because people have the ability to develop active memory. He believed that remembering was possible as a function of memory as a storehouse where images of events are preserved. However, remembering, for Aristotle, is a process that human beings cannot control. Remembering is directed by human understanding and takes place in the midst of memory as a storage place that is uncontrollable (Jonker, 1995: 7).

The modern study of collective memory started with Maurice Halbwachs, who was inspired by his former professor, later colleague, Emile Durkheim's works on collective consciousness and representation. Durkheim's theory served as a solid foundation to further collective memory studies by Halbwachs, Eviatar Zerubavel and Jeffrey Olick, who were all influenced by the Durkheim approach to social association, and grounded their arguments on the concept of collective memory (Zerubavel. 2003).

Collective conscience becomes a collective memory because it consists of collective

representations. Jeffrey Alexander advances Durkheim's collective conscience by arguing that the collective representations are a culturally shared symbol, system of meaning (Alexander, 1984: 5 – 26). Alexander argues that this is the civil sphere the place of social solidarity that connects members of society by a sense of belonging and collective feeling. This sphere stands outside the state structure, economic arena and other social structures. The civil sphere is strongly attached with the idea of group identity and sense of collective connectedness (Alexander, 2006).

Scholars, such as Henri Bergson, also incorporated the concept of collective memory, but Bergson's study is more psychological than sociological (Bergson, 2004). Since the perspective of this work is sociological, I follow Halbwachs who argues, *"the framework of collective memory confines and binds our most intimate remembrances to each other"* (Halbwachs, 1992: 53). Halbwachs understands collective memory as a social reality. Based on their readings of Halbwachs's concept of collective memory, Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robin conclude that Halbwachs *"developed his concept of collective memory not only beyond philosophy but against psychology"* (Robin, 1998: 105 – 140).

Emile Durkheim argues in his theories of totem and collective consciousness that "collective representation" makes and remakes society's collective existence (Durkheim, 2001: 17). Collective representation, in his understanding, is:

> *a product of a vast cooperative effort that extends not only through space but over time, their creation has involved a multitude of different minds association, mingling,*

combining their ideas and feelings – the accumulation of generations of experience and knowledge (Durkheim, 2001: 18).

Durkheim believes that space and time create a collective consciousness, which is symbolized by a totem. The collective understanding of local knowledge regarding the meaning of the totem sets a comprehensive perspective on *locus et tempus*, "space and time". The sociological function of the totem in his argument is the device of the mnemonic. He states, "*of course, the cult of each totem has its seat in the corresponding clan; it is celebrated only there. Members of the clan are entrusted with it and transmit it from one generation to the next, along with the beliefs on which it is based*" (Durkheim, 2001: 19).

Totem preserves memory collectively because the totem is not only a sacred object, but it is also a sociological medium to keep the community's collective consciousness alive. Complete understanding of totemic function and meaning requires a great deal of experience. Drawing from Immanuel Kant's category of "experience", understanding necessitates a sense of belonging (Kant, 2000). Here, the totem creates that sense of belonging needed in a society through which it becomes a site of memory (Kant, 2000). Folklorists such as Dundes, Islam, and Bauman support Kant's category of experience, which creates the sense of belonging in a given society. For Dundes, folklore that represents collective understanding is a product of social experience. The experience infuses "a sense of group identity" that helps to foster the collective memory of particular community (Dundes, 2007: 21). Using different

words, Mazharul Islam points out that the social memory in folklore is rooted in "text, texture, and context". Context or experience, for Islam, plays a pivotal role for forming the text and texture of collective memory (Islam, 1998: 27). In his study of social performance, Richard Bauman draws the conclusion that cultural performance, as a representation of folktale as a mnemonic device, "tends to be the most prominent performance contexts within a community and to share a set of characteristic features" (Bauman,1992: 46). Cultural performance, in Bauman's perspective, is a product of a given context that based on a collective experience of shared value and belief.

