

# THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF MAGIC AND THE KINDS OF MAGIC IN BANTEN SOCIETY\*

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## **Abstrak :**

*Magic merupakan sebuah fenomena social yang ada hampir di setiap tempat, setiap era, dan hampir setiap budaya masyarakat memilikinya. Fenomena ini juga hadir dan telah memiliki akar yang sudah terbangun sejak lama di Banten. Meskipun banyak tantangan dari beberapa kelompok Islam, praktik-praktik magic masih survive di Banten sampai saat ini. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa magic masih memiliki pengikut yang loyal di sebagian masyarakat di Banten.*

*Artikel ini membahas tentang teori-teori dan konsep-konsep dasar tentang magic yang dikemukakan oleh berbagai ahli antropologi dan sosiologi yang concern terhadap budaya magic di berbagai belahan dunia. Disamping itu, jenis-jenis magic yang sudah diklasifikasikan oleh para ahli tersebut juga akan dijelaskan dalam artikel ini. Klasifikasi ini kemudian dikomparasikan dengan berbagai jenis magic yang tersebar pada masyarakat Banten.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Magic, Theory, concept, Banten*

## **Introduction**

Banten, the thirtieth province of Indonesia located in the Westernmost part of Java, is well known as the area in which Islam is the religion that is practiced by the majority of the Bantenese people.

Moreover, Banten has a well-established reputation as 'a haven of the occult sciences', both white and black magic, and quite a few Bantenese have made use of this reputation, acting as bone-fracture *dukuns*, soothsayers and diviners, and bringers of wealth, status, supernatural protection and peace of mind.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, several people derived benefit from this reputation, deceiving other people by acting as if they had magical powers, trying to gain a lot of money quickly and easily.

Magic, defined by Mauss as 'the earliest form of human thought and the foundation of the whole mystical and scientific universe of primitive

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<sup>1</sup> Bruinessen, 1995, 276

man,<sup>2</sup> is as a matter of fact still practiced by Bantenese society up to the present. It indicates that magic still has loyal adherents in some areas of Banten and it has probably become one of the cultural-religious identities of Bantenese society. This situation is in accordance with O'Keefe's view that the practice of magic is found not only in the Paleolithic band stage or in primitive man, but also almost everywhere, in every era, in almost every society; and that it appears in many cultures.<sup>3</sup>

### **Magic : Theoretical Concept**

Many anthropologists and sociologists, when they discuss magic, often relate magic to religion and belief systems or vice versa. Durkheim, in his work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, states that 'magic can not be rigorously differentiated from religion – that magic is full of religion and religion full of magic and consequently, that it is impossible to separate them and define the one without the other.'<sup>4</sup> E.B.Taylor, when he wrote his famous work *primitive culture*, in his first volume associates magical demonology with primitive animism. In his second volume he mentions -and he is one of the first to do so- 'sympathetic magic.' As a matter of fact, Tylor offers no other explanation of magic than the one provided by his general theory of animism.<sup>5</sup> Max Weber does not give any definition of magic, but his books about religion are saturated with the subject. His *Sociology of Religion* seems to be about magic as much as it is about religion; magic is mentioned constantly and basic religious phenomena are frequently referred to as magical.<sup>6</sup>

Weber writes that new religions begin as magic ("charisma"),<sup>7</sup> while Durkheim, as quoted by O'Keefe, states a seemingly opposite idea: that magic derives from religion rather than vice versa.<sup>8</sup> Mauss remarks that because of the failures and the mistakes of magic, religion has appeared.<sup>9</sup> He considers that figures of gods and devils derived from religion have been

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<sup>2</sup> Mauss, 1972, 16

<sup>3</sup> O'Keefe, 1982,1

<sup>4</sup> Durkheim, 1995, 40

<sup>5</sup> See Taylor, 1873

<sup>6</sup> see Max Weber, 1965

<sup>7</sup> Weber uses "charisma" and "magic" interchangeably and virtually defines charisma as magic. For example, he identifies charisma as a *mana* word, *his mana* word: it is primarily, though not exclusively, these extraordinary powers that have been designated by the word magic. He states "*we shall henceforth employ the term "charisma" for such extraordinary powers.*" He actually distinguished two types of charisma: one based on natural endowment which can not be acquired by any means and one based on extraordinary means. See *ibid.*, p.2

<sup>8</sup> O'Keefe, 1982, 14

<sup>9</sup> Mauss, 1972, 16-17

taken by magic - 'in its degenerate stage, when magic became contaminated by religion.'<sup>10</sup> Magical formulas, magical rituals, magical rites and representations often consist of various aspects and elements traceable to old religions, foreign religions, and dead religions. These, according to O'Keefe, may even contain 'archaism from forgotten religions.'<sup>11</sup> Under conditions of emotional stress such as depression, vacuity in significant pursuits, crisis of life, unhappy love and unsatisfied hate, people tend to rely on supernatural powers to solve their problems by performing rituals and believing in the domain of the supernatural. Hence, both magic and religion, according to Malinowski, appear and function in such situations.<sup>12</sup> When people cannot find an empirical way out of such situations and such impasses, they believe that both religion and magic may become a solution to escape from them..

