



## Trances in Perspectives of Javanese and Muslim: An Anthropological Linguistic Study

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### Abstract:

*Possession is a serious health problem for Javanese and Muslims. This study aims to describe the perspective of Javanese and Muslims on a trance or a state of being possessed. This is qualitative research applying a linguistic anthropological approach. The subjects are the members of the Javanese and Muslim communities in Tulungagung. They are the individuals having experienced trance(s), their family, and the witnesses. Other important informants are the healers, shamans, and Islamic leaders (ustadz or kyai). Based on the analysis, it shows that trance for the Javanese is a disease inflicted by a certain spirit. It must be cured by a shaman with a series of rituals and offerings. For Muslims, it is a disturbance of the genie as the possessed disobeys God's rules. Its healing is done through ruqyah by reciting particular verses from the Qur'an. The way Javanese treats a trance reflects their perspectives and thoughts as found in local wisdom: tamba teka lara lunga (the cure comes and the disease goes), meaning that every disease has its cure. For Muslims, a trance is simply an effect of the human relation to his God. A better quality in the relationship will result in a human's better life. Conversely, a bad relationship to God will bring about a negative quality in human life. Trance is just one of them; it is believed to be evidence of the poor relationship a possessed has to God.*

*Keywords: linguistic anthropology, trance, Javanese, Muslim, perspective*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term trance is very popular among the Javanese, especially in extreme artistic circles such as *jathilan* (the braid horse dancer). In its practice, *jathilan* usually shows dancers going into a trance, chewing glass debris and other sharp objects. Most people believe that the power is derived from their being truly possessed. Some Muslim activists convince that the power is from a certain genie possessing them (Ricklefs, 2013:398). Thus, the trance is a subconscious state in which a person cannot control their deed.

The action of a braid horse dancer is indeed an example of an intentional trance for a performance show. In doing so, a shaman would use rituals, spells, and/or offerings to consciously and intentionally summon genies or spirits to come into enter the dancers' minds. As a result, they would be possessed and get into a trance state. In this being, the dancer would get a new power to perform irrational and dangerous actions which are impossible to do when they are normal and fully conscious. It is believed that these actions are from the spiritual being possessing them.

The trance context in this study is a trance that occurs accidentally. A trance that just happens without the intervention of a shaman who casts a spell to summon a genie or spirit. The possessed people do not realize their state of being possessed. During trance, they tend to perform unnatural and destructive actions outside their consciousness, such as slamming and breaking things, molesting innocent people, etc. There are many cases of trance experienced by people because they do something wrong, like urinating in a haunted place, spitting on wrong spots, cutting parts of a haunted tree, etc. These acts actually were not related to the trance. Yet, for a healer, the behaviors are the true cause.

Spirit possession is a common phenomenon around the world in which a non-corporeal agent is involved in a human host. This is found in almost all religions and cultures (Volkan, 2020; Siswanto et al., 2021; Lienardy, 2022). It has been identified in Indonesia (Arni et al., 2020; Molla & Setio, 2022; Silalahi et al., 2022; Siswanto et al., 2021), Asia (Hoare, 2023), Africa (Rashed, 2020), Europe (Blyth, 2021; Pietkiewicz, et. al., 2021). This manifests in a range of maladies or in displacement of the host's agency and identity. Prompted by engagement with the phenomenon in Egypt, Rashed (2020) has revealed connections between spirit possession and the concepts of personhood and intentionality. In another study, Blyth (2021) concluded a major play of spirit possession in cultural and religious practices.

The treatment aspect of possession is explored by Hoare (2023). He analyzed the phenomenon in Fijian cultures, which are mixed with Christianity. There are two types of treatments applied by them: exorcism and/or medical intervention. The practice of exorcism for possession has also been explored by Lienardy (2022) who concluded that the practice is not relevant today. Meanwhile, Pietkiewicz, et al. (2021) reported a possession as a wrong attribution of psychotic delusion, which in turn inhibits its medical treatment. They attempt to negotiate to the people other optional explanatory models, so the patients would be allowed to be treated properly.

In Indonesian context, possession or trance has also been investigated by some scholars with different aspects. Siswanto et al. (2021) reported an account of possession in Makassar from a parenting view. They believe that parenting is an important factor contributing to a tendency of women to get possessed, besides an abusive religious belief. Meanwhile, Silalahi, et al. (2022) conducted a study of possession among the students and concluded that it was triggered by the stress on academic difficulty they experience. The factors of possession are also investigated by

Arnie et al. (2020) who employed the approaches of Islamic theology and psychology. Meanwhile Setio (2021) addresses the controversies in the public about the possessive agents believed to be the real factor.

