

The Hybridity of Islam, Hinduism, and Modernity in Troloyo Cemetery

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Abstract

Troloyo Cemetery, located in Trowulan, Mojokerto, East Java, is a historical burial site that exemplifies the hybridity between Islam, Hindu-Buddhist traditions, and modernity. This study explores the cemetery as a cultural third space, a concept introduced by Homi K. Bhabha (1994), where different belief systems and historical legacies intersect, negotiate, and form new identities. The research applies a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews and direct observation, focusing on the perceptions of local caretakers and community members. Findings reveal that Islamic elements are present in tombstone inscriptions, Arabic calligraphy, and pilgrimage practices associated with Syekh Jumadil Kubro, a key figure in Javanese Islamization. Simultaneously, Hindu-Buddhist influences persist through architectural structures like kijing and symbols such as Surya Majapahit, while modern features such as tourism and infrastructure development further shape the site's identity. Ritual practices like incense burning, flower offerings, and local cosmological concepts highlight syncretic expressions of spirituality rooted in Javanese culture. These complex layers of religiosity and symbolism challenge rigid categorizations of identity, instead revealing a dynamic cultural landscape formed through historical negotiation and continuity. The study concludes that Troloyo Cemetery functions not merely as a sacred Islamic site but as a hybrid space where cultural and religious forms co-exist and evolve, offering a deeper understanding of Indonesia's plural spiritual heritage.

Keywords: Hindu; Islam; Modernity; Troloyo Cemetery

Abstrak

Troloyo Cemetery yang terletak di Trowulan, Mojokerto, Jawa Timur, merupakan situs pemakaman bersejarah yang mencerminkan hibriditas antara Islam, tradisi Hindu-Buddha, dan modernitas. Penelitian ini mengkaji kompleks pemakaman tersebut sebagai ruang ketiga budaya, sebuah konsep yang diperkenalkan oleh Homi K. Bhabha (1994), di mana berbagai sistem kepercayaan dan warisan sejarah saling beririsan, bernegosiasi, dan membentuk identitas baru. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan observasi langsung, dengan fokus pada persepsi para juru kunci dan masyarakat setempat. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa unsur-unsur Islam hadir dalam inskripsi nisan, kaligrafi Arab, serta praktik ziarah yang terkait dengan Syekh Jumadil Kubro sebagai tokoh penting dalam proses Islamisasi di Jawa. Secara bersamaan, pengaruh Hindu-Buddha tetap bertahan melalui struktur arsitektural seperti kijing serta simbol-simbol seperti Surya Majapahit, sementara unsur modern seperti pariwisata dan pembangunan infrastruktur turut membentuk identitas situs tersebut. Praktik ritual seperti pembakaran dupa, tabur bunga, serta konsep kosmologi lokal menampilkan ekspresi spiritual sinkretik yang berakar pada budaya Jawa. Lapisan-lapisan religiositas dan simbolisme yang kompleks ini menantang kategorisasi identitas yang kaku, dan justru

menunjukkan lanskap budaya yang dinamis yang terbentuk melalui proses negosiasi historis dan keberlanjutan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Makam Troloyo tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai situs suci Islam, tetapi juga sebagai ruang hibrid di mana berbagai bentuk budaya dan keagamaan hidup berdampingan dan terus berkembang, sehingga memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang warisan spiritual plural di Indonesia.

Keywords: Hindu; Islam; Modernitas; Pemakaman Troloyo

Introduction

Troloyo Cemetery is one of the ancient burial sites located in the Trowulan area, Mojokerto Regency, East Java, and is recognized as part of the Majapahit cultural heritage. The presence of this burial complex holds significant historical and religious value, as the site is believed to be the final resting place of prominent figures associated with the early development of Islam in Java, including Syayid Jumadil Kubro, who is often referred to as the ancestor of the Wali Songo (Sani & Kasdi, 2017). The existence of Islamic graves within an area rich in Hindu-Buddhist cultural remains indicates a process of cultural acculturation and religious transition that occurred gradually and peacefully. Architectural elements such as red brick structures, the Surya Majapahit symbol, and ancient Arabic inscriptions on tombstones reflect a blend of local cultural features with Islamic values introduced by religious scholars and missionaries of the time (Fatikh & Hendrik, 2022).