Grimm, quoted by Mauss, defines magic as a 'kind of religion, used in lower spheres of domestic life.'<sup>13</sup> Both magic and religion are important things on a personal level for human beings who still believe in the supernatural. Both aspects can not be separated from the human soul. Concerning this issue, Pyysiainen hypothesizes that on a personal level magic can be 'a motivating factor in religion, and religion contributes to the endurance of magico-religious converting as a means of averting ritual failures.'<sup>14</sup>

A word for magic can be found in many languages. It is often a derivative of the local word "*mana*" (the original word of the Maori), the Iroquois Indian "*orenda*" and the Iranian "*maga*" which often means some kind of extraordinary power and "charisma" in Weber's sense of the term.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, in many languages the word for magic refers to the same thing, i.e. 'a group of well known, clearly identified and unmistakable institutions.'<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, in several languages the word for magic derives from a root meaning "to do" or "action." *Zauber* in German and *Factum*<sup>17</sup> in Latin are words meaning magic that come from the same etymological background; in India the word which best corresponds to the word ritual is *karman*, meaning action.<sup>18</sup> Jane Harrison observes that *sacra*, the Greek

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> O'Keefe, 1982, 121

<sup>12</sup> Malinowski, 1955, 87

<sup>13</sup> Mauss, 1972, 28

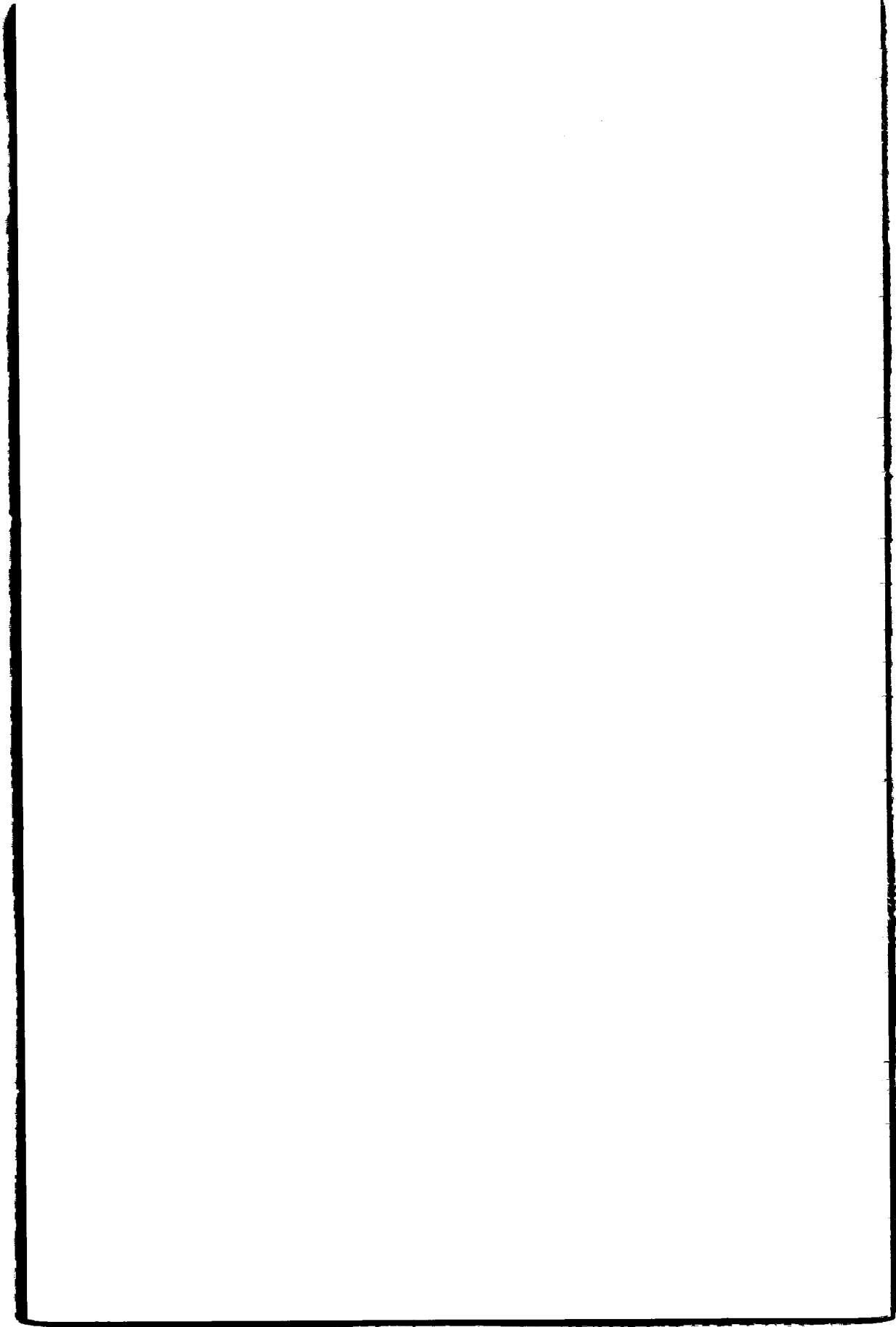
<sup>14</sup> Pyysiainen, 2004, 108

<sup>15</sup> Weber, 1965, 2

<sup>16</sup> O'Keefe, 1930, 1

<sup>17</sup> The Latin verb *facere*, for example, has the dual meaning of *to do* and *to make*: a *factum* is something made.