In "Division of Labour", Durkheim asks a fundamental question: *"What holds a society together?"* He concludes that societies that believe in the power of shared memory and values are kept together through mechanical solidarity. This connection is based on their similarity of beliefs and social sentiments (Durkheim, 1993). Hence, in order to strengthen social relationships, a community needs to remember its beliefs and social feelings. Social remembrances through the totem could reenact collective memories and retie society to become a stronger community.

As I addressed in the introduction, this study seeks to examine the concept of collective memory from Durkheim and Durkhemian perspectives. I employ Maurice Halbwachs, Jeffrey Olick and EviatarZerubavel's theories of collective memory as my points of departure. Memory, for Halbwachs, is framed in the present as much as in the past, and is variable rather than constant. It is a matter of how minds work together in society, how their operations are not simply mediated by social arrangements but are, in fact, structured by them. It is society in which people normally acquire their memories. Remembering, in Halbwachs' theory, is always an active process. *"To remember is not to sit back and watch, but to remember is to reconstruct the past"* (Halbwachs, 1992: 48). Remembering is a repetitive process by which a society is tied up collectively. Therefore, for Halbwachs, memory is a social construction. Marc Bloch supports Halbwachs' argument, saying that societies that respect the past can reconstruct the past (Bloch, 2011: 150 – 155). Similar to Bloch, Paul Ricoeur agrees with Halbwachs, drawn from the Augustinian concept of time, he claims that the present and the past are related (Ricoeur, 2004: 154).

Memory as a social construction is one part of Durkheim's theory of collective consciousness. Although social construction seems to be the central focus of Marx's theory, Marx emphasizes unconsciousness and automatic processes in society. In contrast to Durkheim's concept of consciousness, Marx's understanding of social construction is a social product that goes through oppression as a result of class conflict (Marx, 1978: 158). Durkheim saw social construction as a result of collective solidarity and positive interaction in a given community. Therefore, I do not incorporate the Marx's approach to the memory of social construction because I believe that collective memory emerges along with mutual interaction and social solidarity.

Collective Memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people; individual members of a group remember. While

these remembrances are mutually supportive of each other and common to all, individual members still vary in the intensity with which they experience specific events. Collective memory differs from history because it retains from the past only what is still or is capable of living in the consciousness of the groups that keep the memory alive. Halbwachs insists that the past no longer exists, whereas, for historians, the present and the past have an equivalent reality (Halbwachs, 1992: 75). The memory of a society extends as far as the contemporary group preserves and performs it regularly. Contemporary group preservation and performance of collective memory is a *"site of information-sharing"* (Wagner, 2012: 11) by which an older generation passes down the memory to a younger generation of a contemporary society. Jeffrey Olick understands collective memory as a process in which societies, communities, and groups represent their history and produce accounts of past events to reshape the present (Olick, 2007: 15). Without such collective memory, societies are unable to provide good explanations of their mythology, or traditional heritage. He also argues that collective memory is not just the act of remembering as members of groups, but that society constitutes those groups and their members precisely in the act of remembering. Borrowing from Robert Bellah's concept of "genuine community", Olick describes genuine communities as "communities of memory" (Olick, 2007: 35).

Unlike Halbwachs, whose "collective memory" is based solely on social construction, Olick incorporates theory of socially individual memory and social framework of minds into memory. Collective memory, for him, *"may be social fact sui generis, but brains and minds and individuals need very much to be part of the history"* (Olick, 2007: 11). Based on theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Bakhtin, Emile Durkheim, Maurice Halbwachs, and Karl Mannheim, Olick transforms 'Collective Memory' into something that covers both individual memories and collective representation. He states, *"collective memory indicates at least two distinct phenomena: socially framed individual memories and collective commemorative representations and mnemonic traces"* (Olick, 1999: 333 – 348).

Olick understands collective memory as the aggregate of individual memories. Individuals as members of a community are central to the process of social remembrance. *"Only individuals remember"* (Olick, 1999: 333 – 348). In the study of collective memory, Olick places individuals as members of a group who may remember publicly or collectively (Olick, 2007: 26). Memory shapes group identity through collective remembrance because remembrance is part of the political-cultural process. Collective memory is determined by a significant past and a meaningful present of group history (Olick, 2007: 40).

