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Jagad Lelembut; A Javanese Belief System Constructed Through the Use of Folklore and Myth on a Supernatural Worldview

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ABSTRACT

Javanese society deeply embraces the supernatural, with cultural belief in forming a core of their cultural identity. However, a comprehensive understanding of the roots of this belief system within Javanese culture remains limited, particularly in how myths and folklore intersect with historical and cultural contexts to shape contemporary supernatural worldviews. This study aimed to elucidate the formation, evolution, and integration of supernatural beliefs into the daily lives of Javanese people, addressing a significant research gap in Indonesian cultural studies. Employing a cross-sectional approach with qualitative analysis, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with eight knowledgeable individuals from Yogyakarta, Central Java, and East Java, and participant observation in Yogyakarta museums and cultural centers. The analysis revealed that myths and mystics folklore often serve as explanations for unexplained natural phenomena, fostering a complex cosmology where spirits and supernatural forces are integral to everyday existence. The prevalence of these narratives is significantly shaped by Java's historical and cultural trajectory. This study underscores the enduring significance of traditional beliefs in Javanese society and contributes novel insights into the intersection of folklore, history, and contemporary supernatural worldviews in Indonesia. Future research could explore the impact of contemporary influences like popular culture, social media, and globalization on these perceptions and engagements.

Keywords: Cultural identity, Folklore, Javanese, Qualitative research, Supernatural beliefs

INTRODUCTION

Every culture possesses a collection of folklore and myths that not only disseminate its cultural identity but also impart crucial lessons (Agbenyega et al., 2017). Well-known examples such as Momotaro and Robin Hood illustrate how these narratives embody a society's social identity and belief system. Across the globe, diverse beliefs in supernatural entities exist, ranging from benevolent fairies to menacing sea monsters, each often playing positive or negative roles subject to individual interpretation. The figure of Lucifer, for instance, demonstrates the potential for mythology and dark

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folklore to shape cultural systems, with varying interpretations of his nature influencing belief (Lippman, 2016). Indeed, numerous global cultures, from Japan's Shinto to the shamanism evident in Korean culture (as seen in "Exhuma" movie), and the religious traditions of Islamic nations, Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, incorporate a definition of a supernatural world (Suroyo et al, 2023; Suroyo & Putra, 2024).

Similarly, Indonesia, particularly within Javanese society, recognizes a "supernatural world" termed *Jagad Lelembut*, encompassing spirits and supernatural beings (Rachmawati & Dermawan, 2017; Mayasari, 2021). Javanese beliefs categorize these entities into levels, including ancestors (*Leluhur*) and divine-like beings (*Dhanhyang*). Two primary perspectives exist regarding their origin: one posits their existence since the world's creation as part of nature maintaining harmony (Afni et al., 2020; Mashudi & Thoyib, 2017; Suroyo et al, 2025), while the other views them as originating from malevolent human spirits, akin to concepts in Buddhism and Hinduism (Andayani & Jupriono, 2019; Afnan, 2022; Sari & Brata, 2018). These *lelembut* are often perceived as frightening (*medeni* and *memedi*) and are believed to inhabit objects, rendering them sacred (Warsiti & Sari, 2020; Suryaningputri et al., 2022; Suroyo et al, 2022).

The belief in *Jagad Lelembut* intertwines with the community's belief system, potentially evolving into folklore or myth (Achsani, 2020; Rachman & Tekol, 2020; Harahap & Absah, 2022). This belief in unseen entities can significantly influence decision-making and problem-solving within Javanese communities (Rianto, 2018; Wijaya & Kartiningsih, 2023; Kamilah & Setyani, 2018), impacting social and cultural development (Ahmad, 2018; Wijana, 2021), although it can also present challenges to social justice (Khairina & Lestari, 2018; Hermawan, 2022). Consequently, societal beliefs about the spirit world often manifest as myths, defined as unproven narratives explaining events or realities indirectly (Kholiq et al., 2022; Aulia & Dora, 2024; Muqoddam & Maghfiroh, 2019; Putra & Wakit, 2019; Anah, 2021; Alkaf, 2022; Mahardhani et al., 2023). Notable Javanese myths include the legend of Nyi Roro Kidul and the tale of Bandung Bondowoso (Kwirinus & Saeng, 2023), both reinforcing a culture connected to the supernatural. Traditional Javanese beliefs (*kejawen*) further emphasize this coexistence through daily offerings (*sesajen*) to honor spirits and guardians (Sarwono, 2024).

While studies have explored the enduring influence of supernatural beliefs in Western thought (Cavendish, 2023) and the relationship between the supernatural, myth, and belief systems (Baker & Bader, 2014; Nescolarde et al., 2015; Valk, 2021; Agbenyega et al., 2017), the specific mechanisms through which the Javanese belief system is formed by the realm of spirits (*lelembut*) to create myths remain underexplored in anthropological studies. Existing research often links the supernatural to literature and cultural studies (Rachmawaty & Dermawan, 2017; Mashudi & Toyyib, 2017; Andayani & Jupriono, 2019). This study aims to address this gap by descriptively analyzing how the Javanese belief system is shaped by the existence of *Jagad Lelembut* in the creation of myths. Understanding this

process will provide deeper insights into Javanese values, worldview, and thought processes, contributing to the preservation of Javanese culture, particularly its folklore and dark myths, as vital aspects of national cultural heritage. The belief system surrounding folklore and dark myths among the Javanese presents a compelling phenomenon for investigation, promising a richer understanding of Javanese culture and its societal implications.