<sup>18</sup> Mauss, 1972, 24



considered too mechanical, individualistic, arrogant, and so forth, to count as religious.<sup>28</sup> Conversely, Durkheim, in thirteen sharp pages, claims that magic is something anti-religious that develops out of religion.<sup>29</sup>

Firth, Winick and Koentjaraningrat have the same opinion about magic. They view magic as a technique of coercion, a rite and verbal formula projecting human desires onto the external world in a theory of human control, to some practical end, based on what we would consider false premises.<sup>30</sup> Many current superstitions are relics of such magic. However, it is impossible to regard as magical all coercion based on false premises.

Furthermore, Koentjaraningrat explains that there are two main principles of magic; the belief in supernatural forces or agents, and causality based on association relationship. To him, the success of magical rites depends mainly on the spirit, motivation, sincerity and concentration of the performer. These are the basic conditions that should be fulfilled by magicians or performers.<sup>31</sup>

From Koentjaraningrat's description above, it seems that he sees magic as a mental or psychological process, and in the same pages he writes that if magical actions are performed without the utmost concentration, it will give no result. This means that the influence of mental force and thought is very important for the success of magical actions.

O'Keefe defines magic in two ways. The first one is magic in the 'weak sense' which refers to the metaphors of magic,<sup>32</sup> and the other one is magic in the 'strict sense' which refers to certain famous sacred institutions

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<sup>28</sup> Pyysiainen, *op.cit.*, p.90

<sup>29</sup> Durkheim, *op.cit.* 39-44, 355-367

<sup>30</sup> See Raymond Firth, *Human Types, an Introduction to Social Anthropology*. (Rev.ed.), N.Y.:The New American Library, Inc., 1958, p.124, Charles Winick, *Dictionary of Anthropology*, New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1956, p.334, and Koentjaraningrat, *Beberapa Pokok Antropologi Sosial*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Jakarta: P.T.Dian Rakjat, 1974, pp.276-77

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> O'Keefe discovers that metaphors of magic, 'magic in the weak sense,' refer to several things that are very real on symbolic and psychological levels: 1. The inherent "sympathetic" effects of language, which track back to primitive classification systems. 2. The inherent "sympathetic" effects of all religious rites in which religion strikingly models the magical potentials of symbolism. 3. Certain ego actions of the human self which was nourished historically by magical institutions and retains a magical character. 4. Certain magical aspects of social action, in which actors use the "sympathetic" effects of symbolism to affect each other. 5. There are defective metaphors of magic, such as when we label certain forceful or successful actions "magical" which are not magical at all. See Daniel Lawrence O'Keefe, *op.cit.*, pp.11-12

which are widely accepted as magical in many societies.<sup>33</sup> These institutions, according to him, are often derived from religion, associated with religion or respond to religion. Moreover, these institutions are often meant to serve individual rather than collective purposes and tend to be based on a professional-client connection rather than a community relationship.

Kraig defines magic as 'the science and art of causing change (in consciousness) to occur in conformity with will, using means not currently understood by traditional Western science.'<sup>34</sup> It is clear that his view is different from other writers. He regards magic as science and art, whereas others, such as Satre, consider it as pseudo-science or proto-science<sup>35</sup> or at least some magic is so.

The most concise definition of magic is to be found in Ibn Khaldun's *Introduction to History (Muqaddimah)*. He says, "these are sciences showing how human souls may become prepared to exercise an influence upon the world of the elements, either without any aid or with the aid of celestial matters. The first kind is sorcery. The second kind is talismans."<sup>36</sup> Later in the chapter on magic Ibn Khaldun states that the magical ability of the soul comprises three degrees, the strongest being sorcery, i.e., "influence merely through mental power, without any instrument or aid," the second talismans, and the third prestidigitation, which "exercises its influence on the power of imagination."<sup>37</sup> It is clear that Ibn Khaldun defines magic as a psychic energy enabling one to influence matters without the aid of mechanical tools.

### **The Basic Concepts of Magic**

There are two different basic views of magic presented by early anthropologists. Some of them view magic as a mode of thinking, and the others regard it as an attitude toward reality or as a form of social practice.

