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Interpreting the Maghrib Prohibition: A Ricoeurian Hermeneutic and Jungian Archetypal Analysis of the Bathara Kala Myth in Javanese Culture

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Abstract: This study examines the prohibition on leaving the house at dusk in Javanese culture through an integrated analytical framework, namely Ricoeurian hermeneutics, Jungian archetypal psychology, and liminality theory. Although often understood as a simple prohibition in everyday practice, the ban on duskactually containsa layered structure of meaning that combines mythic, moral, and affective dimensions in regulating behavior and stabilizing the symbolic order. Based on primary data in the form of cross-generational interviews and textual sources regarding the myth of Bathara Kala, this study shows that the ban on dusk functions as a symbolic mechanism that transforms the existential ambiguity of dusk into a comprehensible cosmological order. In this context, Bathara Kala—depicted as a predatory creature at dusk—emerges as a local manifestation of a universal archetype *Shadow* and *Devouring Father*, which acts as a cultural technology to externalize and manage collective anxiety. At the social level, the prohibition of Maghrib (sunset prayer) operates as a pedagogical tool used by parents and family members to discipline children and maintain the rhythm of domestic life. Intergenerational analysis reveals a shift from the literal beliefs of older generations to the moral-pragmatic interpretations of younger generations, indicating that the continuity of tradition occurs through a process of *resemantization* adaptive. Comparative data from Africa, South Asia, and Latin America confirm that the twilight taboo is a cross-cultural pattern for responding to temporal ambiguity. Overall, this study offers a multidimensional analytical model that demonstrates how local myths, social discipline, and existential anxieties combine to sustain the continuity of living traditions in contemporary Javanese culture.

Keywords: Bathara Kala, hermeneutics, Javanese culture, Jungian archetypes, Maghrib prohibition

1. Introduction

The prohibition against leaving the house at dusk is one of the most enduring traditions in Javanese culture. Although modernization has weakened some traditional beliefs, this prohibition persists as part of parenting practices and collective values. This tradition is rooted in the narrative of Bathara Kala—a cosmological figure considered active at dusk and threatening children. From an anthropological perspective, dusk is understood as *liminal space*, namely the transition phase between light and dark which is full of uncertainty [1]–[2]. This concept is in line with Turner's view of transition as a fragile point that requires symbolic mechanisms to maintain social order [3].

Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach provides a framework for reading the ban on Maghrib as *cultural texts*. Ricoeur states that texts have three levels of meaning—semantic, reflective, and existential—which allow for simple prohibitions such as *"aja metu wayah magrib" [don't go out at sunset]* understood as an expression of moral values, social structures, and existential responses to the uncertainties of the world [4]. At the same time, Carl Gustav Jung's theory of archetypes shows that the figure of Bathara Kala not only lives as a local mythological figure, but also as a universal archetypal manifestation such as *Shadow*, *Devouring Father*, and *Threshold Guardian*—psychological patterns that emerge in various cultures [5]–[6].

Global anthropological studies show that the figure of a nocturnal creature or twilight predator is not a uniquely Javanese phenomenon. The Yoruba people recognize... *ajogun* [7], Andean people have *anchanchu* [8], The Gondi–Baiga tribe in India knows *bhut/churel* [9], and the Haitian Vodou community has *spirit patrols* at dusk [10]. A similar pattern emerges in Malay society [11]. This similarity confirms that the Javanese magrib prohibition is rooted in a universal cultural structure: the need to understand and manage uncertainty in liminal

times.

By combining Ricoeur's hermeneutics, Jungian archetypes, and liminality theory, this study aims to interpret the deeper meaning of the sunset prohibition and explain how it transformed from a mythological belief into a social and pedagogical practice. This approach also demonstrates how the tradition persists through resemantization, where literal beliefs weaken but their moral and symbolic functions remain relevant. Thus, this study makes an important contribution to understanding the relationship between myth, temporality, and the continuity of cultural traditions in contemporary Javanese society.

2. Literature Review

The prohibition on sunset in Javanese culture is commonly understood as part of a traditional cosmology that marks dusk as a liminal moment—a transitional phase between light and darkness, fraught with uncertainty. The concept of liminality in anthropology suggests that transitional periods require specific rules and symbols to maintain cosmological and social balance [1]–[3]. In this context, the prohibition of Maghrib not only functions as a time regulation, but also as a symbolic narrative that regulates human relations with the threats and irregularities of nature.

The myth of Bathara Kala is central to the interpretation of this prohibition. Local studies emphasize that Bathara Kala functions as a cosmological figure who guards the boundary between the human world and the supernatural world, while also acting as a moral control mechanism [12]. The transformation of the meaning of Bathara Kala in contemporary society shows the existence of symbolic adaptation without eliminating the structure of the *ruwatan* ritual [13]. Other studies also highlight the presence of similar figures such as *Wewe Gombel* as an educational tool for children [14]. A study of eclipse myths in Java [15] further confirms that Bathara Kala is a "threshold guardian" figure who is activated in various cosmological situations.

Ricoeur's hermeneutical framework provides a way of reading the Maghrib prohibition as a cultural text with three layers of meaning: literal, moral-reflective, and existential [4]. This approach is important for uncovering how this prohibition is reinterpreted across generations. Meanwhile, Jung's archetypal theory suggests that Bathara Kala is a local manifestation of universal symbolic patterns such as *Shadow, Devouring Father,* and *Threshold Guardian* [5]–[6]. This shows that ancient fears of darkness, predators, and time transitions were processed into symbolic figures that could be arranged through ritual and narrative.

A comparative review shows that dusk prohibitions are a cross-cultural pattern. Research in the Yoruba [7], Andean [8], Indian [9], Haitian [10], and Malay [11], Tuareg [16], shows that twilight time is seen as a critical time that requires behavioral restrictions, especially for children. Creatures like *ajogun*, *anchanchu*, or *churel* has a function parallel to Bathara Kala: personifying threats in liminal times and maintaining social order through moral rules.

Thus, the literature review positions the prohibition of Maghrib as a phenomenon with strong cosmological, social, and psychological foundations. It is part of a universal pattern *twilight taboo*, yet rooted in a distinctively Javanese symbolic tradition. Three theoretical frameworks—Ricoeur's hermeneutics, Jung's archetypes, and Turner's liminality—provide a coherent analytical basis for understanding how this prohibition persists and transforms in contemporary culture.