Based on previous studies, it can be seen that research on possession in the views of Javanese and Muslims has never been carried out. Therefore, this research is worth carrying out by focusing on four aspects, i.e. (1) the meaning of trance for Javanese and Muslims, (2) the ways by which Javanese and Muslims handle trance, (3) the different perspectives of trance between Javanese and Muslim, and (4) the local wisdom values contained in their perspectives on trance.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Studies on trance have been done quite a lot by researchers. They have explored it from various points of view. They focus on different aspects of trance in various cultures. Several studies discuss the ontological aspect of trance by providing explanations about trance and some explore the causes of trance events either individually or in a mass (Rogerson et al., 2021). In their research, Rogerson et al. (2021) claim that trance is a phenomenon that occurs and is known in almost all cultures and various ethnic groups with diverse patterns of occurrence. Meanwhile, other studies highlight the phenomenon of trance associated with rituals in Bali (Gatriyani, 2022; Kiswara, 2022; Alkaf, 2022; Piogenta, et al, 2022; Sumertayasa, et al, 2023; Suadnyana, 2022). Valente-Quinn (2020) focuses on trance being exploited in the theater arts in Senegal.

*Meanwhile, Blyth (2021) elaborates on possession in a cultural context and its role as communication in religion. He investigates how narratives, events, and rituals are interrelated as a whole of communicative acts both between the spirits and the humans, and among humans themselves as the members of a community. This study proves significant roles of spirit possession in the cultural and religious practices of a community (Blyth, 2021).*

Another study focuses on the notion of evil spirits influencing human behavior or mental processes in many cultures. It includes psychotic delusions of possession. The study explores how patients with schizophrenia are said to had been possessed. Such attribution was supported by the local environment and media, which led to seeking spiritual help, and delayed diagnostic assessment and treatment. Using religious coping contributed to the sense of predictability and social support, clinicians explored the experiences and conflicts seen in the symptoms and negotiated alternative explanatory models with their patients (Pietkiewicz, et. al., 2021).

Hoare (2023) said that spirit possession elicits two common responses - rites to exorcise Satan or medical intervention. Drawing on pastoral experiences in the two major cultures of Fiji, this paper examines different types of spirit possession from the perspectives of social anthropology, psychology, and theology, which all play important roles in dealing with cases of spirit possession. Understanding and communicating within the local cosmology is important. Pastoral discernment is emphasized, especially in cases of ancestor possession, which are common in the indigenous Fijian culture. The character of the pastoral worker and relationship with the patient are also of great importance in the healing process. The healing power of religious ritual and symbols will be shown in cases of possession within both cultures.

Arni, et al. (2020) described the phenomenon of trance that occurred and analyzed it transparently, as well as describing the factors that influence the occurrence of possession according to studies of Islamic theology and psychology. Molla and Setio (2022) argue that possession often causes controversies, among them is the agent behind the possession. Silalahi, et al. (2022) concluded that students who are stressed due to problems of academic matters can

experience a trance. They reported a description on trance from the perception of the students victims, the ways of handling it, and the process of its occurrences.

Not a few exorcism services carried out by the church did not produce results. Therefore, the question arises, is it still necessary for the church to carry out the ministry of exorcism? Lienardy (2022) attempts to dig up the method that Jesus used in casting out demons to see its relevance in today's church services. This study departs from anxiety as a church servant.

Another study discusses the occurrence of possession disorders in Makassar. The results indicated that parenting, the role of the father figure, and the relationship with the mother, as well as the transmission of abusive religious beliefs, were more likely the causes of possession disorders in the Makassar/Indonesian context. The abuse experience is more related to parenting patterns than physical or sexual abuse as appears in the Western literature (Siswanto, et. al., 2021).

Volkan (2020) said the idea that humans can be inhabited by supernatural entities is widespread among cultures and religions around the world. Demonic possession is sometimes encountered by clinicians who choose to understand it as the actual presence of a demon possessing a human, or as a psychological phenomenon. Some cults of Christianity hold to a belief that demonic possession occurs in reality. Eastern religions like Buddhism understand demonic possession as relatively real but also see it as ultimately stemming from psychological issues. This has implications for treating so-called demonically possessed individuals.

The phenomenon of trance in Europe, especially in France, in the past, has also been studied (Marie, et al., 2022). Various views and perceptions about possession, including ways of handling it in Europe, have also been widely explored (Schafer, et al., 2023; Wahbeh, et al, 2023; Godiawala, et al, 2023; Karrasch, et al., 2022). Even though the object of study is the same, the study of possession in Europe is more about modern life. They see possession as a medical condition that must be resolved. Only a few studies discuss trance from the spiritual and religious views, like the one among Javanese or Muslim communities.