The view of magic as a form of thought is represented by Frazer's idea of the laws of 'sympathetic magic.' According to him, there are two principles of thought on which magic is based, namely the law of similarity and the law of contact or contagion. The former principle which may be

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<sup>33</sup> Institutions mentioned above refer to seven main provinces of the real magical institutions which O'Keefe classified, i.e. medical magic, ceremonial magic, paranormal magic, occult science, magic cults and sects, religious magic, and black magic. See Daniel Lawrence O'Keefe, *ibid.*, pp. 1-15

<sup>34</sup> Kraig, 2005, 9

<sup>35</sup> See O'Keefe, 1982, 25

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Khaldun., 1967, 156

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

called 'homoeopathic' or 'imitative magic',<sup>38</sup> means that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause. The latter one may be called 'contagious magic' which means that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed. From the first of these principles, namely the law of similarity, the magician infers that he can produce any effect he desires merely by imitating it; from the second he infers that whatever he does to a material object, this will equally affect the person with whom the object was once in contact, whether it formed part of his body or not.<sup>39</sup> Magic is thus based on a specific kind of causal thinking.

However, even though magic is seen as a form of thought in which the thinking process is a human activity, the two principles of magic above, according to Frazer, are not performed by humans only. He writes:

"For the same principles which the magician applies in the practice of his art are implicitly believed by him to regulate the operations of inanimate nature; in other words, he tacitly assumes that the Law of Similarity and Contact are of universal application and are not limited to human actions. In short, magic is a spurious system of natural law as well as a fallacious guide of conduct; it is a false science as well as an abortive art."<sup>40</sup>

On the same page, Frazer called *theoretical magic* the magic that is regarded as 'a system of natural law', that is, as a statement of the rules which determine the sequence of events throughout the world, and called *practical magic* the magic which is regarded as 'a set of precepts which human beings observe in order to compass their ends.'<sup>41</sup>

Frazer's ideas about magic, according to Mauss, are dogmatic;<sup>42</sup> Frazer expresses no doubts and offers no exceptions to his rules. Sympathy is a sufficient and inevitable feature of magic; all magical rites are sympathetic and all sympathetic ritual is magical.

In my opinion, Frazer's ideas about magic cannot be applied for all magical rites. As far as I have observed, some kinds of magic developed in Banten cannot be included in one of Frazer's ideas about Sympathetic

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<sup>38</sup> Frazer remarks that to denote the first of these principles of magic, the term homoeopathic is perhaps preferable, for the alternative term *imitative* or *mimetic* suggests, if it does not imply, a conscious agent who imitates, thereby limiting the scope of magic too narrowly. See Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in magic and Religion*, (Abridged ed.) London: Macmillan, 1933, p.11

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-48

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Mauss, 1972, 15-16

magic, neither the law of similarity nor the law of contact or contagion. Take for instance *debus Banten*: it does not conform to Frazer's homoeopathic or imitative magic, as in *debus* the performers do not use any image representing the people or injuring the body. It also does not conform to another law from Frazer's ideas, namely the law of contact or contagion, because in *debus Banten* the performers do not practice it at a distance, and they do not use a part of a body that has been contact with the performers, such as their nail, hair, or spittle. They practice *debus* by stabbing, sticking, pricking, and slashing a part of the performer's body with sharp instruments directly, without any barrier. Therefore, Frazer's idea that all magical rites are sympathetic and all sympathetic ritual is magical is not valid for certain kinds of magic in Banten.

My analysis is that Frazer's principles of magic mostly deal with black magic and ceremonial magic. It is important to demonstrate that what Frazer wrote in his famous book '*The Golden Bough*' mostly related to taboos and black magic developed in many primitive societies. Hence, it is logic that he inferred such principles, because he did not take any sample of magical practices from Muslim societies. As a result, when he wrote down the general principles of magic, his principles did not cover all practices of magic.

Second, the view of magic as an attitude toward reality or as a form of social practice is represented by Mauss' idea. He argues that magic is "a system of social facts."<sup>43</sup> Magic consists of things that a society as a whole considers magical, not those things that are qualified as such by a single segment of society. To him, magic and magical rites, as a whole, are traditional facts. Actions which are never repeated cannot be called magical. If the whole community does not believe in the efficacy of a group of actions, they cannot be called magical. The form of the ritual is eminently transmissible and this is sanctioned by public opinion.<sup>44</sup> Magicians, actions, and representations, according to him, thus become the basic elements of magic.<sup>45</sup>

More recently, the distinction has been made between the view that magic consists of erroneous attempts to manipulate reality and the view that magic is meant for some psychological goals.<sup>46</sup> It is apparent that even though there are different views on magic, and from all definitions and characterizations of magic it becomes clear that people have a widespread tendency to believe that many things in the world happen because of a supernatural cause.

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 22

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-111

<sup>46</sup> Barfield, 1997, 98

## The Kinds of Magic in Banten Society

Some writers on magic have a different concept of categorizing magic. Some of them categorize magic based on its function, others based on its intentions and its means. The following discussion is about the classification of magic which I took from several writers' opinions, whose classifications, in my analysis, relate best to the magical practices in Banten.

Generally speaking, magic is functionally classified into two kinds; white magic and black magic. The former is a kind of magic used to bring benefit and happiness to people, while the latter is used to wreak havoc and bring illness, and to invoke disadvantage and misery on society. However, nowadays this classification is no longer used by anthropologists because the idea of good and bad, right and wrong, fine and evil, advantageous and disadvantageous, beneficial and useless is relative. It means that something is probably regarded as good, fine, advantageous, or beneficial by some people, but not by the others. The line between those concepts is blurred. Indeed, in a society, one kind of magic is sometimes used for two purposes, good and bad.