METHODS

This cross-sectional, descriptive qualitative study employs a phenomenological approach and was conducted between September 2024 and March 2025 in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (Sleman, Gunung Kidul, Bantul, and Yogyakarta City), Indonesia and Central Java. The present study employs a descriptive phenomenological approach, a methodological framework that facilitates an exhaustive examination of the lived experiences and subjective interpretations individuals ascribe to their beliefs in Jagad Lelembut. This epistemological stance is particularly well-suited for the study of belief systems, as it recognizes that reality is constructed through individual perceptions and interpretations. This enables researchers to capture the rich, contextual nuances of cultural beliefs and practices. The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive and empathetic understanding of the spiritual worldviews experienced and interpreted by Javanese individuals. This objective is to be achieved by adopting the aforementioned approach.

The research focused on exploring the beliefs of the Javanese community regarding dark myths and folklore. While a cross-sectional design effectively captures current belief patterns, its limitation lies in explaining the evolution of these beliefs over time. Qualitative methods were employed to provide a rich narrative of the Javanese belief system concerning the supernatural realm within these locations. Data collection primarily involved participant observation in Yogyakarta museums and Javanese cultural centers. This method allowed the researcher to immerse themselves in environments where Javanese cultural values and beliefs are actively expressed and maintained. Additionally, in-depth, unstructured interviews were conducted with eight key informants from Yogyakarta, and the central java including the areas of Magelang and Semarang. The interviewees, whose specific identities and affiliations are not disclosed to ensure their privacy, possessed knowledge of supernatural activities. They included individuals from diverse backgrounds: those who professed belief in the supernatural, individuals with connections to traditional Javanese courts, and indigenous community members with experience interacting with the spirit world. These informants primarily hailed from various regions across Java, reflecting a rich tapestry of Javanese cultural traditions and spiritual beliefs. Their experiences collectively offered a nuanced perspective on supernatural phenomena within the Indonesian context.

The data collection procedure commenced with the identification of relevant themes and study sites. Following this, an initial reconnaissance was undertaken, involving a review of Javanese historical, cultural, and ethnographic literature to establish context and gather preliminary information pertinent to

the research focus. Unstructured interviews served as a supplementary data source to enrich the information obtained from the literature. Participant observation was strategically chosen as the primary observation system, enabling the researcher to become an active participant within the observed settings and directly experience the activities and interactions of the Javanese community related to their belief system. This extensive fieldwork approach formed the backbone of the research. Data sources encompassed stories, tales, beliefs, traditions, and cultural practices associated with Jagad Lelembut as understood and practiced by the Javanese community within the study locations. Direct data collection within the Javanese community environment involved the researcher acting as a participant-observer, engaging in community activities and meticulously documenting observations, conversations, and experienced situations through detailed field notes. Subsequent data processing involved in-depth analysis to understand the meaning, context, and nuances of the collected information. To ensure data accuracy and validity, the researcher employed comprehensive triangulation by consulting with other observers (where possible without compromising informant anonymity) and by cross-referencing observations with field notes. The profound use of triangulation and extensive fieldwork significantly demonstrates the depth of exploration undertaken in this research.

The interviewees, whose specific identities and affiliations are not disclosed to ensure their privacy, possessed knowledge of supernatural activities. They included individuals from diverse backgrounds: those who professed belief in the supernatural, individuals with connections to traditional Javanese courts, and indigenous community members with experience interacting with the spirit world. These informants primarily hailed from various regions across Java, reflecting a rich tapestry of Javanese cultural traditions and spiritual beliefs. Their experiences collectively offered a nuanced perspective on supernatural phenomena within the Indonesian context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The central finding of this study reveals that the deeply ingrained belief in *Jagad Lelembut*, the Javanese supernatural world populated by diverse spirits, functions as a fundamental framework for rationalizing unexplained natural phenomena within Javanese society, thereby shaping a multifaceted cosmological perspective where these entities are integral to daily life. This belief system, rooted in the syncretic tradition of *Kejawen*, which blends animism, dynamism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and local Javanese values, demonstrates a complex and regionally nuanced understanding of the supernatural.

In the Magelang region, informants (referenced as Table 1 and Figure 1 in their descriptions of entities) indicate a structured categorization of spirits, each with perceived attributes and origins. Simultaneously, residents in Sleman and Bantul reported direct encounters with paranormal activities associated with these entities, particularly in eastern areas like Gunung Kidul. The local belief in Gunung Kidul surrounding the Banaspati figure exemplifies the profound impact of supernatural beliefs, where its sighting is tragically linked to the phenomenon of *Pulung Gantung* (suicide by

hanging). This connection highlights how supernatural narratives can intersect with real-world social issues, offering a framework for understanding inexplicable tragedies within the community.