Collective memory is created through the publication of symbols and collective narratives. Olick believes that memory requires a specific social context for its preservation. Therefore, memory is a product of symbols and narratives that are available publicly (Olick, 2007: 11). Individuals absorb memory when the memory enters into the public sphere (Habermas, 1991: 38). Posting narratives and symbols of memory in the public sphere is to insert that memory into public discussion by which

the memory will become a public or a collective memory.

The introduction of symbols and narratives into the public sphere is the means by which collective memory finds its public place. Eviatar Zerubavel argues that commemorative ritual and public parade help mnemonic communities articulate symbols and narratives (Zerubavel, 2003: 29). Even though Zerubavel does not agree with Olick's concept of collective memory as an aggregate of individuals' memories, both scholars agree upon the function of performance and ritual in the commemoration of memory in the public sphere. Public parades, postage stamps, street names and other public mnemonic vehicles, for Zerubavel, are part of the mnemonic practice in public life (Zerubavel, 2003: 29). In Zerubavel's mind, commemoration is mnemonic socialization that plays a critical role in community life (Zerubavel, 2003: 222). This is the way in which a group shapes its past by which it finds the meaning of life in the present (Zerubavel, 2003: 81).

Social commemoration, through public performance, creates collective awareness that strengthens communal identity. In a large community where people live across huge distances, commemoration helps to form communal solidarity and binds the community together. People in Bali, for instance, employed ritual performance and commemoration for restoring society and finding common identity after Bali Bombing in 2002. Grounded on collective memory, ritual and performance theories, Clare Fischer sees Kuta-Bali's commemoration ceremonies as a device of restoration and pubic unity after the Bali Bombing.

"*These two public rituals were meant to commemorate the dead and restore Bali's collective identity, as well as add to the efforts to revive tourism on the island*" (Fischer, 2006: 129 – 150). Social performance of mnemonic practice, such as this, generates imagined communities. Although time and space keep members of the community in their social locations, imagination shaped by social memory ties the group together collectively (Anderson, 2006: 6). For Zerubavel, an imagined community emerges because it has a public concept of time. For this community, time does not stop in the past, but continues to shape the present, whereas the understanding of the present conversely bears new perspectives of the past (Zerubavel, 1981: 141).

Recollections from the past shape the collective memory of particular groups. However, these recollections require a site of memory. Quoting from Zerubavel, *"libraries, bibliographies, folk legends, photo albums and television archives thus constitute the "site of social memory"* (Zerubavel 2003: 6). These sites provide social capital for the community because by looking at or by remembering the sites, the group re-discovers its collective consciousness. Social capital *is "the connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them"* (Putnam, 2000: 19). Therefore, these sites create the act of collective remembrance because they enact shared norms that could trigger mutual trust among its community members.

D. Discussion: The Role of Ritual in Collective Memory

Ritual, or the social dimension of ritual, plays an important role in strengthening cohesion and in binding the community together. Halbwachs, Zerubavel and Olick all inspired by Durkheim's works, agree that ritual is part of the production and preservation of collective memory. Ritual helps the community remember its past and shape the present. Paul Connerton, a British sociologist, believes that if ceremony or ritual is work for its participants, then those who participate in the ritual must be habituated to the ritual performance (Connerton, 2003: 76). Ritual can produce a habitual feeling, because it explores *"feeling for the game and practical sense"* (Bourdieu, 1990: 53).

In a collective sense, ritual is a force binding a group of people into a collective consciousness. Durkheim highlights that when people come together in a ritual, such as mourning, that ritual will establish a shared feeling among those people. "Just by being collective, these ceremonies raise the vital tone of the group" (Durkheim, 1993: 303). Therefore, ritual in religious life occupies ample room for creating religious emotions. Harvieu-Leger names this social emotion or shared feeling, *"integrated memory".* Ritual, as a device of integrated memory, establishes a collective experience that is reinforced by people's lineage of beliefs (Leger, 2000: 103). By the same token, Catherine Bell concludes that ritual can bridge binary communities. Bell says;

> *"at the same time, ritual is portrayed as mediating or integrating all these oppositions"* (Bell 1992 : 47) In Bell

perspective, all different actions and thoughts are re-incorporated in ritual performance (Bell, 1992 : 48).