The discussion of trance in the various books and articles is not about the views of the Javanese and the Muslims on it. Thus, research on trance according to Javanese and Muslims is worth doing. Based on their thoughts, it can be seen the local wisdom of the Javanese and the Muslims. The Javanese view trance as a part that must be resolved according to their cultural customs. Their views reflect local wisdom often contained in the noble Javanese *pitutur* (teaching) (Sumodiningrat and Ari Wulandari, 2014). As for Muslims, they view their local wisdom as an expression of their religion. Their wisdom is more based on Islamic religious guidance, from Al-Quran and Al-Hadith (Supriyanto, et al., 2018).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research method uses a qualitative research design. Qualitative research includes the use of the subjects studied and the grouping of various empirical data that describe the meaning of everyday and problematic life in one's life. The results of this research include a description of the empirical data analysis (Fitrah and Luthfiah, 2018). A qualitative research is an approach to explore and understand the meaning that a number of individuals or groups ascribe to social or humanitarian problems (Wijaya, 2020). Bogdan and Biklen (1988:27-30) state that qualitative methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive research reports in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior.

This research was conducted in Tulungagung, East Java. It is chosen based on five reasons. First, Tulungagung is widely known as a city with a very strong Javanese tradition. This represents the existence of a “Javanese” community. Second, it is an area that has quite a lot of Islamic boarding schools, both traditional and modern Islamic boarding schools. *Pesantren* can represent “Muslims” referred to in this study.

Javanese are the term to refer to those who live on the island of Java. They preserve Javanese customs. They practice Javanese cultural heritage from their ancestors in their daily. Of course, they speak Javanese. The origin of the Javanese in this study is the Java island (Koentjaraningrat, 1994:43). Meanwhile Muslims here refer to the people who embrace Islam religion. It is an Arabic term, meaning literally as “a person who submits to Allah”. “Muslim” has an innate meaning of male Muslim, while for females it will be “Muslimah”. Though the word Muslim is generally used for male and female.

Third, the people there, both “Javanese” and “Muslims”, still use “traditional cures” in dealing with various diseases. The fourth is that there are many incidents of people in trance there, although cases of mass trance are rarely heard. Fifth, there are traditional healers for handling possession, among Javanese and Muslims.

The objects of this study are people who have experienced a trance. Considering that the trance is an unconscious condition, then most of the possessed person cannot remember anything they did or any event that happened during their trance. Thus, other data source is required to cover the gap. They are the families or other people who were present in the trance episodes; they are reliable sources providing more detailed information about the trances. Other valuable sources are traditional healers who can give more complete accounts about it. They are able to explain in detail the creature possessing the body, the cause, and the procedures for dealing with or expelling the spirits lodging in the bodies.

The informants include people who have experienced trance, their family members or eyewitnesses of trance incidences, and also traditional healers who cure the trance. All of them are the key informants in this research. The criteria to be informants are among others, (1) a normal person in their circle -- meaning that they have a good psychological condition; they can think properly like others. They can interact logically; (2) mature -- means that they are old enough and can answer all research questions well; (3) male or female -- there is no gender difference in the selection of informants for this study; (4) they are physically and mentally healthy, means not being treated for mental illness or mental disorders and other physical disorders; and (5) have clear language habits -- can understand research questions and answer them well (see Bailay, 1978:81, 91).

This data collection was done in two ways, namely participated observation and interview. The former means the researchers were involved in the social activities done by the informants; they became a part of what they were studying. The latter was done by having a discussion with two or more people to collect the information. It is a means of proving information from informants to get reliable data (Poedjosoedarmo, 2012:17-18). In the interviews, most of the interactions were in Javanese. The data are all the result of the observations and interviews with informants in December 2019. The real names and their residence are masked in order to conceal their privacy.

The data collection in this study was carried out using the listening method, by focusing on the use of written or spoken language (Mahsun, 2005:92). The basic technique used is the note-taking technique, by recording, categorizing, and classifying the data (Mahsun, 2005: 133). These

steps are to simplify the process of data analysis.

Then, the data were analyzed and explained based on anthropological linguistics (Duranti, 1997:2). The process of data analysis followed by Ahearn (2012:43); involves rereading all field notes and other documents, transcribing interviews and natural conversations, and analyzing responses from the survey conducted. After the recording and documentation process, the researcher classified the data according to their respective needs. They were grouped into three types, namely (1) the data from the informants who directly experience a trance, (2) the data from the family or the eyewitnesses, and 3) the data from traditional healers.

The classification is to make an easier identification of trance from holistic aspects. By the grouping, the researcher then can describe the definition of trance, the causes of trance and its background, the process the shamans or kyai heal the trance. Trance is believed to be inflicted by an invisible agent. An adequate theory to discuss the meaning of trance with regard to culture is componential analysis. This theory aims to understand the structure of a phenomenon in the field. A trance is a phenomenon created a relationship link within.

## 4. RESULTS

Based on the data analysis, researchers can present answers related to the questions in the problem formulation. Here is a detailed description.

### 4.1. Trance

Javanese and Muslims have different understandings of trance, but they also share some in common. For Javanese, possession is a disorder or an unnatural disease that occurs in a person due to a certain agent that possesses his/her body. The agents who cause trance are often referred to as spirits, including ghosts, they're referred to as *dhayangane*, who have control over a haunted place), *jinn*, demons, etc.