Furthermore, the reported appearance of the Jombor entity in Magelang, attributed by local belief to black magic practices within a family, underscores how supernatural explanations are invoked for unusual or negative occurrences. These explanations often serve to interpret misfortune, providing a cultural lens through which communities make sense of events that might otherwise be perceived as random or unjust. Conversely, entities like Kuyang, Genderuwo, and certain types of fairies are perceived as malevolent forces capable of endangering human life. Beyond direct harm, many myths and beliefs surrounding these entities are intertwined with cultural values and social norms. For instance, the concept of *pamali* (taboo or prohibition) often acts as a guardian of moral and ecological order. Stories of spirits punishing those who violate *pamali* — such as disrespecting sacred places, harming nature, or engaging in forbidden social behaviors — serve to reinforce community ethics and environmental stewardship. These narratives, while supernatural in nature, play a vital role in maintaining social cohesion and guiding behavior in accordance with traditional Javanese values. They illustrate how myths are not merely fantastical tales but deeply embedded cultural tools that reflect and perpetuate a society's moral fabric and worldview.

These findings align with the notion that myths and dark folklore often emerge as attempts to make sense of events or natural occurrences that defy conventional explanation. The vivid accounts and regionally specific beliefs highlight how the engagement with the natural world, coupled with historical and cultural transmission, fosters a cosmology where spirits actively participate in the fabric of everyday existence. This resonates with previous research suggesting that belief systems are often constructed to interpret ambiguous or frightening phenomena (Lippman, 2016).

However, this study acknowledges a limitation in its cross-sectional design, which provides a snapshot of current beliefs but does not fully capture the diachronic evolution of these beliefs. Future research could address this by employing longitudinal studies or incorporating historical analysis to understand how these beliefs have transformed over time. In conclusion, the Javanese belief in *Jagad Lelembut* and its associated myths and folklore serves as a crucial mechanism for interpreting the world and integrating supernatural forces into the understanding of daily life. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the Javanese worldview and the significant role of traditional beliefs in shaping cultural identity. Future studies could examine how popular culture and globalization influence the continuity of supernatural beliefs of the dynamic interplay between evolving societal factors, such as popular culture, social media, and globalization, and the persistence and transformation of these deeply rooted supernatural beliefs within Javanese society. Types of *lelembut* is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Types of *Lelembut* (known as Ghost and/or spirit)

Name of Entities	Shape of Physical			Elements of Entity		Level of Dangerous		Place of Entity	Ability
	Abstract	Human or some part of human	Shapes (Ball, Square)	Element	Human's part / Animal's Part	Harm	No Harm		
Banaspati (in ball form)			√	√			√	Forest, Cliff, Rivers	Could fly
Banaspati (human/animal form)		√			√		√	Cemetery	Could fly
Jin		√			√	√		Abandoned house, under the bridge, the source of water	Could walk and interact like a normal human
Wewe		√			√	√		Behind the pine tree in the morning	Could walk
Genderuwo		√			√	√		anywhere	Could transform into a handsome man
Peri (Fairy) Known as Sundel Bolong		√			√	√		Abandoned building	Can transform into a pretty lady
Jrangkong	√				√	√		Cemetery, forest, and haunted building	Could flow and hunt human
Wedon		√			√		√	Cemetery	Could jump with high-range
Buta (buto)		√			√	√		Forest	Could hunt human as their prey
Thethekan	√			√		√		Forest at night	Could produce a weird sound "*thethek*"
Gundhul Pringis	√				√		√	Cemetery and abandoned buildings which humans never there	Could walk on the ground by its head

Name of Entities	Shape of Physical			Elements of Entity		Level of Dangerous		Place of Entity	Ability
	Abstract	Human or some part of human	Shapes (Ball, Square)	Element	Human's part / Animal's Part	Harm	No Harm		
Lampor			√	√		√		mostly in the river	Could fly to haunt human
Leak		√			√	√		Anywhere, mostly witch's lair	Could haunt human
Tuyul		√			√		√	Anywhere, Mostly at the witch's lair	Could steal money
Nyi Roro Kidul		√			√	√		At the south sea of Yogyakarata	Could kidnap people
Kuyang		√			√	√		Anywhere, mostly at the witch's lair	Could fly and haunt newborn babies as their prey

The table categorizes various entities based on their physical shape, elemental composition, danger level, location, and abilities, highlighting their supernatural attributes. Entities such as Banaspati and Jin exhibit diverse forms and powers, including flight, shape-shifting, and interaction with humans across different environments like forests, cemeteries, and water bodies. Many entities pose potential harm, with some capable of hunting or abducting humans, while others exhibit benign or playful traits. This classification underscores the cultural significance and varied supernatural phenomena present within local beliefs and folklore.

The supernatural world plays an important role in the lives of Javanese people. The belief in spirits and supernatural powers has been embedded for a long time and is still sustainable today. This belief affects various aspects of life, such as many Javanese rituals and traditions related to the supernatural world, such as *selamatan* (thanksgiving), *ruwatan* (cleansing) and *larung sesaji* (sea alms). These rituals aim to establish a relationship with the spirits and ask for protection or help. The belief in karma and reincarnation encourages Javanese people to live well and morally. They believe that good deeds in this world will be rewarded with goodness in the next life. in other words, the supernatural world plays an important role in the lives of Javanese people. Belief in spirits and supernatural powers affects various aspects of life, such as rituals and traditions, values and morals, arts and medicine. Javanese society has many types of supernatural beings, which can be categorized into two major groups: good supernatural beings and supernatural beings that terrorize humans (Figure 1). It is

important to respect Javanese beliefs, even if we don't believe in them. We should also be careful in spreading information about supernatural beings, so as not to cause fear and panic.