Even though anthropologists no longer use the terms 'black magic' and 'white magic,' these terms are more common than other terms for Bantenese people. They believe that magic derived from *kyai*, *ahli hikmah*, and *pesantren* must be quoted from the Qur'an, *hadith*, and some Islamic classical texts (*kitab*s). For instance, when K.H. Ja'al Maqsud<sup>47</sup> would give magical science (*ilmu gaib*), *wafak* (magical formula written on paper, animal skin, cloth and other materials used for talismans) and amulets to his students or commoners, he would cite *kitab Samsu al-Ma'arif*, *Mambail Ushulu lil al-Hikmah*, *Abu Basyar al-Falaqi*, *Aufaq Imam Ghuzali*, and others as his sources. Hence, many Bantenese people believe that magic derived from religious figures is white magic because it aims for the happiness and welfare of people, or at least, in the view of K.H. Ma'sum Daenuri, its formula, its rite, its techniques and its purpose are not in contradiction with Islamic law (*syari'ah*).<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, magic derived from non-religious figures, such as sorcerers, witches, fortune-tellers, etc., of which the formula, rite, and meaning are not quoted from *the Qur'an*, *hadith*, or *kitab*, and which is directed toward the suffering and misery of other people, is often regarded as black magic, or at least, it is not allowed by Islam or it is called, in the term of Burgel, 'illicit magic (*as-sihr*

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with K.H. Ja'al Maqsud, a *kyai of pesantren* 'Sabilu Rosyad in Batu Kuwung, Padarincang, Banten. [interviewed on July 25<sup>th</sup> 2008]

<sup>48</sup> Interview with K.H. Ma'sum Daenuri, a religious figure or *ulama* from Banten (Barugbug, Serang), [interviewed on August 5<sup>th</sup> 2008]

*al-haram*).<sup>49</sup>

Concerning black magic, there are two common terms widely recognized by Bantenese society: *teluh* and *tenung* (witchcraft and sorcery). Both kinds of magic often become a hot issue when someone has a disease that cannot be detected by a doctor or treated with modern medicine. In connection with the technique and the way of practicing *teluh* (sorcery), there are several kinds of *teluh* recognized in Banten, i.e. *teluh angin*, *teluh banyu*, *teluh geni*, *teluh penjarahan* and *teluh celuruh*.<sup>50</sup>

Similar to the classification I mentioned above of white and black magic, the author of '*The Feather of Simurgh. The "Licit Magic" of the Arts in Medieval Islam*' makes a distinction between two types of magic, but he prefers using other terms, namely "licit magic" and "illicit magic" rather than white and black magic – exclusively derived from the standpoint of the

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<sup>49</sup> See Burgel, 1988, 31

<sup>50</sup> *Teluh angin* is a kind of sorcery where the technique and the media the sorcerers (*dukun teluh*) use to harm and to kill their victims are the use of several devices such as needles, nails or spikes, broken glass or porcelain, and such kind, which are packed into a bag or a doll and hung on the tree using a black string. They say incantations to deliver their magic to the victims, using wind or air to deliver it. This action is done repeatedly until they are sure that their victims die. *Teluh banyu* is almost the same as *teluh angin*, but the media they use to deliver their magic is water. They usually put magical things into river, well or a glass of water of their victims. Both *teluh angin* and *teluh banyu* are also called *teluh rambat* because both of these sorceries are meant to kill the victims slowly. Moreover, *teluh geni* is the most dangerous black magic in Banten because the effect of such magic is faster than other kinds of sorcery (*teluh*). The victims who suffer from this kind of *teluh* will die in a few days, even a few hours. This *teluh* uses a little knife or magical *kris* which is put into a full water glass or bowl. The objects, then, are covered by clothes and the sorcerers say some incantations to these objects. After saying the incantation, the glass cover is lifted. If the knife or the *kris* is no longer in the glass, it means that the victims will suffer from this action in a few minutes, even die a few hours later. *Teluh penjarahan* is a kind of sorcery which uses certain cemeteries as media to harm the victims. The sorcerers will ask the evil spirits living in these eerie places to assist them to kill someone else. *Teluh celuruh* is the least dangerous kind of black magic. It aims not to kill the victims, but to make them suffer from itching all over the victims' body so that the victims will scratch their body continuously until it becomes ulcerous which cannot be cured. One who suffers from this *teluh* will not be recovered by a doctor unless the sorcerer himself stops his action or someone else, such as a *kyai*, *ahli hikmah*, or *dukun* who has supernatural powers does it. This *teluh* may use wind, water, cigarettes, cloth and other objects as media to deliver black magic to the victims. See Tb Ronny Nitibaskara, *Reaksi Sosial terhadap Tersangka Dukun Teluh di Pedesaan Banten Jawa Barat (tahun 1985-1990): Studi Kasus Desa S dan A Kecamatan Sajira dan Bojonegara (Suatu Kajian Kriminologi-Antropologi)*, Unpublished dissertation, Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia, 1993, pp. 229-231

purpose pursued.<sup>51</sup> "Licit magic" means all the magic that serves the aims of Islam (*as-sihr al-halal*), while "illicit magic" means what is opposed to the aims of Islam (*as-sihr al-haram*). It seems that the author views magic from an Islamic perspective, not from a general idea of magic. It is reasonable that he divided magic according to such a classification, because the society he observed at that time recognized these two kinds of magic based on the Arabian tradition and the justification of several verses of the Qur'an. Hence, he cited several more sources and Islamic works, such as Ibn Khaldun's *The Muqaddimah: Introduction to History*, the epistles of Ichwan as-Safa' called *Rasa'il Ikhwan as-Safa' wa-Khillan al-Wafa'*, some verses of the *Qur'an*, and some *hadiths*.