Studies on the prohibition of Maghrib prayers and the figure of Bathara Kala in Javanese culture have been discussed in ethnography, ritual, and symbolic anthropology. Early research positioned Bathara Kala as a cosmological figure who restores the balance of the world through narrative *Murwakala* and *ruwatan* rituals. Riyanto 12] shows that Bathara Kala functions as a "guardian of the threshold" who swallows up the irregularities of the cosmos. Contemporary studies confirm that the practice of *ruwatan* has undergone transformation, but the symbolism of Bathara Kala remains relevant as part of the cleansing and protection ceremony [13]. The relationship of Bathara Kala to cosmic phenomena such as eclipses has also been documented, showing that Javanese people interpret natural events through the same mythic framework [15]. In addition, studies on pedagogical figures such as *Wewe Gombel* reveal patterns of using supernatural beings to control children's behavior, paralleling the function of Bathara Kala in the prohibition of Maghrib prayers [14].

From an international perspective, the pattern of twilight prohibitions emerged in many cultures as a response to liminal time. Rasmussen [16] noted that Tuareg people avoid outdoor activities at night due to the threat of supernatural beings. Yoruba people face *ajogun*—a dangerous entity that is active at dusk [7]. In the Andes, *anchanchu* seen as a twilight predator that threatens children [8]. Studies of Haitian Vodou show the presence of "spirit patrols" at times of transition that regulate social mobility [10]. A similar pattern is found in India, where twilight bans serve to protect children from creatures *churel/bhut* [9], and in Malay society, children are prohibited from going out at sunset for physical and moral safety [11].

Overall, previous research suggests that the Javanese Maghrib ban is part of a global pattern. *Twilight Taboo* which combines cosmological, pedagogical, and protective functions. Bathara Kala, although a uniquely Javanese figure, displays a symbolic structure that parallels the guardian of the dusk figure in various cultures,

thus providing a strong comparative context for the hermeneutic, archetypal, and liminality analysis in this study.

3. Method

This description summarizes the research design, data sources, collection techniques, analysis strategies, validity, and research ethics in a coherent and concise flow, with references to relevant methodological and theoretical literature.

This research was designed as an interpretive qualitative study aimed at exploring the deeper meaning of the prohibition on leaving the house before sunset and the Bathara Kala narrative in Javanese culture. An interpretive approach was chosen because the focus of the study is on cultural texts—including myths, ritual practices, and oral narratives—which require a hermeneutic reading to uncover the layers of meaning hidden behind normative statements. This approach is placed within the tradition of interpretive anthropology as formulated by Geertz, who emphasized *thick description* and understanding context as a prerequisite for expressing cultural meaning [17]. Methodologically, the research integrates three analytical pillars: Ricoeurian hermeneutics to read the text at semantic, reflective, and existential levels; Jungian archetypal analysis to identify symbolic patterns in the collective unconscious; and van Gennep and Turner's liminality framework to position the evening prayer as a transitional time that triggers certain practices and taboos.

The research data sources consist of a combination of primary and secondary data that have gone through a selection process to ensure the depth of analysis. Primary data includes a corpus of Bathara Kala myth texts (including the *Murwakala* version and variations of oral stories from field archives) sourced from two key informants, as well as cross-generational responses to the myth of Maghrib time and Bathara Kala classified by age, namely: adolescents (18–22 years), adults (27–30 years), and elderly (65–80 years). A total of 20 informants were interviewed. Interviews were conducted in Central Java (Sragen, Bandungsogo) and East Java (Jember, Andongsari), between May and September 2023.

Interviews were aimed at capturing childhood experiences related to the prohibition of evening prayers, narratives of speakers regarding Bathara Kala, and the dynamics of intergenerational changes in interpretation. Secondary data included classical and contemporary ethnographic literature on Javanese cosmology and *ruwatan*, works of hermeneutic theory and cultural psychology, and international comparative studies on twilight taboos and nocturnal creatures from African, Indian, Latin American, and Southeast Asian contexts. This combination of primary and secondary sources allows for triangulation of findings, enriches the validity of interpretations, and places local phenomena in a global comparative perspective.

Data collection techniques were implemented through text documentation, narrative interviews, and the collection of relevant ethnographic materials. Text documentation included searching for wayang manuscripts, *ruwatan* transcripts, and oral recordings depicting versions of Bathara Kala; this process follows traditional practices *textual ethnography* which treats both spoken and written texts as cultural artifacts that can be analyzed in their social context [18]. Interviews were conducted semi-structured using a narrative approach, allowing informants to share their stories chronologically and reflectively. Interview recordings were then fully transcribed and textually analyzed to identify motives, metaphors, and strategies for legitimizing the prohibition. Furthermore, researchers conducted participant observation of several ritual practices (e.g., *ruwatan*, *slametan*) where possible, to obtain contextual data that strengthened the reading of the text.

Data analysis was conducted in three complementary layers. First, a hermeneutic analysis followed Ricoeur's three-level model: semantic reading to capture the literal meaning and narrative structure; reflective reading to examine power relations, moral goals, and the context of communication; and existential reading to explore how the narrative responds to ontological anxieties and formulates a collective way of life. Second, a Jungian archetypal analysis applied the techniques of *symbolic amplification* to identify and interpret symbol patterns such as *Shadow*, *Devouring Father*, and *Threshold Guardian* in the representation of Bathara Kala, as well as comparing it with similar figures in cross-cultural studies (e.g., nocturnal creatures in the Andes, Yoruba, Tuareg). Third, the analysis of liminality places the findings within a temporal and ritual framework, reading the prohibition of sunset as a form of *temporal taboo* and protective mechanisms that manage the ambiguity of the transition phase. These three analytical layers are critically synthesized to produce a holistic yet differentiated reading.

Efforts to maintain the validity and reliability of interpretations are carried out through several strategies. First, source triangulation—comparing oral narratives, textual documentation, and academic literature—is used to verify the consistency of the prohibition's motives and functions. Second, theoretical triangulation—confronting findings with hermeneutic, archetypal, and liminal perspectives—helps test the interpretation's resilience to various analytical lenses. Third, *reflexive memoing* applied throughout the analysis process to record interpretive decisions, researcher assumptions, and possible biases, so that readers can assess the

analytical path taken. Fourth, this study uses *member checking* selective with a few key informants to ensure that any particular interpretation does not fundamentally deviate from the meaning they convey.

Ethical considerations were an integral part of the research design. All informants were interviewed with informed consent, with an explanation of the research purpose, data use, and the informant's right to withdraw at any time. Informant identities were protected through anonymization of published transcripts and quotes, and sensitive data regarding religious practices or rituals were handled with care to avoid exposing the community to stigma. Furthermore, the research respected local norms regarding prohibitions and rituals by avoiding practices that could disrupt or commercialize sacred traditions.