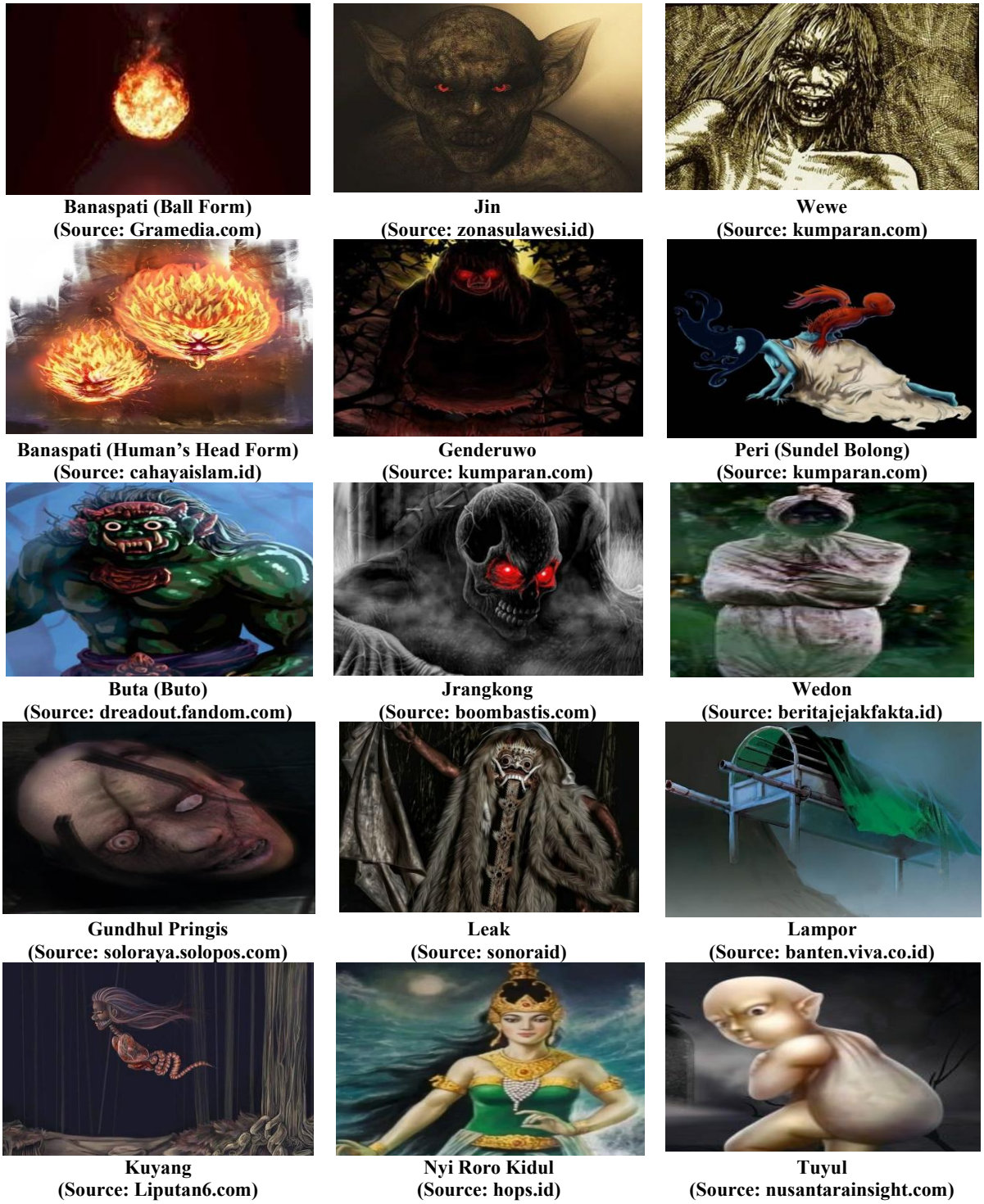


Figure 1. Illustration of Spirits Built by Javanese Belief System

The Ancient Javanese Belief System in the Supernatural World

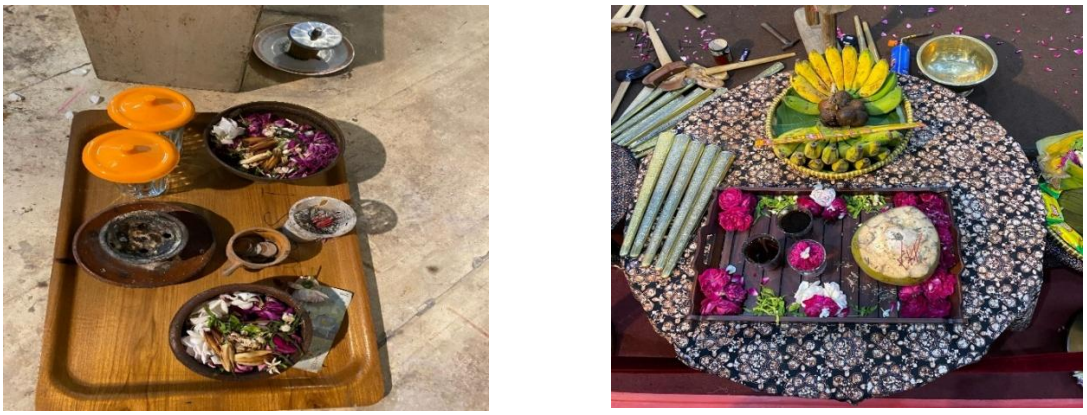
Javanese society holds a profound and enduring belief in the supernatural world, a system