In the Javanese mind, a person can be in a trance if he/she does wrong to a spirit or is loved by a spirit. There are at least three causes of trance in the Javanese version, namely: (1) doing wrong to spirits, (2) doing trouble or bad things in the place where spirits reside, and (3) being loved by spirits. Below is a detailed presentation of each factor.

First, the mistakes made by humans can cause trance, for example defecating, urinating, spitting, or even just splashing hot water in haunted places accidentally. Second, doing trouble or bad things in the place of spirits, such as trampling on a haunted place or making a fuss that disturbs the "inhabitant" in that place. Third, being loved by spirits. A spirit falls in love with a person; he/she refuses. This makes the spirit angry and possesses the person. It usually harms the people around him.

With these different causes, traditional Javanese healers, like shamans, psychics, or elders, must cross-check with the spirit before taking treatment. After knowing the problem, then the shaman can decide to take certain actions. All of these actions must be carried out or fulfilled so that the spirit will leave the body of the person possessed. When a spirit is in the body of a person, the person may cause trouble and damage.

In the Javanese group, trance is handled by shamans with various appropriate traditional rituals. The families of trance sufferers generally agree to the shaman's request so that their family recovers quickly. In certain cases the rituals and offerings can be very simple, in others they can be very complicated and very costly.

On the other hand, Muslim sees a possession as a disturbance of the jinn that enters the human body, but the reason is different. They believe it happens because the person lacks faith or does not obey God's commands. People who are often in a trance are considered to have a mind blank, and they don't remember God. Thus, they have a simple view of trance.

Related to their belief about trance, they heal it by *ruqyah* method—it is like an Islamic exorcist. It was done by reciting some verses of the Koran by religious teachers or clerics to expel the jinn from the body. This expulsion of jinn is believed to be a part of Islamic teachings. Muslims never use rituals or offerings as an exorcist. Sometimes they only use fresh water adorned with Islamic chanting or prayers. Then the person in a trance should drink it.

Muslims will first look for *Ustaz* or religious teachers, when there is a family member or relative gets possessed. They consider them as the experts in handling cases of trance. They will not seek the shamans or the paranormal, although they are Javanese.

#### **4.2. Treatment or Handling Trance**

In terms of the trance treatment, Javanese and Muslims have different methods. The former treats a trance based on its causes. If the trance is analyzed to be triggered by wrongdoing done by the person to a certain spiritual agent, the healing will be applied by sending an apology to it. They will do a ritual of apology. More treatments conducted by Javanese to cure a trance are elaborated in the following sections.

First, as mentioned earlier, if a person getting trance is due to his/her misconduct to a spirit, the solution is to apologize to it. The apology can be a simple one; the shaman will apologize to the spirit on behalf of the person. Then, the person will soon get back to normal. At other times, an apology is not enough verbal expression. The spirit may ask for some offerings and certain spells. The common offerings include fruit, a whole chicken dish, a complete dinner package, and seven kinds of flowers.

Second, if the trance is inflicted by trouble or mischief done in the spirit's homes, the treatment is to restore the broken or modified place. This process is never easy. The shaman as a mediator usually asks to replace the act with offerings. The design and model of these offerings vary relative to the request of the spirits. As all the requests and conditions have been satisfied, then the possessed will immediately recover.

Third, in case the person is loved by spirits. According to some traditional healers, the healing process is a more complicated issue. The spirit in love will usually refuse to move out from the body it likes. It wants to stay there for good and will fight to keep doing it. Thus, the shaman will apply various methods to negotiate and finally kick it out.

Therefore, based on the information from some shamans as the informants, the treatment for the case should be done in some stages. At first, the spirit will be advised that its world and human world are not the same. Both are totally different. Thus, it is better for both to live peacefully in their respective places without disturbing each other. This negotiation may work, and the spirit will understand, and then leave the body. However, it can be otherwise. The spirit disagrees with the idea and insists on staying in place. In such a case, coercive measures will be taken. Shamans will hit, punch, or slap using supernatural energy to force the spirit out. In practice, the shamans will do these to the body of the possessed, but the real target is the spirit within. In such cases, the healing does not use any offering.

For Muslim, handling possession is generally carried out by *Ustaz* or religious leaders. The methods among them are the same, i.e. *ruqyah*, though the verses they recite can be different. This is relative to their Islamic knowledge level. The following is among the verses commonly used in the healing process of trance. *Ustaz* or *Kyai* will read among these verses as the attempt to expel the *jinn* from the body of the patient.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ - طِبِّ الْقُلُوبِ وَدَوِّهَا - وَعَافِيَةِ الْأَبْدَانِ وَشِفَائِهَا - وَنُورِ الْأَبْصَارِ وَضِيَائِهَا - وَقُوَّتِ الْأَرْوَاحِ وَغِدَائِهَا - وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Allaahumma shalli 'alaa Sayyidinaa Muhammadin thibbil quluu-bi wa dawaa-ihaa wa 'aa-fiyatil abdaa-ni wa syifaa-iha wa nuu-ril abshaari wa dlii-aa-ihaa wa quu-til arwaa-chi wa gidzaa-tihaa wa 'alaa aalihi wa shahbihii wa sallim.