Methodologically, this research is expected to meet recognized standards of rigor in international qualitative studies. An interpretive approach combining hermeneutic reading, archetypal analysis, and a liminality framework offers a methodological contribution by providing an integrative model that can be replicated or retested in other cultural contexts. The results of the analysis are expected to not only describe the content of myths or the frequency of adherence to prohibitions, but also explain the symbolic and psychocultural mechanisms that maintain the Maghrib prohibition in collective memory, as well as how these mechanisms change when confronted with modernity and rationalization discourses.

4. Results and Discussion

The discussion of the research results combines Ricoeur's hermeneutic analysis, Jung's archetypal framework, and van Gennep–Turner's liminality perspective, with empirical data in the form of cross-generational informant narratives as listed in the thesis appendix (data on the Bathara Kala myth and community responses). All findings are presented at three levels of interpretation: (a) semantic level, (b) reflective level, and (c) existential level, then enriched through archetypal analysis and international anthropological comparisons regarding *Twilight Taboos*.

4.1 Level of Semantic

At the semantic level, the Maghrib prohibition first appears as a text *say something directly*. In field data collected through cross-generational interviews, the majority of informants quoted the prohibition in the form of a relatively fixed "verbal formula", for example:*"jangan keluar saat magrib, nanti digondol Bathara Kala"[Don't go out at sunset, or you'll be taken by Bathara Kala]* or *"ojok dolan wektu magrib, ana demit metu" [Don't play at dusk, there are ghosts out there].* Here, language works as a direct mechanism to connect two entities: time (*magrib*) and threat (*Bathara Kala/Wewe*). The consistency of this formula suggests that the ban on magrib has reached a certain level *fossilized expressions*, namely expressions whose formation is stable and inherited without much semantic change. This formulaic stability is a main characteristic of primitive and traditional cultural texts that function normatively, as noted by Bloch [19] and Duranti [20].

The presence of Bathara Kala in the informant's literal utterance is not only as a "frightening" supernatural being, but as a cosmological marker that emphasizes the boundary between the human and non-human worlds. When a mother tells her child, *"Bathara Kala metu wayah magrib"[Bathara Kala comes out at sunset]* (informant 1, Dwi, 20 years old), this statement is not just a moral warning, but is a form of "worldmaking" [21]—namely symbolic actions that build relational structures between space, time, and cosmic beings. In other words, the language of prohibition creates *moral cosmos*, not just warning of danger.

Semantically, these prohibition sentences form a triadic meaning structure: temporal markers: *magrib, peteng-peteng, wayah wingit, surup, samarwulu [evening, dark, scary time; dusk, twilight]*; entity markers: Bathara Kala, *Wewe, Demit*; consequence markers: *digondhol, digawa, dipangan [stolen, taken, eaten]*. This triadic structure shows a minimal narrative pattern, or *minimal narrative grammar*, as stated Barthes [22]. The places in the structure mark the role of actants in the Greimasian narrative scheme: time as*opponent*, Bathara Kala as *anti-subject*, and children as *subject* which is vulnerable to antagonistic actions.

This triadic pattern is also found in world mythological traditions. Research Kumar [9] in the Gondi–Baiga society of India found a similar form of formula: *"do not go out at twilight; churel walks then; she takes children."* Likewise in the study Olupona [7] regarding Yoruba, dusk is encoded with the structure: *"time of ajogun," "danger," "child exposure."* This parallel semantic structure explains why the concept of the prohibition of Maghrib is so easily maintained, because it has a linguistic form optimized for intergenerational transmission—concise, repetitive, and rich in emotional content.

In Javanese field data, literal statements about Bathara Kala are often accompanied by *intensification marker*, for example: *"gedhe banget," "ngeri," "senengane mangan bocah".[really big, scary, the joy of eating children]*. This kind of intensification strengthens the literal meaning while producing psycho-affective effects on the child. Ricoeur calls this phenomenon *the rhetoric of threat*, namely a style of language that is a threat that works not only through content, but through the intensity of expression inherent in the semantic structure of the text [4]. This intensification narrows the scope of interpretation so that the literal message is accepted as

unquestionable truth.

Linguistically, the prohibition utterances in the field data show an imperative mode (prohibition), a declarative mode (information about danger), and a predictive mode (future consequences). The combination of commands (don't go out), explanation (Bathara Kala came), and threats (*stolen*) produces what Austin [23] call it a speech act complex—a series of speech acts that simultaneously command, explain, and frighten. This is why the prohibition of Maghrib is not just a verbal rule, but has become *ritualized speech* in Javanese culture.

Interestingly, all informants—adolescents, adults, and seniors—remembered the Maghrib prohibition in almost identical literal form. This suggests that the prohibition has undergone a process of entextualization [24]: The prohibition text was removed from its original context, standardized, and then reused consistently across various family contexts. This explains why, although literal belief in Bathara Kala is declining among younger generations, the linguistic form of the prohibition persists.

From a cognitive anthropological perspective, the continuity of this literal form can be explained through *minimally counterintuitive concepts* theory [25]. Bathara Kala is an entity that is largely intuitive (large, predatory, dangerous—much like a real predator), but deviates in one aspect (the ability to appear at dusk and supernaturally devour children). This kind of structure is very easy for the human brain to remember. In field data, sentences like *"Bathara Kala is a naughty boy"* combining natural predatory traits with supernatural ones, making it "optimal for memorability".

Semantically, Bathara Kala in the Maghrib prohibition can be read as a linguistic icon (*iconic linguistic sign*), because the characteristics depicted (large, ferocious, appearing in the dark) parallel human experiences of predators or natural danger at dusk. In cross-cultural research, Allen [8] find the same pattern in the concept *anchanchu* in the Andes, where the dangers of "creatures of the night" are given easily sensorially mappable characteristics.

Thus, at the semantic level, the prohibition on Maghrib is a text that: emphasizes the direct relationship between liminal time and cosmological threat, creates a triadic narrative structure that is easily inherited and remembered, uses a codified verbal formula as a "rule", strengthens the message with intensification (emotional expression), depicts Bathara Kala as a sensorially representable icon of threat. This overall structure generates a strong literal meaning while simultaneously activating cognitive-emotional mechanisms that allow the prohibition to persist in the collective memory of Javanese society.

4.2 Level of Reflection

At the level of reflection, the focus of analysis shifts from *what was said* prohibition text (semantic level) towards *who said it, in what relation, and for what function* in the social context of Javanese society. In accordance with Ricoeur's hermeneutic framework, a reflective reading reveals that the prohibition on Maghrib prayers functions not only as a cosmological discourse, but also as a pedagogical instrument that strengthens moral structures and discipline within the family. Field data shows that almost all informants received this prohibition from moral authority figures—namely, mothers, fathers, grandmothers, or grandfathers—who conveyed the prohibition repeatedly and consistently. For example, one adult informant recalled that his parents always said: *"It's okay to wander around, pray at school, watch Bathara Kala"*. Here the supernatural warning is interspersed with religious commands, indicating that the prohibition contains a greater normative intention than simply fear of spirits.