deeply interwoven with daily life and transmitted across generations. At its core lies the conviction that all elements of nature possess a spirit or soul (animism) and supernatural powers (dynamism). Trees, rivers, mountains, and even inanimate objects are imbued with spiritual significance. This pervasive belief is evident in various corners of Yogyakarta and its surrounding cities, areas rich in Javanese culture. Practices like *Pesugihan* (a pact with supernatural entities for wealth) and the use of offerings to spirits exemplify the depth of this cultural and philosophical heritage (**Figure 2**). Within Javanese culture, spirits such as *hyang* (a concept akin to God or the highest spirit), various deities, and revered ancestors are believed to play crucial roles in human existence. This stems from a core Javanese understanding of the intimate connection between the spiritual and the material realms. *Pesugihan* and other traditional Javanese beliefs often involve diverse forms of offerings, intended to honor, praise, and cultivate relationships with subtle beings. These offerings are typically conducted following significant events such as religious recitations, weddings, or other ceremonies. For instance, a *Slametan* aims to express gratitude to spirits believed to influence success.

However, this deeply rooted supernatural belief system presents a fascinating ambivalence. While it serves as a powerful force for cultural preservation, safeguarding ancient traditions and fostering a unique sense of identity, it simultaneously intertwines with inherent fears of the unknown and potential retribution from the spirit world. On one hand, these beliefs offer a sense of protection and guidance, providing a framework for understanding life's uncertainties and seeking spiritual solace. On the other hand, the pervasive influence of supernatural explanations can, at times, hinder rational inquiry and critical thinking, potentially affecting societal progress and adaptation to modern perspectives. This dynamic tension between cultural continuity and the challenges to rational thought underscores the complex nature of Javanese supernatural beliefs. In addition, there is one ceremony held to commemorate and praise gods or ancestors who are considered to have an important role in the lives of Javanese people. In this ceremony, dignitaries will carry a *tawur* (parade) with images of gods or ancestors made of wood and cloth.

In today's modern life. The belief system of the ancient Javanese community also still exists. Javanese people have a very close relationship with nature. They believe that nature is a residence for various spirits, such as ancestral spirits, gods and other supernatural beings. Certain rituals are carried out to ask for blessings and protection from nature by giving them an offering which is normally called *sesajen*. An offering made by the elders or inhabitants to hyang or other spirits. In this activity, they will bring various kinds of *tawur*, such as *tawur kresek*, *tawur gong*, and *tawur* gamelan. All these practices aim to improve the relationship between the Javanese people and the spirits, so that they can get blessings and luck in life. In addition, it also builds a sustainable community and strengthens Javanese cultural values and culture. For example. The giving of offerings (figure 2) is often found in several places with the concept of ancient Java, such as one of the shopping centres. This offering aims to honor the supernatural world or the universe of lelembut. This is because ancient Java has a strong

influence on animism, which focuses on nature and the concept of humans coexisting with supernatural beings. In addition, the practice of black magic is also still developing by asking for help from creatures or entities that have dangerous levels. Such as the practice of *jelangkung*, the raising of tuyul which is believed to make the master rich from tuyul, and witchcraft (a metakinesis practice that attacks the victim indirectly with the help of spirits). This belief functions as a social system that regulates human behaviour. Religious rituals and beliefs in supernatural powers can strengthen social bonds and maintain order in society. In addition, belief in the supernatural world provides explanations for natural phenomena that are difficult to understand, such as natural disasters, disease, and death. This provides a sense of security and certainty for society. Javanese people believe that human life is full of uncertainty. Belief in supernatural powers provides hope and a way to deal with problems that cannot be explained rationally. This belief system has been passed down from generation to generation and has become an inseparable part of Javanese cultural identity.



A **B**

Figure 2. Media Offerings To The Supernatural Realm

On Figure 2 (A), shown an offering to a spirit that lives on one of the heirlooms in the Surakarta palace, Solo-Central Java. People believe that if someone touches this offering, the waiting figure will haunt and terrorize the person holding it. Unlike the Surakarta palace, on Figure 2 (B), offerings of roses, coffee, and fruits such as coconuts and bananas are believed to be the favorite objects of supernatural beings. Especially bitter coffee. People believe that if a person drinks bitter coffee, but tastes sweet, then the jinn are already inside the person's body.

Javanese Belief In Totems That Are Believed To Be The Dwelling Place of Lelembut

In the view of the Javanese people. Spirit or evil is a general term for spirits or spirits. They are believed to inhabit various places, one of which is a totem. Totems in the Javanese context are often manifested in the form of natural objects such as large trees, unique stones, or water sources that are considered to have magical powers. Javanese society does have a magical image and belief system that

makes anyone nervous. Some totems are often decorated in several areas and historical buildings on the island of Java. Including one of the trains in the train museum, Yogyakarta. There is a train that should not be photographed by anyone. Nevertheless, the train has its magical aura, white and looks old. It is said that the white-coloured train that can be found in the train museum is the train of the incarnation of the queen of the South Coast.