"O Allah, bestow mercy and welfare on our lord, Prophet Muhammad, healer and medicine for the heart, medicine for body health, light and rays of sight, provision and food for the spirit, as well as safety for his family and friends." (3x)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ السَّمِيعِ شَيْئٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ - وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

*Bismillaa-hiladzii laa yadlurru ma'asmihii syai'un fil-ardli walaa fis-samaa'i wahuwas samii'ul 'aliim*

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, He to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and He is the All Hearing, the All knowing."

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ الَّتِي لَا يُجَاوِزُهَا بَرٌّ وَلَا فَاجِرٌ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَمِنْ فَتَنِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمِنْ طَوَارِقِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ إِلَّا طَارِقًا يَطْرُقُ بِخَيْرٍ يَارْحَمَنُ.

*A'udzu bikalimatillahit tammatil lati laa yujawizuhunna barrun walaa faa-jirun min syarri maa yaliju fil ardli wa maa yakh-ruju minhaa wa maa yanzilu minas samaa 'I wa maa ya'ruju fiihaa wa min firaanil laili wannahaa-ri wamin thowaa-riqil laili wannahaa-ri illaa thoo-riqoo yath-ruqu bikhoirin yaa rohman*

"I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allah, which neither the good nor the evil can surpass, from the evil that descends from the heavens and the evil that ascends to it, from the evil that is created on the earth and what comes out of it, from evil the catastrophe of the night and the day, and, from the evil that comes by night and day, except that which comes with good, O Lord, the Most Merciful." (3x)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ أَرْقِيكَ وَاللَّهُ يَشْفِيكَ - مِنْ كُلِّ دَاءٍ يُؤْذِيكَ - وَمِنْ كُلِّ نَفْسٍ أَوْعَيْنٍ حَاسِدٍ اللَّهُ يَشْفِيكَ - بِسْمِ اللَّهِ أَرْقِيكَ

*Bilmillahi arqii-ka, wa allahu yasyfika min kulli daa-in yu'dzika wa min kulli nafsin au 'aini chaa-sidin. Allahu yasy-fika. Bismillahi arqii-ka.*

"In the name of Allah, I recite Ruqyah over you - and Allah will heal you - from every disease that hurts you, and from every soul or envious eye. God heals you. In the name of Allah, I recite Ruqyah over you." (3x)

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ النَّاسِ أَذْهِبِ الْبَأْسَ - إِشْفِ أَنْتَ لِشَافِي لِشِفَاءِ إِلَّا شِفَاؤَكَ شِفَاءً - لَا يَغَادِرُ شَقَمًا.

*Allaahumma robbannaasi adz-hibilba'si isy-fi antasy-syafi lasyifaa-an illasyifaa-uka syifaa-an laa-yugaa-diru syaqoman.*

"O Allah, Lord of all mankind, remove the disease. Heal, You are the healer. There is no antidote but Your antidote, the antidote that consumes sickness and disease." (3x)

*A'udzu bikalimaatillaa-hit tammaa-ti kullihaa min syarri maa-kholaq.*

"I seek refuge in the words of Allah, which are perfect in all, from the evil of creation."

(3x)

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ غَضَبِهِ وَعِقَابِهِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ عِبَادِهِ وَمِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ.

*A'udzu bikalimatillaa-hit tammaati min gho wa'iqabihi wamin syari 'ibaadihi wamin hamazaati syayaathiini wain yahlduruun.*

"I seek refuge in the words of Allah, which are perfect, from His anger, His punishment, from the evil of His servants, from the crush of the devils, and from their presence." (3x)

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ وَهَامَّةٍ وَمِنْ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ لَآمَةٍ.

*A'udzu bikalimatillaa-hit tammaati min kulli syaithoni wa hammatin wa min kulli 'ainil amatin "I take refuge in the perfect words of Allah from the evil of every demon, every venomous beast, and every harmful eye." (3x)*

Then read the following surahs of the Quran.