The narrative of elderly informants confirms this function. Mbah Nasrimah (informant 8, 73 years old) stated that children *"ora ilok metu wektu magrib, ben aman lan ben sholat" [It's not okay to go out at Maghrib time, so it's safe and you can pray.]* The two reasons given—security and religious obligation—reveal that the ban on Maghrib prayers serves as a platform for integrating moral order, religious discipline, and collective safety. Thus, the use of Bathara Kala as a threat functions as an "enforcer symbol," an authoritative symbol that reinforces compliance without relying on rational explanation. This parallels the findings [11] in Malay society, the twilight prohibition is used to ensure children return home, help with housework, and prepare for evening religious activities such as reciting the Koran or praying. The same pattern was also found by Armony [10] in Haiti, where a dusk exit ban serves as a defense mechanism *moral order* amidst the changing day-night activities.

These field findings show that the ban on Maghrib can be read as *dispositive* Foucaultian—a device that combines speech, symbols, threats, and spatio-temporal structures to produce obedient subjects. Although the language of prohibition uses mythological references (Bathara Kala), its true function is to produce disciplined child subjects: those who do not wander off, follow family rules, and live a regular rhythm of social life. In other words, this prohibition is a pedagogical technology in Javanese households. This argument is supported by the literature on family anthropology, which confirms that traditional societies often use myths or supernatural figures to build children's obedience [32].

At this point, Ricoeur's reflective reading allows us to see that Bathara Kala's threat is not the primary objective, but rather a rhetorical sheath for a more fundamental moral message. The teenage informant, when questioned again, explicitly acknowledged this: *"Ibu bilang nanti digondol Kala, tapi maksude ben aku ora dolan adoh"[Mother said that Kala would be taken, but what she meant was that I wasn't going to be carried away.]* (informant 3, David, 22 years old). This recognition confirms that the function of the Maghrib prohibition is physical protection and enforcement of domestic ethics.

In a cross-cultural context, this pattern is remarkably consistent. Kumar's [9] research in India shows that the Gondi–Baiga tribe's twilight prohibition aims to protect children from ecological hazards (wild animals, dark terrain), but is packaged in a narrative *bhut* or *churel*. In the Andes, Allen [8] shows how *anchanchu* used as a moral figure to ensure children return home before dark. Even in Yoruba society, the dusk prohibition serves as a boundary-setting measure to ensure children follow the family's social rhythms [7]. This global consistency makes the Javanese ban on Maghrib prayers understandable as a global human strategy: the use of myth as moral pedagogy.

Furthermore, this reflective reading also reveals a connection between the prohibition on Maghrib prayers and social time structuring. Living in a Javanese agrarian society places Maghrib as a marker of transition from work to worship, from social to domestic space. Turner [3] call this kind of moment as *key transitional states*, which desperately needs symbolic control devices to create order. Thus, the prohibition on Maghrib prayers is a means for Javanese families to regulate social rhythms so that children understand the boundaries between outdoor activities and domestic activities. This is where the prohibition meets a moral function: it instills habits of order and discipline from childhood. Bathara Kala is merely a symbolic manifestation that packages this goal in a form that is easily understood by children.

Interestingly, field data also shows that even though the younger generation knows the prohibition on Maghrib prayers has a social function, they still remember it as a powerful and non-negotiable text. This demonstrates the success of this pedagogical strategy. Bathara Kala becomes an icon that "binds" the moral message so that it is not easily forgotten. This aligns with the theory Boyer [25] about *predictable transmission*: Mythological concepts that deviate slightly from reality are easier to remember and pass down across generations than moral commands that are too abstract.

Thus, at the level of reflection, the prohibition on Maghrib prayers can be concluded as a form of moral pedagogy, ritualized discipline, and social boundary-making. It shapes children's behavior through a narrative of threat, but maintains its social function even as literal belief in Bathara Kala declines. This is the strongest indication that the prohibition on Maghrib prayers is not merely a customary rule, but rather part of the *the moral architecture of the Javanese household*—moral architecture that maintains a balance between order, protection, and social control.

4.3 Level of Existential

At the existential level, the prohibition on sunset reveals the deepest layers of Javanese people's relationship with time, space, and the uncertainty of the cosmos. While the semantic level expresses a literal threat, and the reflective level reveals its social function, the existential level raises questions: why do humans need this prohibition? What is it that they want to tame? What are the most primal anxieties that drive the production of the Bathara Kala narrative?

According to Ricoeur, the existential dimension of a cultural text emerges when we examine how the text structures the human experience of disorder and builds a "symbolic order" that allows humans to feel safe [4]. Field data shows that informants often describe Maghrib with terms such as *"wingit" [scary]*, "*peteng*" *[dark]*, and *"ngelmu ora katon" [knowledge is invisible]*. These terms are not just physical descriptions, but existential expressions of self-fragility when faced with times of transition. Elderly informants describe Maghrib as a time of *"sing ora cetha, ora ngerti opo onone" [unclear, not understanding what it is]*—an admission that humans have lost their cosmic orientation on the light-dark border.

In the anthropology of liminality, times such as Maghrib are classified as "threshold temporality"—a time that suspends social categories and boundaries [1][3]. At this time, humans were "not completely in the light, but neither had they entered into darkness"—a situation that by Thomassen [2] described as producing "existential vulnerability and anxiety." This situation is mitigated by the existence of the Maghrib prayer ban. Bathara Kala, as a cosmological entity that appears in liminal time, gives specific form to abstract and inexplicable fears.

It is in this existential realm that the prohibition on Maghrib (sunset prayer) reveals its primary role as a narrative that tames anxiety. Various informants, when recounting their childhood fears, not only referred to Bathara Kala as a "giant" but also as a threat that *"metune pas ora ana cahya" [appearing when there is no light]* or "*waktune kabeh dadi sepi*" *[it's time for everything to be quiet]*. The absence of light is not just a sensory state, but an existential condition in which humans feel a loss of control. Damasio [26] studies have

shown that the human brain responds to a lack of predictability with increased emotional alertness. In the Javanese cultural context, Bathara Kala exists to "fill" this space of uncertainty.

Evolutionarily, dusk anxiety has been understood in the psychological literature as part of *ancestral danger detection system* [27]–[28]. Dusk is a time of increased risk of predators, decreased visibility, and human vulnerability to the environment. Therefore, cultures around the world have developed mythological figures of twilight guardians, *ajogun* in Yoruba [7], such as *anchanchu* in the Andes [8], churel in India [9], and *evil spirit patrols* in Haiti [10]. Bathara Kala plays a similar role: he is a cosmological metaphor for human ignorance of what lies in the dark.