The train was used to take the corpses of palace members to Imogiri, the cemetery of kings. In addition to the carriage, there is also a scary stern head statue that adds a sense of drama when the Kasunanan Surokarto Hadiningrat Palace group traveled to attend the ceremony of asking the dependents of the Madura royal princess to become Pakubuwono IV's wife. This is all the more interesting as the boat sails through the Bengawan Solo and over various riverbanks and seas. Prince Pakubuwono V, the king's great son from the Kasunanan Solo Palace, added a butho head statue by the name of Kiai Rojomolo. This stern is apparently about 120 years old and is stored in two places. Besides being believed to be a historical legacy of the 18th-century Sunanate, the Rojomolo canthik looks fresh and shows no signs of damage. Therefore, many people who come to the museum still see Rojomolo as haunted, which cannot be taken for granted.

The Kraton boat chose the name Rojomolo instead of something else, and not only historians, but also collectors of sacred items in Surakarta know why Mangkunegara IV chose that name (Figure 3). Although in Javanese, *rojomolo* means "king of troubles". In the Radya Pustaka Museum, literature is kept that mentions the possibility that the name Rojomolo was taken from folklore in the Kickapura Kingdom, which means the incarnate egg of Dewi Watari, the bodyguard of Resi Indradewa.



A **B**

Figure 3. Totem of Lelembuts as a cultural belief of Javanese

The stern of Kyai Rojo Molo has the energy of the powerful realm of demons. For those who touch it, terrible things will happen to them. There is a prohibition against touching this 120-year-old

heirloom. On the side, bitter coffee, the favorite drink of the genies, is available.

Belief in totems shows the close relationship between Javanese people and nature. Totems are symbols of natural forces that must be respected and worshipped. In this context, totems are an integral part of the complex Javanese belief system. This belief explains natural phenomena that cannot be understood rationally and provides a sense of security for the community. Totems are considered as protectors for the community. The spirits that inhabit the totems are believed to provide blessings, fertility, and protection from danger. In addition, Totems are often a symbol of the identity of a community or family. Through totems, Javanese people feel they have a strong bond with their ancestors and the environment in which they live. Although belief in totems still exists today, the influence of modernization and globalization has caused changes in the religious practices of Javanese society. However, totems remain an important part of Javanese cultural identity and are passed down from generation to generation.

Manifestation of an entity into an object

In the view of Javanese people, especially Javanese, everything in the universe has a spirit or *sukma* (soul). Not only humans, but also objects, places, and even natural phenomena are considered to have spiritual powers. This concept then gave rise to the belief that supernatural entities can manifest themselves in the form of physical objects..The manifestation of supernatural beings or invisible entities in the form of sculptures and paintings as a Javanese belief system occurs through a complex and diverse process. Javanese culture has a very rich history, which is seen in the various artistic endeavors and beliefs found in the area. In this context, supernatural beings may be represented in the form of sculptures and paintings as part of the Javanese cultural and historical heritage. Sculptures and paintings can be used to present symbolism that depicts the nature, function and sophistication of supernatural beings. For example, the shape of the body, the fingers, and the use of accessories in statues or pictures can give an idea of the creature's characteristics. In communicating Javanese beliefs about supernatural beings, statues and paintings can be an important medium to transform beliefs into a reality that can be displayed and understood by the community. This allows them to become a more integral part of Javanese culture and identity. As in a statue in one of the Prambanan temple complexes in Yogyakarta-Klaten, Central Java. Manifestations of this bird-bodied human demon are seen on several sides of the temple. The myth is that the guardian of the Prambanan area is a figure with the form of a human-headed bird demon (Figure 4).



A B

Figure 4. Manifestation of supernatural beings on an object

Figure 4 (A) shown a statue of a bird-bodied man, often seen on some sides of Prambanan temple. In addition to humans with bird bodies, there are also snake demons with dragon bodies that are believed to be pets of Ny Roro Kidul (Figure 4 (B)).

Statues of gods are often considered as the dwelling place of the god's spirit. Thus, this belief explains natural phenomena that cannot be understood rationally, thus providing a sense of security and certainty for the community. Another manifestation of supernatural beings is a snake with a dragon body that can be found on one of the beaches in Gunungkidul. This manifestation can also be seen in the Yogyakarta palace as the "guardian" of the palace. "*Dwi Naga Rasa Tunggal*" is a candrasengkala symbol or sengkalan that indicates a key year in history. The statue can be read as "Two Dragons of Unified Rasa" and represents the year 1682 Javanese or 1756 AD when the Yogyakarta Palace was built. In the context of manifestation, the surrounding environment and nature can influence the way Javanese people cope with and value supernatural beings. Sculptures and paintings can provide a unique and interesting display of the natural environment or buildings associated with such beings. In this process, Javanese people may become adherents and developers of the statues and paintings they create. This leads to an increase in people's belief in supernatural beings and makes them a more significant part of Javanese culture and beliefs.