1. QS. Al-Mu'minuum [23]: verses 97-98 (7x).
2. QS. Al-Fatihah [01]: verses 1-7 (1x).
3. QS. Al-Baqarah [02]: verses 1-5 (3x).
4. QS. Al-Baqarah [02]: verse 102 (3x).
5. QS. Al-Baqarah [02]: verses 163-164 (3x).
6. QS. Al-Baqarah [02]: verse 255 (3x).
7. QS. Al-Baqarah [02]: verses 285-286 (3x).
8. QS. Ali-Imran [03]: verses 18-19 (3x).
9. QS. Al-Araf [07]: verses 54-56 (3x).
10. QS. Al-Araf [07]: verse 117-122 (5-7x).
11. QS. Yunus [10]: verses 81-82 (70x).
12. QS. Thaha [20]: verse 69 (7x).
13. QS. Al-Mukminuum [23]: verses 115-118 (1x).
14. QS. Ash-Shaaffat [37]: verses 1-10 (1x).
15. QS. Al-Ahqaf [46]: verses 29-32 (1x).
16. QS. Ar-Rahman [55]: verses 33-36 (1x).
17. QS. Al-hasyr [59]: verses 21-24 (1x).
18. QS. Al-Jin [72]: verses 1-9 (1x).
19. QS. Al-Ikhlâs [112]: verses 1-4 (1x).
20. QS. Al-Falaq [113]: verses 1-5 (1x).
21. QS. An-Naas [114]: verses 1-5 (1x).

Those are the verses of the Koran that are usually read for the *ruqyah* exorsion process. For a normal individual, the reading of the verses will not produce any effect. On the contrary a person with a supernatural being in the body, they can stimulate some instant effects. The person can be suddenly angry; he or she may shout loudly as a resistant effect on the expelling. In other, he/she may feel nausea and vomit. These are seen as turmoil of the jinn in the body.

These verses are usually also used in the self-*ruqyah* procession to protect a person from jinn or the devil. The process takes a very long time, about 4 hours. It requires good stamina to keep

reading the verses. The simplest method to prevent from Satan or jinn is by reciting An-Naas seven times every day. Other informants mention that the recitation of three-Qul surah (An-Naas, Al-Falaq, and Al-Ikhlâs) before sleep will protect Muslims from the evils of such beings.

After the person in trance is freed from the jinn, he/she will usually be dazed for a while. They cannot remember all things and events during the trance. *Ustaz* or *kyai* will give him a drink of fresh water which has been spelled using the verses. Then, as the person has gained all his mind and gets better, the family will be asked to bathe him/her. In another, the person will be guided to the bathroom and they monitor from outside. Finally, the patient gets dressed, the healer will pray for the safety of the person and his/her family. That is the closing of the treatment of trance among the Muslims.

### 4.3. Javanese and Muslim View on Possessions

The handling of the treatment of a possessed person reflects their view of it. For Javanese, trance is an unnatural disease, so it needs special treatment. Trance is a health disorder that cannot be cured conventionally. If a person in a trance is taken to a hospital or other modern medical clinic, he definitely will not recover. The family will immediately find a shaman, paranormal, or elder, who is considered to have a special competence to heal a possession.

In general, Javanese people accept and will take for granted everything a shaman says. They believe that shaman truly has the skill to communicate with ethereal beings. Any command or request from a shaman is just the order of the spirit, and through a shaman, they will fulfill what they want. In some cases, some shamans take benefit from this belief. They will ask for some valuable things from the family; they may ask for jewelry and gold and claim that it is a request from the spirit.

Javanese think that the person in trance is in a state of imbalance, and not in harmony to life. Thus, he needs to be rebalanced in various ways, including rituals and offerings through a shaman or another possessed expert.

While Muslims see that people who are possessed are people who are less close to God. They are often confused, and daydreaming, their minds are empty, so they can be possessed by jinn or demons. If they use their time for worship or other positive activities, they will definitely not be possessed.

Meanwhile, for Muslims, a trance can occur to someone who does not obey God's rule. They ignore the religious teaching. Muslims do not believe other reasons. Although some cases prove that the trance happens to good students in the Islamic boarding house, *pesantren*. They live normally in their daily and they participate actively in their studies.

It seems that Muslims is too simplistic, ignoring factors and reasons other than the relation of human being and God. It is true that those who have a good relationship with God tend to have a better life. Yet, human is a social beings, who cannot be dispatched from a social life. A person prays diligently, but he does not live well with the community. In Islamic principles it may be considered "right", but in social principles, it is not.

Some strict Muslims may consider everything from traditional custom to be a "heresy", and it is often said to be "misguided", because it is not from Islamic teaching. Thus, they tend to reject everything related to cultural customs. In fact, there are many cultural customs that are actually in line with Islamic rules. They include being friendly, caring for orphans, loving the poor, giving priority to help those in need nearby over others in the distant, and many others.

#### **4.4. Local Wisdom in the Possession Perspectives**

The local wisdom of the Javanese against trance is basically based on Javanese teaching, "*Tamba teka lara lunga*" (medicine comes, disease away). This means that every disease must have a cure. The possession considered to be an unnatural disease also requires treatment. Javanese people think that those who can treat all kinds of diseases are shamans or traditional healers. That is why they go to them for healing a trance.