Integration in ritual emerges from communal emotions. In addressing a small part of Durkheim's theory, Massimo Rossati points out that in interaction ritual participants have a common focus of attention, a common mood or an emotional experience. Rossati highlights that ritual is a matter of collective consciousness. *"The aim of liturgical ritualism is not individual, but collective authenticity, the sense of belonging to a tradition, of being part of something broader (and deeper) than one's own introspective conscience"* (Rosati, 2009: 46). In a collective sense, ritual produces a sense of belonging through which mechanical solidarity develops. In Durkheim's language, ritual reinforces social solidarity. Ritual creates the habitual nature of solidarity because as ritual, habitus consists of "schemes of perception, thought, and action that produce individual and collective practices, which in turn reproduce the generative schemes" (Scheer, 2012: 193 – 220)

Commemorative ritual is more than just ceremony; it is, rather, performative memory. As performative memory, ritual becomes highly representational. Connerton states that commemorative rituals maintain the past in participant or group mentality through depictive representation of past events. Rituals are constructed re-enactments of the past (Connerton, 2003: 82). In rituals, people perform their collective memory of the past in the present. In oral societies, such as Madagascar, songs and bodily movements are intrinsically part of their efforts to recollect the

past. By listening to folksongs and by being physically involved in somatic memory practices, people are connected with the past, giving them the strength to face present struggles (Emoof, 2002). Folksong can support collective memory through a ritual performance because "*the meaning of the folksong arises from its context*" (Bauman, 1992: 168). In a given community, folksong plays important role in shaping, maintaining, and moving collective consciousness. The folksong has contributed significantly to group memory *"not merely in recalling what was learned orally but also in associating certain music (song) with certain people, events, emotions, symbols, and ritual from the past"* (Bauman, 1992: 169).

Edward Casey reminds us that remembrance requires ritual and commemoration in order to work. Like Connerton, he does not believe that representation alone can create memory. For him, memory also requires participation, because "in commemoration, body, place and psyche become more fully participatory" (Casey, 2006: 67). Casey concludes that the process of remembering through ceremony has two gates: horizontal and vertical. He argues, " *in ceremonial commemoration, we also participate with other persons, forming with them a "horizontal", participatory communitas that lies perpendicular to the "vertical" community with the commemorator (or group commemorators) establishes with the commemorandum proper"* (Casey, 2006: 6). Martha Sims and Martine Stephens support Connerton and Caseys' argument of participation being required in a ritual and memory. Grounded on their study of living folklores and traditions, Sims and Stephens argue, *"folklore both*

forms and expresses group identity through the interaction of group members and interaction with other groups" (Sims and Stephens, 2005: 69). Interaction through participation creates and re-creates collective memory and group identity. In Peter Berger's words, participation or externalization is a means by which people shape and are shaped by shared values and memories (Berger, 1990: 4 – 5). In commemoration ritual, shared values and memories plays significant part in strengthening social cohesion (Green, 2011: 8) among those who are involved in the ritual. Using Rappaport's perspective of ritual and myth relationship, Rachel Wagner insists that participation in a ritual can transmit information to ritual participants. The recitation of myth in a ritual performance creates a sense of collective experience. (Wagner, 2012: 68). Ritual and meaning of myth becomes a common ground that ties a community in a collective cohesion.