Shamans and Santet (Witchcraft)

Historically and sociologically, the figure of the shaman and the practice of black magic have become an integral part of Javanese cultural identity. Both are closely intertwined with the complex and diverse belief systems of Javanese society. The figure of the shaman has a central role in Javanese society. They are considered to have special abilities to communicate with the spirit world, cure illnesses, and provide advice. Shamans are often a reference for people in dealing with problems that are considered beyond the reach of modern science. Meanwhile, black magic is a form of black magic that is believed to be used to harm others. Belief in black magic is often associated with social conflict,

competition, or personal grudges. The emergence of the existence of small entities that people believe in, as may disrupt human life. Meanwhile, *Santet* is an individual's attempt to inhibit another relationship by using black magic. It is often practised by people who feel disappointed in the suffering experienced by others. *Santet* can be done independently or with the help of a shaman. Etymologically, the word "*santet*" comes from the Osing language, which is an acronym for the phrases "*mesisan kanthet*" (to cause pain) or "*mesisan benthet*" (to cause poisoning).

Although Islam is against associating partners with Allah, its customs and cultural misconceptions are still inherited from the family, which is difficult to separate in modern life. Although advanced technology is available to fulfil human needs, indigenous people in the modern era still choose the shaman as the leader of success in every matter. It becomes a mantra that is highly trusted. These phenomena show that belief in magic is a social phenomenon that exists in both traditional and modern societies in Indonesia. People's need for nature makes them believe in magical things that come from nature itself. The use of witchcraft is also the same as that of shamans. Without shamans, witchcraft would not exist. However, without witchcraft, shamans still have other alternative rituals such as *pellets* or *susuk* (totems that support the spell for their victims). The presence of witchcraft is also believed to have the ability and support of the world of entities that cannot be trusted. For example, *pesugihan* witchcraft, someone who wants to get rich instantly will perform a witchcraft ritual by placing several totems in their home or business. These totems are useful for summoning supernatural beings with specific purposes and intentions. According to Kepling (initial), a former shaman who lives in Pakem, Sleman Yogyakarta. Several witchcraft practices are still popular today (Table 2). The purpose of witchcraft is also various, depending on what type of entity is used.

Table 2. The entities used in witchcraft

Name of Ritual	Entity	Type of Entity			Objectives	Media of Santet / totems
		Abstract	Human's parts / animals	Shapes (Ball, Square, etc)		
Susuk Konde	Spirit	√			To harm the victim that contains the spikes, needles and others in certain parts of the victim's body.	Konde
Santet Lowo Ireng	Spirit	√			To harm the victims and bring them to death	Thread
Santet Kuyang	Kuyang		√		To change the victim's mind just like a kuyang (a head and organs) that Victims could change instantly	Hair, or victim's liquid (blood, saliva, urine, etc)

Santet Khodam	Jinns	√	√	√	To terrorise victim's minds and bring them to the level of psychotic	Human Hair
Santet tali ghaib	Spirit	√			To control them as the orders of the owner of this santet	Human Hair
Santet lepas	Spirit	√			To kill the victims with an "invisible" bullet	Human Hair
pesugihan	Pocong		√		To terror victims, and make the restaurant popular by spitting their corpse fluid	Used underwear, black chicken's head, pocong's thread
	Tuyul		√		Stealing money to give the owner of this rich	Crabs, bowl of salt water, mirror
	Genderuwo		√		To protect the family from other's santet from the rival	Unkown

Structure And Elements Of The Javanese Belief System Related To The Supernatural World

The Javanese *Pertuan* (owner) System is an institution associated with the culture and history of Java, which is one of the regions in Indonesia rich in culture and tradition. In Javanese culture, Hyang is a word used to refer to supra-natural leadership or God. Hyang is considered the leader of all culture and religion in Java. Hyang has many forms and names, including Hyang Widi Wasa, Hyang Rara, and Hyang Tunggal to Hyang Taya. In the context of Sang Hyang Kesuma, it is a phrase used to refer to a higher level of supra-natural leadership and serves as a link between Hyang and Javanese society. Sang Hyang Kesuma is considered the guardian of all life in Java, including life and death. In the Javanese system of governance, the Patih is the person responsible for directing and guiding the Javanese community in carrying out the necessary efforts to honor and praise Hyang and Sang Hyang Kesuma. The Patih is also considered to be the link between the supra-natural leadership and the Javanese community. Meanwhile, the context of kebatinan is the strong belief in the existence of the supernatural world among Javanese people. This kebatinan influences the way Javanese people deal with problems, build social relationships, and respect supra-natural leadership. The Javanese belief system related to the supernatural world is also seen in various ceremonies and traditions held in Java. An example is Slametan, which is a ceremony held to honor and praise Hyang and Sang Hyang Kesuma. In this ceremony, Javanese people also honor the Patih and other chiefs. Thus, the Javanese hereditary system associated with the supernatural world is an important part of Javanese culture and tradition. It allows Javanese people to honor and praise supra-natural leadership, as well as establish a harmonious relationship between culture, beliefs and daily life.

The Role of Myths and Traditional Javanese Stories in the Formation and Influence of the Javanese Land System on Javanese Society

In the context of Javanese society, it is known as pamali, which is a taboo for some people to do something. For example, children are forbidden to go out during maghrib time until before 8pm or Isha prayer. If children go out at that time, they will be kidnapped by Genderuwo or Wewe (known as Wewegombel). Other pamali include bathing a corpse, birds chirping to signal death, pregnant women, guarding a grave within 40 days, and so on. This belief builds a system in the cultural belief of Javanese society to this day. However, the role of Javanese myths and traditional stories plays an important role in the formation and influence of the Pertuan (royal) system in Javanese society. These stories describe the roles and relationships between the beings that make up nature, as well as the relationships between these beings and humans. This helps Javanese people to understand and deepen the role of each family, group and individual in society. In this sense, traditional myths and stories help direct the role and function of the Pertuan system in Javanese society.