From a Ricoeur perspective, the ban on sunset places Bathara Kala as a "symbolic mediator of fear"—a symbolic mediator who transforms abstract anxiety into a figure that can be understood, discussed, and managed. Instead of facing a formless fear, society confronts Bathara Kala, a personified entity. This process, according to Ricoeur, is the core of the existential function of narrative: giving form to what is formless, and giving meaning to what cannot yet be understood. The human experience of dusk fear—biologically primordial—is transformed into the story of Bathara Kala, which can be organized morally, socially, and symbolically.

The informant's statement regarding the twilight atmosphere, such as *"wektu sing memedi-memedi metu" [the time when the ghosts come]* (key informant 2, Mbah Semin, 76 years old), not just a supernatural belief, but a reflection of existential disorientation. Stenner [29] call this phenomenon as affective atmospheres—a collective emotional atmosphere that arises not because of a particular object, but because of the conditions of space-time itself. Maghrib, in Javanese culture, is *affective atmosphere* which produces a mixture of calm, emptiness, and threat. The ban on Maghrib prayers serves as a symbolic structure that dampens this emotional atmosphere.

At this point, Bathara Kala is not just a "child-eating giant," but a symbol of what Turner calls anti-structure—something that emerges when social structures weaken, reflecting latent energies that humans cannot fully control. The informant states: *"wayah iku akeh sing ora katon… yen metu yo wedi" [at that time many were not visible.... if they came they would be scared]*. This statement suggests that the fear is not due to the literal Bathara Kala, but to "something invisible"—the existential rift that emerges in liminal time. Bathara Kala serves as a "name" for something that cannot be named.

Thus, existentially, the prohibition on Maghrib (sunset prayer) can be understood as a cultural mechanism to: alleviate ancient anxiety over the uncertainty of time transitions; give symbolic form to undefined threats; create cosmological order through the representation of the figure of Bathara Kala; discipline emotional experience through narratives that are easily understood by children; connect humans with moral-ritual order as night falls. The prohibition on Maghrib, at this point, is not just a rule. It is an existential architecture built by Javanese culture to maintain the continuity of meaning, affective stability, and the regular rhythm of social life.

4.4 Reading of Archetypal

An archetypal reading of Bathara Kala reveals that this man-eating giant figure in Javanese cosmology cannot be reduced simply to a local mythological character, but rather to a manifestation of a universal psychic structure identified by Carl Gustav Jung as the Shadow and the Devouring Father. In analytical psychology, an archetype is a primordial image that appears consistently in myths, rituals, and dreams throughout the world, because they are rooted in the collective unconscious. Bathara Kala, as depicted in the field data, fulfills all of these characteristics. Informants describe him as *"raksasa gedhe banget, sing mangan bocah-bocah sukerta, metune magrib" [a very big giant, who ate Sukerta's children, came at dusk]*—a description that combines elements of colossal physicality (the monstrous body), cruelty (predatory appetite), and liminal temporality (arising at dusk), exactly like the archetypal image that Jung called *the devouring shadow-being* [5].

As the Shadow, Bathara Kala represents the dark aspect of the collective psyche of Javanese society—a part that is unwilling to be acknowledged but always present as a threat that must be negotiated. The Shadow is a collection of destructive impulses, primordial fears, and dark psychic energies repressed by consciousness. In fieldwork, Bathara Kala is consistently depicted as the frightening one and which approaches when children disobey. The image of the giant as a Shadow figure facilitates society's ability to project fear, anger, and anxiety onto external entities, allowing these negative emotions to be managed symbolically. In Jung's concept, this is the primary function of the Shadow: it enables individuals and collectives to "see" their dark side through figurative forms that can be handled ritually, narratively, and morally.

As the Devouring Father, Bathara Kala embodies the universal archetypal pattern of the "devouring father"—a cosmic masculine force that devours, punishes, and regulates the boundaries between life and death. This figure has global counterparts such as Kronos in Greek mythology (who devours his children), Moloch in Semitic traditions, *ajogun* in Yoruba [7], *anchanchu* in the Andes [8], and *bhut/churel* in Indian tradition [9].

This comparison suggests that Bathara Kala is not an eccentric local entity, but part of a universal cosmological pattern of transcendental predators emerging at perilous time boundaries. Jung [5] call this figure as *the archetype of the devouring masculine*, whose job is to "monitor the threshold" and judge those who are weak, break the rules, or are in an inappropriate time/space.

In Javanese cosmology, Bathara Kala was born from the negligence of the gods—namely, drops of Batara Guru's sperm, as recorded in wayang texts. This origin strengthens the character of the Devouring Father, as he is a "child of cosmic chaos" who ultimately becomes an agent of cosmological punishment. This pattern aligns with the findings of Eliade [30] about myths *chaos-born deities* who often take on the role of devourers because they represent the "disorderly residue" that is not absorbed into the orderly cosmos. Thus, Bathara Kala is the residue of chaos that returns to demand balance.

In the field data, the dominance of the "time-devouring" trait is seen in the descriptions of elderly informants: *"Bathara Kala iku mangan bocah-bocah sukerta lan sing metu wayah magrib" [Bathara Kala ate Sukerta's children and came out at sunset.]*. Interestingly, this narrative associates Bathara Kala with two forms of "disorder" simultaneously: birth disorder (the child of Sukerta) and temporal disorder (the child wandering at the wrong time). This suggests that Bathara Kala is the archetypal figure who maintains order in the cosmos through the principle of "the rectifying devourer"—*the devouring corrector*. In the structural framework Lévi-Strauss [31], figures like this serve to manage the cosmological contradiction between order and chaos by "swallowing" elements that disrupt the harmony of the system.

Bathara Kala's hybridization of Shadow and Devouring Father has a unique psychosocial effect: it is terrifying yet necessary, destructive yet functional. This figure is not simply a threat, but an existential stabilization mechanism. As noted, Stevens [6], the Devouring Father archetype universally serves to teach boundaries that must not be crossed; he is the "judicial energy of the cosmos" that ensures that violations of time, space, and norms always have consequences. This is particularly relevant to the prohibition on sunset: a child who goes out during this liminal time is placed in a position that is "cosmologically" dangerous, not just socially. Bathara Kala gives form to this danger so that it can be negotiated in the daily life of Javanese families.