Different from the general view that divides magic into two types, Kraig classifies magic into three categories, namely white magic, black magic and gray magic.<sup>52</sup> Gray magic in his terms means a blend of white and black magic. It may become either white or black depending on the purpose of the people who use it.

However, his definitions of white, black, and gray magic remain vague. There is no clear and detailed description in his book. I assume that his definitions on black and white magic are basically the same as the explanation above. He just adds one more classification, namely 'gray magic,' referring to magic neither black nor white. However, it seems that his *gray magic* is almost similar to white magic. This can be seen in his definition of gray magic: 'the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with will, using means not currently understood by traditional Western science, for the purpose of causing either physical or non-physical good to yourself or others, and is done either consciously or unconsciously.'<sup>53</sup> Something which has as a purpose something good is never called black magic. For me, therefore, it is still vague and ambiguous, because generally when someone practices and performs magic, he must have intentions that are either good or bad, either directed to him or to others.

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<sup>51</sup> Burgel, 1988, 31

<sup>52</sup> Kraig defines *white magic* as 'the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with will, using means not currently understood by traditional Western science, for the purpose of obtaining the knowledge and conversation of your Holy Guardian Angel', *black magic* as 'the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with will, using means not currently understood by traditional Western science, for the purpose of causing either physical or non-physical harm to yourself or others, and is done either consciously or unconsciously', and *gray magic* as 'the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with will, using means not currently understood by traditional Western science, for the purpose of causing either physical or non-physical good to yourself or others, and is done either consciously or unconsciously'. See Donald Michael Kraig, *op.cit.*, pp.10-11

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

Hutton Webster in his *Magic, A Sociology Study*, as quoted by Koentjaraningrat, categorizes magic into two kinds; *public magic* and *private magic*.<sup>54</sup> The former is magic used for public good, such as magic used in public ceremonies and rites meant to ask for rain, to repel disaster or calamity, to cast off plant diseases, to obtain a good harvest, etc. It is performed ritually on behalf of a community or tribe. The performer is seen as an important figure in his community and is often considered the tribal chief. The latter is magic used for personal aims, with either good or bad intentions, such as magic used by *dukuns*, sorcerers, witches and most of the black magic.

The terms used by Webster above, as a matter of fact, exist in Banten as well. Even though most of Bantenese people do not recognize these terms, practically they perform such kinds of magic.

Based on the practical goals, Firth classified magic into three types. The first is productive magic, such as magic for hunting, magic for fertility, planting, and harvest in agriculture, magic for rain-making, magic for securing a catch in fishing, magic for trading, magic for love, etc. This productive magic is performed either by private individuals for themselves, or by specialist magicians for others or the community as a whole. It is socially approved, and works as a stimulus to action and as a factor in the organization of economic activity. The second is protective magic, such as taboos to guard property, magic to assist the collection of debts, magic to avert misfortune, and magic for safe travelling. It works as counter-magic to destructive magic. It is practiced like productive magic, and carries social approval. It is used as a stimulus to action and as a force for social control. The third is destructive magic, such as magic to bring storms, magic to destroy property, magic to produce sickness, magic to bring death. The most well-known of this magic is sorcery and witchcraft. It is seen as morally bad. It provides a native theory of failure, misfortune, and death.<sup>55</sup>

Firth's classification above can also be applied in the case of Bantenese magic. For instance, many people such as salesmen, politicians,

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<sup>54</sup> Koentjaraningrat, 1974, 279

<sup>55</sup> See Raymond Firth, *Human Types. An Introduction to Social Anthropology*, Rev.ed., N.Y., The New American Library, Inc., 1958, pp.124-25. While Firth classifies magic into three types, Koentjaraningrat adds one more type of magic besides the three classifications made by Firth above, namely "*ilmu gaib meramal*" (fortune magic or oracle). It is a kind of magic used to help people in taking important decisions about certain matters in their daily life, such as to determine the right time for planting in the field, travelling, performing *slametan*, building a new house etc. Indonesian people, especially Javanese, usually used the technique of *petungan* (one kind of oracles) by using *kitab primbon* (oracle book) to plan special events in their life. See Koentjaraningrat, *Beberapa Pokok Antropologi Sosial*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Jakarta, P.T.Dian Rakjat, 1974, p.284

businessmen, etc., ask *wafak*, charms, and amulets (*jimat*) from *kyai*, *ahli hikmah*, even from *dukun* in order to achieve their goals. These are examples of productive magic in Firth's sense of the word which exists in Banten. Furthermore, many Bantenese people also come to *kyai*, *ahli hikmah*, and *dukun* to avert misfortune, to secure safety while travelling and to cure their illness, whether it is caused by black magic or not. It means that to protect their life, they still believe in magic. This is protective magic in terms of Firth's categorization. Finally, I can also give examples of 'destructive magic' which can be found in Banten. The practice of sorcery and witchcraft (*teluh* and *tenung*) in the sub-districts Sajira and Bojonegara in Banten<sup>56</sup> shows us that Bantenese are also well acquainted with its destructive magic.