In addition, the Javanese are an ethnic group that is very concerned about balance in life. A person in a trance is often considered to be mentally unbalanced. There is a hole in him that needs to be patched so that it returns to a balance. The patching is translated in various ways like rituals, mantras, giving offerings, etc. Thus the relationship between humans and spirits perforated earlier, could be closed and restored. The gaping hole can be patched. After it is recovered, the balance will return, and the life will run normally.

While Muslims view trance as part of a person who is not close to God. It also has a local wisdom. For them, the most important thing is a good relationship with God, even if he is isolated from others and has no dealings with them. This view has a positive and negative side. Putting a priority on the relation to God is good, but to ignore a social life is not. Human beings need to be with other people; a person should live socially in his/her community.

The view is not completely wrong, as it is taken from a religious view. In fact, other Muslims (Muslim Javanese) have a different idea. The people have a stronger belief in their Javanese culture than what they have in Islam. The Islamic local can make people live in a simpler way. Their treatment of trance also seems to be easier and more efficient than the Javanese method. This is surely an integral part of their view on trance.

Both Javanese and Muslims contribute different local wisdom about trance. For people who happen to coincide on these two sides of culture, Javanese Muslims can choose one of the views and thoughts that are considered to be more suitable and appropriate for them. There is no need to criticize or blaspheme each other because each has a similarly strong rationale. Their beliefs are then expressed in the way they understand the trance and the ways to heal it.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

Trance is a phenomenon interpreted variously across cultures and religions. The views among them can be strikingly different, even among different communities living in the same region as proved in this study. The following is a comparison between the Javanese and Islamic views on trance, which is then compared to other cultures and religions.

Javanese people tend to view possession as the result of magical or spiritual influences. They believe that a person can be possessed by spirits or subtle entities. It is often considered a form of interaction with the supernatural world, such as spirits or ancestral spirits. Topics on possession among Javanese have also been widely addressed in various journals, including natural possession, in the *raja* tradition, the *Kuda Lumping* performance, the *gebyak dusun* tradition (Subandiyah, 2022; Pamungkas, 2022; Sumanto, 2022; Sarifa, 2023; Wahyudi, 2023). However, they do not particularly discuss the details of possession among Javanese from its causes, conditions, and healing.

In Javanese culture, shamans or spiritual experts are often called to cure a possessed individual. They are believed to have knowledge of special rituals and prayers to relieve possession. This culture sees them as a mediator between the natural and the supernatural worlds. In Javanese

circles, shamans are very popular. Especially in rural communities where the old Javanese traditions are still strongly held. Many studies have also explored the role and function of shamans in Javanese cultures, but they do not have a specific address on their role in handling the possession like those having been done by Syuhudi (2022); Syarofi, et al (2022); Wulandari, N.D., et al (2023); Latifah, S. and MS Ami (2022); Syafitri, et al. (2022); Hamirul, et al. (2022).

For Muslims, possession is considered to be the result of the influence of jinn or satanic interference who wish to harm humans. Their religion teaches them to seek protection from God, Allah, and to use verses from the Koran and prayers to overcome the satanic influence. They have a great emphasis on a strong faith by obeying the religious teachings. When a Muslim often gets possessed, the recommended treatment is to strengthen his relationship to God by practicing daily prayers and another good deed (*amal salih*), and to avoid bad deeds (*munkar*). Thus, possession, for them, is related to their faith in God. Individuals having a good relationship with God will not fall into it. Meanwhile, others with a bad relation to Him will easily be affected. Similar results have been reported by other studies (Asmarani, et al., 2023; Basir, 2022; Molla, et al., 2022).

### 5.1. Differences from other Cultures and Religions

This view of possession does not only exist among Javanese or Muslims. Almost all ethnicities throughout the world and various religions or beliefs also recognize trance. However, each ethnicity and religion has different perceptions, thoughts, and views from Javanese or Muslim people. The following are several views that differ from Javanese and Muslim people.

**Latin American Culture (*Curanderismo*):** In Latin America, there are traditional healing practices such as “*curanderismo*” where shamans or spiritual healers can be used to overcome possession. This is similar to the Javanese view regarding the use of dukun.

Of course, all kinds of attributes, rituals, and spells performed by shamans in Java will not be the same as shamans in the Latin American tradition in overcoming possession. Studies on the problem of possession in Latin America have been carried out by several researchers, including Toledo, et al. (2023), Flores, et al. (2022), Pacino (2022), Rottschäfer (2022), Engler (2022), Csuri, et al. (2022), Arnold, et al. (2022).

In the Vodou culture of Haiti and Santeria in Cuba, there is a belief in spirits that can come into or control a human body. It is similar to the concept of trance in Javanese culture. They also have shamans who practice to overcome the possession. However, their spells, rituals, and various models of healing methods are Javanese, as it is found in the accounts of some researchers (Ridho, 2023; Mastur, 2022; Nelwan, 2022).