E. Critical Exploration: Indonesian Muslim and Ritual Performance

As the biggest Muslim majority country in the world, Hajj ritual becomes the central spiritual performance among Indonesian Muslims. For Indonesian Muslims and Muslims in general, being in Mecca and Medina during the Hajj is not only part of their participation in the global Islamic ceremony, but also is an opportunity to experience collectively physical, geographical, and psychological convergence with other fellow Muslims who visit these two holy cities. In Victor Turner's perspective, Hajj provides a liminal (Turner, 1969: 65) phase in Islamic public ritual because the ritual of Hajj

creates another sense (betwixt and between) of personality, spirituality, and communal identity than the previous stage before a Muslim performs a Hajj ritual. Like the "sacred community" for Chihamba ritual in Ndembu community (Turner, 1975: 17), the Hajj ritual also creates a sense and image of among those who perform Hajj ceremony in Mecca and Madina.

Moreover, orality in *azan*, the public recitation of the Quranic verses in the nearby mosque, is a pre-requisite of collective memory in the Hajj commemoration. In the Hajj, Muslims discover their collective memory both horizontally and vertically. Scott Flower's research in Papua New Guinea supports this position. Flower realizes that Papuan New Guineans who converted to Islam were occupied by vertical and horizontal feelings of collective ritual during their Hajj journeys to Mecca and to Medina. They encounter vertical emotion through the recitation of the Quran in their Holy Land. In addition to the first feelings, the Papuan Muslims who encountered other Muslims from many countries and races experience the communal living as an *Ummah*, "Muslim community", during the Hajj journey (Flower 2012 : 201 – 217). The feeling of an *Ummah* overwhelms their minds and collective emotions because, for them, the Hajj is not just a ritual but also a performance of religious ceremony. Here, based on Durkheim's ritual theory, Schechner distinguishes ritual and performance in creating social solidarity. He states, *"...although ritual may communicate or express religious ideas, rituals were not ideas or abstractions, but performance enacting known patterns of behavior and texts"* (Schechner, 2002: 50). Bell supports this

idea by saying, *"...a focus on ritual performance integrates our thought and their action"* (Bell, 1992: 32). Therefore performance of ritual ceremony incorporates thoughts of spectators and actions of people who play the ritual action.

As the ritual central to Islamic teaching, one of Islamic pillars, the ritual of Hajj has vertical and horizontal dynamics. In Indonesian Muslims understanding, Hajj functions as the social and spiritual glue to reinforce global solidarity with Muslims across the globe. By reciting Quranic verses at the Kabbah as Islamic Axis Mundi, Indonesian Muslims that participate in the ritual action involve in the fellowship re-memorize of communal knowledge or faith confession. Voicing out Islamic teachings through the reciting of Holy Quran expresses the spiritual belief and brings individual closer to the global community. Testimony of Muslim pilgrim reflects the centrality of relationships between reciting Holy Quran, place, and the narrative of collective memory in Islam. As Bell points out that the ritual action integrates belief and action, the Hajj intermingles creed and deed through oral performance and symbolic action.

Throwing the stone toward the pillar representing evil serves as symbolic action that voicing the narrative of belief and contesting good and evil. The social action of throwing the stone performs the fundamental value of Islam which is good as the complete submission to Allah. Through the social-ritual action, Muslims, including Indonesian Muslims constructing the meaning in ritual performance. Throwing the stone in the religious performance conveys twofold meanings: first, the ritualistic action encapsulates the religious

meaning, value, and belief within self in stone as the media and throwing as specific religious action. In the study of rites and ritual, the throwing of stones visualize the rites (religious knowledge) and make the sacral real in the action of performance. Second, the throwing of the stone declares the fundamental teaching to the spectators who might presence at the moment of ritual or absence physically, but observes the ritual through online or social media. Third, representing social action in the ritual of Hajj, throwing the stones reinforces Muslim collective memory of Ibrahim throwing stones to the Satan in order to follow Allah's comment: *Muslims who perform the ritual and the rest of Muslims in world who consume the narrative through the social media reenact the memory through the action.*