O'Keefe categorizes magic into seven types: medical magic, black magic, ceremonial magic, religious magic, the occult sciences, the paranormal and magic cults and sects.<sup>57</sup>

It seems that what O'Keefe means with medical magic is the kind of magic used for healing. This can be concluded from his explanation of the Azande people – which he quoted from Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, Oracles and magic among the Azande* – who consult a mechanical oracle to get a diagnosis when they get sick. They may be told their illness was caused by a sorcerer, a ghost, a broken taboo or a natural cause and they then seek out a witchdoctor to get magic medicine to fight his spiritual tormentor, or they may go to the dumbfounded accused "witch" himself and demand that he climb down.<sup>58</sup> Black magic is magic used for evil purposes. Black magic in O'Keefe's terms refers to magic which runs from the mild aggressions of love magic to trivial spite magic, to defensive magic that counterattacks the enemy, all the way to the darker areas of witchcraft, sorcery and demonology. Ceremonial magic is magic performed for the community for a collective purpose, such as rain-making magic or agricultural magic, the ritual magic of great occasions, etc. With the term religious magic he means magic applied only to some magical institutions that have become embedded within religion, often in response to other magic. The clearest case is exorcism, which is religion's own medicine man magic to fight black magic. Occult literally means 'hidden,' but loosely applied to any matter supposed to be supernatural (or concerned with the supernatural). It is a kind of magical practice, such as fortune-telling (especially with stars), theosophy and something dealing with the control of nature by using magical procedures.<sup>59</sup> The paranormal in his typology means magic which uses extrasensory perception, and altered states of consciousness. These seem to

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<sup>56</sup> See Nitibaskara, 1993.

<sup>57</sup> O'Keefe, 1982, 2-9

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Barry, 2001, 229

be natural phenomena but they are often produced by small groups using traditional magical means and their expectations are patterned by magical archetypes. Finally, O'Keefe's description of magic cults and sects is exactly the same as Weber's term '*charisma*'.<sup>60</sup>

The classifications made by O'Keefe as mentioned above are very confusing to me. It looks like there is overlapping between the different types. For instance, his explanation of magic cults and sects is very similar to that of religious magic, and religious magic seems close to ceremonial magic. It is probably because he does not mention on which premises his classification is based, whether he categorizes it based on its function or its means.

Meanwhile, regardless of the intention and the techniques of magical practices, Crowley divides magic into five types: magic to remove obstacles, magic to create opportunities, magic to achieve a particular goal, magic to heal and to restore something or someone, and magic to change a personality.<sup>61</sup> The last one, according to her, is often called high magic because it is the magic of transformation or the magic of change. We can see practices of magic as classified by Crowley and described above in Banten. For instance, many Bantenese people still believe *dukuns* or *kyai* can cure diseases which can not be treated by modern medical treatment. Indeed, to achieve a particular goal such as to win elections for head of the village, Bantenese people still rely upon some kinds of magical powers, such as *wafak* and *jimat* (amulet) which they obtain from *dukun* or *kyai*.

Furthermore, Silverwind categorizes magic into four types: sympathetic, natural, ceremonial, and sexual magic.<sup>62</sup> Sympathetic magic, according to her, is the oldest form of magic which was used by prehistoric people. It uses objects or actions to represent the desired objects or actions. It is apparently the same as Frazer's law of magic.<sup>63</sup> Natural magic means magic used for any purpose, either good or bad and it can use many tools such as colored cords, oils, or candles and techniques in which practitioners can change the words to suit their purposes. It looks similar to the 'gray magic' of Kraig I explained above, i.e. magic which is neither white nor black; it depends on its purpose. What she calls ceremonial magic seems similar to O'Keefe's classification. Sex magic is magic used for a sex-related goal such as the conception of a child.

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<sup>60</sup> O'Keefe, 1982, 8-9

<sup>61</sup> Crowley, 2003, 2

<sup>62</sup> Silverwind, 2004, 217-220.

<sup>63</sup> See Frazer, *Aftermath. Supplement to the Golden Bough*, London: Macmillan and Co., LTD., 1936, p. vii. He states that: "A magical sympathy is often supposed to exist between people at a distance, such that the actions of the one directly affect the other. Thus, rules of conduct are often imposed upon wives during their husband' absence in hunting, fishing, or fighting."