Meanwhile, as a collective Shadow, Bathara Kala harbors a primordial anxiety towards the dark. Field data reveals a number of expressions such as *"wis peteng dadi medeni" [It was already dark so it was scary]*, *"wektu sing ana setan-setan"[a time when there were many demons]*, and *"rono petenge wingit"[it's scary dark there]* (various informants). Shadow in this case is not just a supernatural entity, but a human psychological condition when faced with sensory uncertainty. Seligman [28] in research on *preparedness* suggests that humans are biologically predisposed to fear the dark, predators, and large creatures—elements all present in the figure of Bathara Kala. The Shadow archetype allows society to "raise" these ancient fears to the surface and package them in a pedagogically accessible story.

It is also important to note that Bathara Kala becomes more than just a mythological figure when he is present in the *ruwatan* ceremony, a ritual that explicitly aims to "neutralize" cosmological threats. Turner [3] emphasizes that the archetypal figures in liminal rituals work as *liminal operators*—a force that changes the existential status of the subject (e.g., a child of Sukerta becomes safe). In the Murwakala ritual, Bathara Kala is not only frightening; he is also an agent that must be "appeased," "negotiated," or "tamed." The depiction of Bathara Kala in wayang art—with his gaping jaw, flowing hair, and cosmic size—emphasizes that he is a Shadow figure that "transcends human limits." But through ritual, society transforms him into a figure that can be controlled through prayer, offerings, and performative narratives.

Thus, an archetypal reading of Bathara Kala reveals three main characters: as Shadow, he represents the dark aspects of the human psyche and the existential threat of twilight; as Devouring Father, he reorganizes disorder (birth, time, behavior) through the threat of predation; as Liminal Guardian, he controls cosmological and social boundaries, ensuring a safe transition. Within a hermeneutic framework, this enriches the understanding that the prohibition of sunset is not simply a moral rule; it is a symbolic architecture that organizes fear, order, and the collective identity of Javanese society.

4.5 Transformation of Intergenerational

The intergenerational transformation in the meaning of the prohibition on Maghrib (sunset prayer) reveals one of the most important dynamics in contemporary cultural anthropology: an epistemological shift from mythic-belief mode to rational reasoning (rationalizing-belief mode), without eliminating the social and psychological function of the prohibition. The analyzed field data shows differences in legitimacy patterns between the elderly, adult, and adolescent generations. Elderly informants still understand the threat of Bathara Kala as an entity that *literally* present at dusk—*"wayah iku Bathara Kala metu nggoleki bocah"[at that time Bathara Kala went out to look for children]* (Mbah Semin) However, adult and adolescent informants no longer view Bathara Kala as a real being, but rather as a pedagogical metaphor. An adolescent informant stated: *"Dulu*

takut Bathara Kala, tapi sekarang ngerti itu cuma supaya aku pulang." [I used to be afraid of Bathara Kala, but now I understand it was just so I could go home.] (informant 4, Rika, 22 years old).

Within Ricoeur's hermeneutic framework, this phenomenon illustrates a shift from naive belief (first-order belief) towards reflective trust (second-order belief). In the first phase, the prohibition was accepted as a literal truth; in the second phase, the prohibition was understood as a "story with a purpose." This shift did not negate the function of the prohibition, but changed its epistemological foundation. This parallels what Ricoeur calls *"hermeneutics of suspicion"*—when the subject reinterprets the symbol to find its moral and social meaning, not its cosmological meaning.

From the perspective of developmental anthropology, Lancy [32] shows that traditional societies tend to use a "mythic pedagogy" strategy to discipline children; however, as children grow, they engage in a "reinterpretation loop"—tracing the moral intent of stories that were once considered real. The findings of your field data demonstrate this pattern very clearly: the younger generation "continues to practice" the Maghrib prayer rule but "changes the reasons for it." This is not a deconstruction of the prohibition, but rather a transformation of belief modes (changing belief-mode), as explained in the research. Norenzayan [33] about *cognitive secularization* in urban society.

This pattern is not unique to Java. Peletz [11] in Malay society, it was found that the older generation understood the threat of the twilight creatures literally, while the younger generation—who had received formal education and lived in a modern environment—interpreted the prohibition as a form of safety, morality, or social norm. In the study Armony [10] Regarding Vodou in Haiti, the younger generation still adheres to the ban on going out at dusk *even though I don't fully believe in night demons*, because the prohibition is considered "part of family etiquette". Kumar [9] India also noted an identical phenomenon: teenagers in the Baiga and Gondi tribes are no longer afraid *churel*, but still follow the prohibition because it is considered "parental rules".

This phenomenon can be explained through Boyer's [25] cognitive-evolutionary theory of modular reconstruction. According to Boyer, myths do not disappear when literal beliefs weaken; they transform into *constraint scripts*, namely, behavioral scripts that are maintained because they are considered functional in a social context. For the younger generation of Javanese, Bathara Kala may no longer be "real," but the prohibition on Maghrib prayers remains "functional" (functional retention). This is what Barrett [27] referred to as *pragmatic supernaturalism*—a situation in which religious/mythical symbols continue to influence actions even though literal cognition is weakened.

From Weber's perspective, this transformation is a form of rationalization (Verwissenschaftlichung)—The process by which traditional structures are rationally, practically, or morally rejustified. In the Javanese context, the prohibition on Maghrib prayer has been rationalized into a "safety rule" (avoiding accidents in the dark), a "hygiene rule" (avoiding nocturnal animals), or a "religious rule" (preparing for Maghrib prayer). In the field data, a young informant stated: *"Sekarang aku ikut larangan itu karena gelap dan banyak motor lewat, bahaya kalau main—bukan lagi karena Bathara Kala*." *[Now I follow the ban because it's dark and lots of motorbikes pass by, it's dangerous to play—not because of Bathara Kala anymore.]*

However, this epistemological shift does not mean the loss of the symbolic aspect. In fact, as Taylor [36], modern societies often maintain traditional forms as affective structures even though their metaphysical meaning has weakened. In field data, several young informants said that they still get goosebumps when they go out at sunset *even though I know that Bathara Kala is a myth*. This phenomenon illustrates affective persistence: emotions persist even though cognitive beliefs change.

From a Jungian perspective, this suggests that the Bathara Kala archetype remains active as a symbol of primordial fear (Shadow archetype). Generational changes in interpretation do not erase archetypes; they simply change the form in which they are stored—from literal narratives to *implicit psychological schema*. Archetypes don't die; they migrate into the realm of the unconscious. This is in line with the idea Stevens [6] that archetypes persist because they are linked to evolutionary mechanisms of threat perception, not to specific religious beliefs.

In addition, the field data reveals a very important phenomenon in modern anthropology: the coexistence of multiple belief registers. The younger generation can simultaneously say: (1) *"I don't believe in Bathara Kala,"* and (2) "But still, don't go out at Maghrib."In the literature, this condition is called *"cognitive polyphasia" [34]*, this is a state in which individuals maintain various forms of knowledge—rational, traditional, and symbolic—side by side. This is a characteristic of societies in cultural transition, such as Java today.