Myths and traditional stories are often used to suggest that a kingdom or leader is entitled to hold power. An example would be a story about a leader being given powers and duties by God or a deity, so they are appointed to the position of Pertuan. This helps the community to become more amenable to the royal system and determine the appointed leader and traditional Javanese stories also help to set social and ethical norms that are valued by the community. Some of these stories show good leaders who are competitive, and bad leaders who suffer consequences. This helps the community to understand and pursue the ethical values required in the royal system. In the process of shifting traditions and social roles, traditional Javanese myths and stories help direct the role of the Pertuan system in an evolving society. For example, the move from an Indian-derived royal system to a more localized and Javanese culture-based royal system. In this case, traditional myths and stories helped adapt and develop a royal system that suited the culture and needs of Javanese society.

Javanese culture and values are seen in Javanese people's understanding of the supernatural world.

Javanese people's understanding of the supernatural world is seen among Javanese culture through various aspects, including culture, values, feelings, and efforts to overcome problems. Javanese culture has a belief in Hyang, which is the unity of all the gods that make up nature and life. Javanese people consider that all supernatural events, including events that are considered bad, are still controlled by Hyang. This shows that Javanese values, such as the belief in the Exa God and the opposition between good and bad, are visible in the Javanese understanding of the supernatural world. In Javanese culture, there are two aspects of Hyang that play an important role in the Javanese understanding of the supernatural. Hyang Kusuma is regarded as the producer of nature's surprise and beauty, while Hyang Rara is responsible for events involving violence and abuse. This shows that Javanese values, such as

appreciation of natural beauty and concern for justice, are visible in the Javanese understanding of the supernatural world. Javanese people take action to address mistakes and bad events that are perceived to be related to the supernatural. For example, Javanese people hold abatement or offering ceremonies to repair the relationship with Hyang and prevent bad events from happening again. In addition, the role of ancestors and refugees are considered as inhabitants of the supernatural world who have an important role in directing Javanese society in daily life. They are considered to have greater insight and can provide a broader view of supernatural events. This shows that Javanese values, such as attention to greater influence and a broad outlook, are seen in Javanese people's understanding of the real world.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the Javanese belief system, deeply rooted in the supernatural world and expressed through cultural myths, serves as a fundamental framework for interpreting both the tangible and intangible aspects of their existence. These myths provide explanations for the universe's origins, human existence, and various natural phenomena, effectively structuring the Javanese understanding of their world. Beyond mere storytelling, these narratives actively transmit essential Javanese cultural values, such as the profound respect for ancestors, the importance of maintaining ecological balance, and principles for virtuous living. Furthermore, they facilitate the comprehension of abstract concepts like karma and reincarnation, which are integral to the Javanese worldview. This intricate belief system is not merely passive; it is actively reinforced and manifested through a variety of significant rituals and traditions, including *selamatan*, *ruwatan*, and *larung sesaji*. These practices serve as crucial mechanisms for establishing and nurturing relationships with supernatural entities, seeking their protection, and soliciting their aid.

In the contemporary landscape of rapid modernization, the perpetuation of this rich cultural heritage faces both challenges and opportunities. The traditional mechanisms of intergenerational knowledge transfer, often informal and community-based, are increasingly complemented by new avenues for cultural transmission. Cultural schools, for instance, play a vital role in formalizing the teaching of Javanese language, arts, and philosophy, ensuring that foundational elements of the belief system remain accessible to younger generations. Moreover, the pervasive influence of social media offers an unprecedented platform for the dissemination and discussion of Javanese myths, rituals, and values. Digital content creators and cultural enthusiasts can leverage platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to share narratives, explain complex spiritual concepts, and document traditional ceremonies, fostering a sense of community and pride among Javanese youth globally. Similarly, digital literacy initiatives empower individuals to access, interpret, and contribute to online archives of Javanese folklore and spiritual texts, thereby enriching the collective understanding and ensuring the continued relevance of these beliefs in a digitally connected world. These modern modalities present a dynamic pathway for the inheritance and evolution of Javanese spiritual traditions, ensuring their resilience amidst the pressures of globalized modernity.

Consequently, these communal rituals play a vital role in strengthening the bonds within Javanese society and solidifying a shared sense of cultural identity. While this deeply ingrained belief in the supernatural offers a sense of security and comfort by positing a world where individuals are not alone and are often under supernatural protection, it also presents a potential duality by occasionally fostering fear and anxiety, and potentially hindering the development of critical and scientific modes of thought. Acknowledging the scope of this investigation, it is important to note that this study focused on a selection of Javanese myths and rituals and did not encompass the entirety of supernatural beliefs prevalent in Java. Moreover, it did not delve into the dynamic ways in which these beliefs adapt and transform in response to evolving societal landscapes. Therefore, future research endeavors could fruitfully expand upon these findings by examining a broader spectrum of Javanese supernatural beliefs. Specifically, researchers could explore the intergenerational transmission of these beliefs, investigating how they are passed down and reinterpreted across different age cohorts. Furthermore, an in-depth analysis of their ongoing evolution within contemporary society could shed light on how globalization and modern influences impact their practice and significance.

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