The action of ritual performance is not limited only to its theatrical study, but also linked to ritual ceremony. Ritual performance is a way people remember, because ritual itself is memory in action (Schechner, 2002: 45). Performance in the theatrical study only focuses, on play-script, but ritual performance, as part of folklore, centers on collective representation, experience, and local knowledge. Advanced from Habermas's theory of Communicative Action, Bauman argues that ritual performance, therefore, is a communicative means of shared character of a given society. Hence, ritual requires a collective participation where people can come together to enhance a collective experience and memory (Bauman, 1992: 42 – 46). Richard Schechner reminds the reader that performance consists of: being, doing, showing, and explaining, showing, doing. Due to its reflective aspects, performance influences those who observe or

participate in the action by interacting with others (Schechner, 2002 : 23). Drawing on Herbert Mead's theory of symbolic interactions, E. Goffman points out that influence as a result of an encounter between performers and the audience is the main concern of any performance. (Goffman, 1980: 29). Bauman, Schechner, and Goffman agree that the encounter or interaction in the performance creates a sense of collective experience. In the study of ritual, collective experience plays a major role in creating collective memory.

In strong oral societies, orality is the backdrop of ritual that produces collective memory. Jack Goody's research on the Bagre, a secret community of LoDagga in Northern Ghana, has discovered the importance of the use of folktales in the preservation of local knowledge/myths of the collective understanding of God, animals and human beings. Among the Bagre, myth is long recitation, in rhythmic speech, which is performed in the ritual of the community. Orality as a mnemonic device of memory/myth in the Bagre community socializes collective memory (Goody, 1992: 96). Local knowledge and social solidarity of the Bagre society, as a primarily oral community, depend upon social remembrance and memory. Since writing is not part of the knowledge preservation used in a primarily oral society, people rely on ritual as a form of mnemonic performance (Goody, 1995: 47). Therefore, ritual, including the recitation of myths or local knowledge, is an event of mnemonic socialization.

Similar to primary oral societies, secondary oral societies, such as Muslim communities in Java, Indonesia, base their collective memories on

recitation or oral performances of a social mnemonic. Most of the devoted Muslims in Java can read the Arabic script in the Quran, but only those who attend the *Pesantren*, or Islamic boarding schools, understand the meaning of what is written in the Holy Book. In social rituals, such as the *pengajian*, where there is an opportunity for public recitation of the Quran, people cling to the sound and the rhythm of the Quranic reader. Many Muslims in Java do not completely understand the narrative that is being read. However, the sound and the rhythm create a collective experience and bind social feeling. The sound and the rhythm become the catalysts for collective understanding that is, further explained by the Imam, the leader of community, who has mastered the Quranic text (Millie, 2011: 151 – 169). Hence, although people have well-written reading material, orality still functions strongly to create collective experience and memory.

F. Conclusion

Orality is the most important facet of collective memory in strong oral societies. In those societies, even though given groups have well-written materials, literacy functions efforts only support the process of orality. Literacy does not occupy the realm of collective memory because literacy in oral societies is only a residual offshoot of orality. Oral culture shapes the people's *habitus* to cling to oral tradition when people seek to remember their past. Songs, poems and other modes of orality are mnemonic devices by which people preserve their collective memory in a strong oral society.

The use of orality as a mnemonic device can be traced back to ancient communities, including classical Greek works. During that period, philosophers, such as Homer, Plato and Aristotle, were already reflecting on orality and memory. Homer's Odyssey and Iliad provide examples of how orality was translated into literate structures. Even though literacy replaced the importance of orality, in these two poetic collections, the residual importance of orality still shaped the poetic essence. The way in which Plato and Aristotle critique literacy proves that orality was a major vehicle of memory in their day.

Drawing on Durkheim's theory of collective consciousness, Durkhemian scholars, such as Halbwaschs, Olick, Zerubavel and Rosati developed their studies of collective memory sociologically. In this social sense, collective memory functions as a belt to tie the community together. Collective memory needs to be repeated and performed in order to bring it into the contemporary life of community. Therefore, collective memory requires the existence of ritual in the process of remembering. Through ritual, people in a given community can more deeply connect with each other both vertically and horizontally.

In other words, with ritual, oral traditions may continue to exist even in a society, which prioritizes written communication, so that traditions beyond the written can help communities in their ritual practices remember the past.

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