Most interestingly, this transformation does not result in the disappearance of norms—but rather a strengthening of their effectiveness. As mythical reasons weaken, moral, health, and security reasons emerge, taking over their role. This phenomenon is called by Seligman and Weller [35] as *"ritual persistence through functional reinterpretation"*. Precisely because interpretations increase, prohibitions become more adaptive to changing times.

Thus, the intergenerational transformation of the Maghrib prohibition is not a demythologizing process that destroys mythical meaning, but a resemantizing process—a shift in meaning from cosmological to moral, from literal to pedagogical, from supernatural to socio-practical. Bathara Kala does not disappear; it is "demoted" from an ontological entity to a pedagogical metaphor, and ultimately becomes an affective substructure in the psyche of the younger generation.

Such a transformation is only possible because the Maghrib prohibition has a strong semantic structure, a relevant social function, and flexible symbolic power. This is where the power of Javanese tradition demonstrates its sophistication: it not only survives but adapts through intergenerational negotiation.

4.6 Symbolic, Social, and Psychological Mechanism

This synthesis section positions the prohibition on Maghrib prayers not as a simple "customary rule," but as a multidimensional mechanism that integrates three layers of cultural structure: symbolic (narrative), social (behavioral regulation), and psychological (anxiety management). Ricoeur's hermeneutic analysis, Jung's archetypal reading, and Turner's liminality perspective demonstrate that the prohibition on Maghrib prayers functions as a cultural dispositive—a cultural device that simultaneously shapes cosmological reality, organizes social interactions, and regulates the affective dynamics of society.

At the symbolic level, the prohibition on Maghrib (sunset prayer) creates a narrative structure that transforms the experience of time into a meaningful cosmos. Maghrib is positioned as a liminal threshold, a boundary that marks the fragility of natural and social order. In field data, the term *wingit, peteng*, and *ora cetha apa ana* depicts the existential experience of unstable time.

Within the framework Ricoeur [4], this prohibition becomes a narrative that tames ambiguity: it "fills" the gap in human ignorance with the figure of Bathara Kala as a symbolic mediator. Bathara Kala concretizes abstract threats into predictable and negotiable figures. This is a fundamental narrative function in all cosmogonic myths as examined by Eliade [30] and Lévi-Strauss [31]: organizing chaos into structure.

Global comparisons show that almost all cultures have "dusk guardian" figures—*anchanchu, ajogun, churel, evil dusk spirits*—who map the ambiguities of nature through the symbolism of nocturnal predators [7]–[10]. Thus, the prohibition of Maghrib prayers works as a universal symbolic mechanism that connects Javanese people to global mythopoetic patterns.

At the social level, the prohibition on Maghrib prayers serves as a domestic regulatory mechanism that maintains the rhythm and order of family life. Authority figures (mothers, fathers, grandparents) use the Bathara Kala narrative to direct children's behavior: returning home, stopping play, preparing for prayer, and avoiding physical danger outside the home.

According to Peletz [11], the same pattern occurs in Malay society; according to Armony [10], also happened in Haiti; and according to Allen [8], also occurs in the Andes. This means that the twilight prohibition is a cross-cultural moral device that regulates children's behavior during moments of social transition.

From Weber's perspective, this is an early form of moral rationalization: traditional rules are maintained but modernized through social and practical justification. Field data shows that the younger generation complies with the prohibition not because they believe in Bathara Kala, but for safety reasons: "it's dark, there are lots of motorbikes, it's dangerous" (adult informant).

However, even if literal belief in Bathara Kala weakens, its symbolic authority remains binding. This shows what is called Seligman and Weller [35] as a ritual persistence through reinterpretation—tradition does not become extinct, but its function and epistemological basis change.

Psychologically, the prohibition on Maghrib prayers is a way for Javanese people to manage ancient fears of darkness, predators, and sensory uncertainty. Evolutionarily, humans have an innate fear program (phobos preparedness) for darkness and large creatures [28]. Bathara Kala, as a dark giant figure that appears at dusk, represents this primordial structure.

In Jung's framework, Bathara Kala is the Shadow archetype—a manifestation of dark psychic energy that is frightening but needs to be confronted. Field data shows that many informants described feelings of "*shiver"* or *"afraid of the dark"* even though they claim to no longer believe in Bathara Kala literally. This demonstrates what Jung called the "survival of the archetype despite rational disbelief"—the archetype persists on an affective level despite being rejected on a cognitive level.

Thus, the prohibition on the evening prayer (*magrib*) operates as a psychological mechanism that: reduces liminal anxiety, stabilizes children's emotions during times of ambiguity, and provides an external symbol for externalizing internal fears. In Ricoeur's framework, this prohibition functions as a "living metaphor"—a symbolic structure that continually reconfigures human relations with existential fear.

When the three dimensions of analysis—symbolic, social, and psychological—are connected, it appears that the continuation of the Maghrib prohibition does not depend on a single source of meaning, but rather on a network of mutually supporting cultural functions. In the symbolic dimension, the prohibition of sunset provides

a narrative framework that organizes the human experience of the ambiguity of twilight. Bathara Kala as a symbolic figure helps people understand and structure the transition of the cosmos between light and darkness. At this level, the Maghrib prohibition persists because it provides a system of representation that makes the world intelligible; it turns uncertainty into stories, and stories into moral guides that can be passed from one generation to the next.

In the social dimension, the Maghrib prayer prohibition serves as an effective behavioral regulation mechanism in domestic and community contexts. The Bathara Kala narrative serves as a tool to guide children into a daily rhythm that is considered safe and orderly. Thus, this prohibition achieves its endurance not because of the efficacy of its mythological beliefs, but because of its usefulness in shaping behavioral patterns that align with social norms. Even as literal belief in Bathara Kala begins to weaken, the social function of this prohibition remains relevant. Younger generations may no longer accept its supernatural legitimacy, but they absorb the values of discipline, safety, and spiritual preparedness conveyed through the prohibition. This transformation demonstrates that cultural rules do not necessarily rely on metaphysical beliefs but can be maintained through moral and practical rationalizations appropriate to the modern context.

Psychologically, the prohibition on the evening prayer (*magrib*) operates as a mechanism for managing the existential anxiety that arises from human encounters with ambiguous space-time. Dusk unites two realms of experience—day and night—each carrying conflicting symbolic weights. The prohibition on the evening prayer alleviates the emotional tension that arises at this liminal moment by providing an external figure to represent internal fears. Bathara Kala, in this case, acts as an archetypal projection of the Shadow and the Devouring Father, allowing individuals to reimagine primordial fears of darkness and disorder. Thus, the prohibition on the evening prayer not only maintains social structure but also provides an affective buffer for individuals facing existential uncertainty.