Concerning the last type of magic classified by Silverwind above, it is interesting to me to demonstrate that it also exists in Banten. For instance, one Bantenese person who had not had a child for seven years came to a *dukun*. One piece of advice given to the couple was that during sexual intercourse, they should put some bananas on the bed, and then eat them after finishing the intercourse. Not only that, he was also advised to perform some magical rites.<sup>64</sup> Some Bantenese people have *ilmu leunca*, which is used to make women have an orgasm without having intercourse. It means that even though the term of 'sex magic' is not common for Bantenese people, it exists in Bantenese magical practices.

With the explanation above, it is demonstrated that whatever the terms used by the writers to classify the different kinds of magic, they are all basically referring to the same points, namely that magic may be used for good or bad ends, either personal or collective. Furthermore, even though several terms used by the authors above are not known by many Bantenese people, they perform such magical practices in their daily life.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has shown that Banten is not only well-known as a religious area where the population was famous as the fanatical Muslims who often rebelled against the Dutch colonial government, but also that it has a well-established reputation as a haven for occult sciences.

Magic is real action existing in almost every society. It is the very real phenomenon that people, both in primitive and modern societies, recognize and are acquainted with the practice of magic; they themselves even practice and take part in certain kinds of magic in social life. Hence, almost every person believes that magic really happens and exists in the surrounding area of his life. People believe that social situations can be influenced, altered, healed, destroyed, and transformed by magical actions. Magic is sometimes practiced in the form of violence, such as sorcery and witchcraft, and it is also exercised for good purposes, such as for healing and religious rites.

Various magical practices, both white and black magic, exist in Banten and have various purposes. Some of them are used for positive purposes, such as curing diseases, assisting people to solve their practical problems, improving and strengthening their faith in God, and as a means of legitimizing leadership in the community. Others are used for negative purposes, such as destroying relationships, causing diseases and killing people by using black magic.

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Pak Uj (Serang, Banten), [interviewed on August 15<sup>th</sup> 2008]

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**Interview:**

- Interview with K.H. Ja'al Maqsud, a *kyai of pesantren 'Sabilu Rosyad* in Batu Kuwung, Padarincang, Banten. [interviewed on July 25<sup>th</sup> 2008]
- Interview with K.H. Ma'sum Daenury, a religious figure or *ulama* from Banten (Barugbug, Serang), [interviewed on August 5<sup>th</sup> 2008]
- Interview with Uj (Serang, Banten), [interviewed on August 15<sup>th</sup> 2008]

## STUDI SEJARAH AGAMA

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### Abstrak :

*Agama-agama di dunia ini, memiliki tingkat pengaruh yang masih tinggi pada pengikutnya. Hal ini dikarenakan agama memiliki kitab suci yang setiap saat dapat dibacanya. Namun demikian, agama-agama ini ternyata muncul atau turun di kawasan wilayah Asia.*

*Agama-agama yang muncul di Asia ini, tidak saja agama samawi, melainkan agama ardi yang didalam kitabnya terdapat unsur-unsur pemikiran manusia. Berbeda dengan agama samawi. Seperti agama Islam karena agama ini tidak memasukkan unsur-unsur pemikiria manusia dalam kitab sucinya.*

**Kata Kunci :** *sejarah, agama, dan perbandinga agama*

### Pendahuluan

Sejarah agama besar dunia yang masih eksis keberadaannya dan masih ada penganutnya sampai saat ini, adalah agama Hindu, agama Yahudi, agama Zoroaster, agama Shinto, agama Tao, agama Jaina, agama Buddha, agama Konghuchu, agama Kristen, dan agama Islam. Semua agama itu mempunyai kitab suci, mempunyai nabi, mempunyai tempat ibadat, serta meyakini adanya Tuhan dan kehidupan di akhirat.

Agama besar dunia tersebut, semuanya diturunkan di wilayah Asia, baik di Asia Barat seperti agama Yahudi, agama Kristen, dan agama Hindu, agama Buddha, dan agama Jaina. Sedangkan di Asia Timur seperti agama Shinto, agama Konghuchu, dan agama Tao.<sup>1</sup> Sepuluh agama besar ini, ada yang termasuk agama dakwah dan ada pula yang tidak termasuk agama non dakwah. Agama yang tergolong memiliki misi dakwah menurut Max Muller adalah agama Buddha, agama Kristen dan agama Islam.<sup>2</sup> Sedangkan yang tidak termasuk agama dakwah adalah agama Hindu, agama Yahudi, agama Zoroaster, agama Shinto, agama Tao, dan agama Jaina.

Ketiga agama dakwah yang paling cepat perkembangan-perkembangannya, adalah agama Islam kemudian agama Kristen dan agama Buddha. Di samping agama-agama yang lainnya. Agama Islamlah sebagai agama yang dapat diterima oleh kalangan intelektual dan masyarakat, dan

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<sup>1</sup> Yoesoef Sou'yb, *Agama-agama Besar di Dunia* (Jakarta : Pustaka Alhusna, 1983), cet. 1, h. 13

<sup>2</sup> Thomas W. Arnold, *Sejarah Da'wah Islam* . (Jakarta : Widjaya. 1981). Cet. 2: h. 1