In some Hindu and Buddhist traditions, a similar belief is also identified. They believe the potential influence of spirits or supernatural beings on individuals, like in the Javanese view on trance. Hinduism and Buddhism share similar views and treatment. However, they are different from Javanese and Muslims. This proves that trance is recognized by most communities, but the view and its treatment vary. The studies on trance among Hindu and Buddhist have been done by some scholars like Gatriyani (2022), Kiswara (2022), Alkaf (2022), Piogenta, et al (2022), Sumertayasa, et al (2023), Suadnyana (2022). Thus, views on possession can vary greatly across cultures and religions, and interpretations and practices can differ even within the same community. Additionally, modern views on possession in various cultures and religions may also develop over time.

The perspectives of Javanese and Muslims towards trance, or altered states of consciousness, can differ based on their cultural and religious backgrounds. Here are the key differences of their views.

**First, in cultural context, Javanese says** that trance is known as a way to connect with ancestral spirits or supernatural entities. It is considered a cultural practice deeply rooted in Javanese traditions. Trance is often associated with rituals, dances, and music that aim to invoke a state of altered consciousness, allowing individuals to communicate with the spirit world.

In Islam, trance is generally not encouraged or practiced in the same way as in the Javanese. While Sufism, a mystical branch of Islam, does involve spiritual practices that can lead to altered states of consciousness, mainstream Islamic perspectives emphasize maintaining a clear and sober mind while engaging in worship and religious activities.

**Second, the trance can also be compared from spiritual and religious interpretations.** In Javanese culture, trance is often interpreted as a means to connect with ancestral spirits, seek guidance, or gain insight into spiritual matters. It is believed that during trance, the individual's body is taken over by spirits or supernatural forces, allowing them to communicate with the spiritual realm. The experience is seen as a form of divine communication and guidance.

In Islam, trance can be interpreted as states of heightened spirituality or closeness to God, especially within the context of Sufism. However, the focus is on maintaining a balance between the material and spiritual worlds while remaining firmly rooted in Islamic teachings and practices. Trance-like states should not lead to behaviors that go against Islamic principles.

**Third, the differences can be seen obviously in their practices and beliefs.** Javanese trance practices often involve rituals performed by traditional healers, known as “dukun” or “paranormal”. These rituals can include dances, chants, and offerings to appease or communicate with spirits. Trance is seen as a way to address spiritual and emotional concerns and to maintain harmony with the supernatural world.

Within Islam, trance-like states might be experienced during intense moments of worship, meditation, or devotion, particularly by Sufi practitioners. However, the emphasis is on maintaining a strong connection with Allah through prayer, meditation, and recitation of Quranic verses. Sufis believe in seeking closeness to God through disciplined spiritual practices, rather than inducing trance states for their own sake.

It's important to note that both Javanese culture and Islam are diverse. Furthermore, individual perspectives within these groups can vary widely. Some individuals might blend elements of their cultural heritage with their religious beliefs, resulting in unique personal perspectives on trance.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of Javanese and Muslim perspectives on trance, it can be concluded as follows. First, Javanese and Muslims commonly view trance is a disturbance from the invisible being. For Javanese, the causative agents of trance can be various, such as jinn, demons, ghosts, *dhayangan* (the supernatural owner of sacred and haunted places), and other spirits. Meanwhile, for Muslims, the source is jinn, who have human-like characters - Some are good, and others are bad. It is the bad genie which is often the trance maker.

Second, when the Javanese see their family in a trance, they will quickly turn to shamans or elders for the healing process. They will not bring a possessed person to a modern treatment like

psychiatrists or psychologists. They believe that the condition can only be solved by a shaman who can expel the supernatural beings with a series of spells, rituals, and offerings. Meanwhile, Muslims will immediately call *Ustaz*, or *Kyai*, Islamic religious leaders to heal the trance. From them, the healing to a trance can only be done by praying and reading the holy verses of the Koran according to the Islamic provisions.

Third, the healing process of trance for the Javanese often involves various rituals, ceremonies, and offerings that vary according to their diagnosed causes. Meanwhile, the process of resolving possessions among Muslims tends to be generalized. Everything is resolved with *ruqyah* in different levels relative to the power of the jinn believed to possess a person.

Fourth, the Javanese view their actions and perceptions of trance as an unnatural illness, because they think that everything in nature is in a state of balance. If a person is imbalanced, he/she will be easily possessed. Possession is a form of imbalance and must be returned, with various rituals, mantras, and offerings according to the request of the corresponding supernatural being that invades. Muslims are much simpler in handling a trance. The being is generally considered to be a potential risk among the person who ignores God's rules. As a result, the jinn easily comes into his/her body. They expel the spirit with *ruqyah* method. As the jinn leaves their body, they will regain his/her consciousness. At this stage, the healing is completed.

In sum, Javanese and Muslims share in some ways, but they have differences of understanding and handling the trance. Javanese view is generated from the local Javanese culture, while the Muslim view has a fundamental on Islamic teaching.

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