When these three dimensions are combined, it is clear that the prohibition on the evening prayer (*magrib*) persists because it simultaneously functions as an explanatory cosmos, a social regulator, and an emotional support. When one dimension weakens—for example, the literal belief in Bathara Kala—the other strengthens the continuity of the tradition. This is what makes the prohibition on the evening prayer adaptive to changing times: it can be reinterpreted without losing its core function. The older generation maintains it as a cosmological truth; the older generation as a moral code; and the younger generation as a practice of security and self-discipline. This tradition persists not because its original meaning remains fixed, but because it has the structural flexibility to find its relevance in changing social and psychological contexts. Thus, the prohibition on the evening prayer (*magrib*) is a form of living tradition which harmonizes the past, present social needs, and the never-ending affective dynamics of humankind.

The overall analysis shows that the prohibition on the evening prayer is a cultural structure that possesses extraordinary resilience because it operates simultaneously on three planes: symbolic, social, and psychological. At the symbolic level, the prohibition on the evening prayer provides a way for Javanese society to reorganize the experience of an ambiguous world, especially during the liminal twilight. Through the figure of Bathara Kala, the elusive uncertainty of the cosmos is translated into a recognizable and inherited narrative. This symbol, within a Ricoeurian framework, allows humans to transform vague existential experiences into ordered meanings, making the world appear more predictable and responsive.

In the social sphere, the prohibition on Maghrib prayers serves as a behavioral regulation device embedded in the rhythms of family and community life. This rule maintains a balance between children's freedom and the collective need to create order, discipline, and safety. Even as literal belief in Bathara Kala declines among younger generations, the social structure that underpins this prohibition remains functional. It transforms into new forms of security protocols, moral norms, and domestic ethics. Thus, its resilience depends not solely on mythological beliefs but also on its evolving social relevance.

Psychologically, the prohibition on sunset prayers serves as an internalized mechanism for managing ancient human anxieties about darkness, change, and uncertainty. As an archetypal representation, Bathara Kala embodies collective psychic energy that persists despite reinterpretation. Fears of darkness and predators, rooted in humanity's evolutionary heritage, find a symbolic place in this figure. By personifying abstract threats through Bathara Kala, society can regulate, name, and defuse the emotional tensions that arise during liminal times.

By integrating the findings across these three dimensions, it is clear that the endurance of the Maghrib prohibition is not a coincidental phenomenon, but rather the result of a structural flexibility that allows this tradition to adapt to various contexts. It can be read as a cosmological myth by older generations, as a moral code by adults, and as a security protocol by younger generations—without losing its core function. This tradition endures not because of its fixed meaning, but because of its ability to adapt to changing epistemological, social, and emotional environments. The Maghrib prohibition, then, is a clear example of *living*

tradition, a living tradition that continues to move, adapt, and remains relevant as a mechanism supporting the order of the cosmos, society, and the psyche of Javanese people.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This research shows that the prohibition of Maghrib in Javanese culture is a complex cultural mechanism, encompassing symbolic, social, and psychological dimensions that work simultaneously to maintain cosmological and social order. Using Ricoeur's hermeneutic framework, this prohibition is shown to have three layers of meaning: literal as a warning of danger, reflective as a moral instrument in parenting, and existential as a human response to the uncertainty of dusk. This reading shows that the prohibition of Maghrib is not merely a customary rule, but a *cultural texts* which organizes experiences, values, and identities.

Through Jung's theory of archetypes, the figure of Bathara Kala can be understood as a local manifestation of a universal pattern such as *Shadow* and *Devouring Father*, which visualizes humanity's primordial fear of darkness, predators, and existential boundaries. The existence of Bathara Kala confirms that Javanese myths possess symbolic coherence with universal psychic structures and serve as a channel for managing collective anxiety. A liminality perspective complements this analysis by demonstrating that the evening prayer time functions as a threshold area requiring symbolic reinforcement so that the transition between light and darkness can be socially and emotionally managed.

The intergenerational transformation found in this study shows that the ban on Maghrib prayers persists through the process *resemantization*: the older generation maintains literal beliefs, while the younger generation interprets them morally and pragmatically. However, despite this epistemological shift, its social and symbolic functions remain. This phenomenon is in line with global patterns. *Twilight Taboos* which also adapts to various African, Indian, Caribbean, and Andean cultures.

Conceptually, this research contributes to cultural studies by demonstrating that traditions persist not because of their static meanings, but because of their ability to organize the ambiguity of the cosmos, regulate behavior, and stabilize emotions. The prohibition on sunset prayers (*magrib*) is an example of a living tradition that remains relevant in contemporary Javanese society, while also enriching international scholarship on the relationship between myth, liminal temporality, and the dynamics of cultural continuity.

This study makes a significant theoretical contribution by demonstrating that the prohibition on Maghrib prayers in Javanese culture is a multidimensional cultural mechanism that integrates symbols, social norms, and affective structures. Through Ricoeur's hermeneutics, this prohibition is understood as *cultural texts* which have a depth of meaning—literal, reflective, and existential—that shapes how communities understand threats during liminal times. These findings reinforce the relevance of hermeneutics as a method for studying oral traditions that operate as collective knowledge systems, not simply customary practices.

Jung's archetypal reading enriches this study by showing that Bathara Kala is a local manifestation of a universal psychic pattern, such as *Shadow* and *Devouring Father*. This theoretical contribution expands the global discussion on how archetypes persist in modernity through functional transformation, not literal belief. The liminality perspective adds an important anthropological dimension: the evening prayer time is understood as a transitional space that demands symbolic control to maintain social and emotional stability. Thus, this study places the evening prayer prohibition within a global context. *Twilight Taboos*, while introducing the case of Java as an example that enriches international literature.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study are relevant for education, childcare, and cultural preservation. The prohibition on Maghrib prayers has been shown to be an effective pedagogical tool in instilling discipline, vigilance, and family ethics. Understanding its symbolic function is also useful in designing cultural curricula and character education programs that value local wisdom. In the context of cultural preservation, this study emphasizes that traditions such as the prohibition on Maghrib prayers should be preserved not only as symbolic heritage, but also as social and emotional capital that helps communities navigate uncertainty.

Furthermore, this research opens up opportunities for developing cultural psychology and narrative therapy approaches that utilize local symbols to understand and manage individual and collective anxiety. Overall, the theoretical and practical implications of this research demonstrate that seemingly simple traditions can contain complex knowledge structures and remain relevant in contemporary society.

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