In addition to its historical significance, Troloyo Cemetery also serves as an active spiritual destination frequently visited by people from various backgrounds, both for religious purposes such as pilgrimage and for cultural tourism. The practice of pilgrimage is not limited to local communities but also attracts visitors from other regions and abroad, demonstrating the site's importance within the spiritual networks of the Indonesian archipelago. This study aims to explore the perceptions of local communities and cemetery caretakers regarding the social and spiritual dynamics that have developed in the Troloyo area. The main focus lies in understanding the meanings behind the symbols found within the cemetery complex, the presence of myths or mystical experiences associated with the site, and the patterns of interaction between Islamic elements and the remaining Hindu-Buddhist cultural heritage. A qualitative approach is employed to enable in-depth exploration of meanings based on narratives provided by informants who have direct connections to the site.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method, supplemented by direct observation of the research object. Interviews were conducted with several informants, including the caretakers and managers of the Troloyo cemetery complex. Interviews took place in the cemetery area on Saturday, June 28, 2025. Informants were selected purposively, based on their direct involvement and knowledge regarding the history, pilgrimage activities, and socio-spiritual phenomena that have developed around the cemetery complex. During the interviews, the researcher posed open-ended questions to explore the informants' experiences, perspectives, and beliefs related to the Troloyo site. The data obtained from the interviews were fully transcribed, thematically analyzed, and interpreted to uncover cultural and religious meanings embedded in the narratives shared by the caretakers. To ensure data validity, the researcher conducted cross-verification among the informants as a form of information

triangulation. This approach was chosen to capture the social realities in a more contextual and in-depth manner, in line with the characteristics of the research object.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the data collected through interviews. This section describes the results of what the researcher saw, heard, and thought during the interviews. The data presented and described here are based on interviews to the local people. This chapter consists of two parts: Findings and Discussion.

Hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha (1994)

The concept of hybridity, developed by Homi K. Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), has become one of the main theories in postcolonial studies. Bhabha explains that in the encounter between dominant (colonial) and local (colonized) cultures, a new space will emerge called the third space or a space of negotiation that produces cultural identities and practices that do not entirely originate from either pole. "It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity, that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (Bhabha, 1994). Bhabha argues that cultural identities are not fixed. They emerge in a Third Space of an ambivalent, intermediate space between cultures difference. Third space is not a fixed space or can be represented completely, but rather a discursive condition that allows for shifts in cultural meaning.

Homi K. Bhabha identified the emergence of what calls hybridity in postcolonialism. Hybridity is a cross-cultural interaction, both intrinsic and extrinsic, that appears in society in many forms, such as language and attitudes. However, in this case, hybridity is not simply a blending of cultural elements, but rather an active and continuous process in which identities are reshaped (Nazir et al., 2025; Pasopati et al., 2022; Riyanto, 2011). Bhabha emphasizes that in third space, resistance, reinterpretation, and the creation of new meanings occur. Identities in this space are ambivalent, unstable, and open to reshaping. Bhabha explains that hybridity is a cultural strategy in confronting colonial domination. Hybridity disrupts the strict binary divisions between "colonizer" and "colonized". It breaks down the idea of a dominant center and a submissive periphery, highlighting the complex, blended reality of postcolonial identity. "Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal" (Bhabha, 1994). Thus, hybridity allows for the emergence of ambiguous yet productive cultural forms.

Hybridity theory is crucial for analyzing situations like the one at Troloyo Cemetery, where elements of Islam, Hindu-Buddhist traditions, and the influence of modernity coexist. Rather than negating each other, the three form a complex socio-cultural configuration. In Bhabha's approach, the presence of Islamic practices at a site with a Hindu-Buddhist heritage is not a form of domination or erasure, but rather a process of negotiation that produces a new order of hybrid forms of religiosity and space. "Hybridity is constituted and contested through complex hierarchies of power" (Nazir et al., 2025; Pasopati et al., 2022; Riyanto, 2011), meaning that hybrid formations do not arise from a mere peaceful blending, but from a relationship full of tension and the tug-of-war of cultural and political interests.

Referring to Bhabha, this study understands Troloyo as a third space that reflects the tension, continuity, and transformation between different belief systems. This concept aligns with Bhabha's view that liminal space is "the in-between space where cultural change can

take place. It is an intercultural space where personal (accumulated subject structures) or communal self-strategies can be developed. It can also be seen as a region of continuous movement and exchange between different statuses" (Furqon & Busro, 2020). Thus, Troloyo can be read as a cultural space that allows for the birth of new forms of spiritual practice that are not entirely Hindu, Islamic, or modern, but rather forms of continuous transition.

Furthermore, it is important to note that this kind of hybridity is not an exceptional phenomenon. "hybridity is unremarkable and noteworthy only from the perspective of essentialized boundaries" (Nazir et al., 2025; Pasopati et al., 2022; Riyanto, 2011). It can be concluded that the religious and symbolic configurations seen in Troloyo become exceptional only if we impose a rigid and essentialist interpretation of identity. Within this framework, hybridity is not simply a fusion of elements, but evidence of ongoing cultural dynamics.

History of Troloyo Cemetery

Tralaya or Troloyo comes from the words 'setra' (field/field) and 'pralaya' (damaged/dead) which means a field for the dead (cemetery/tomb). The Troloyo Tomb is located in Sentonorejo Village, Trowulan District, Mojokerto Regency, East Java. The existence of the Troloyo Tomb shows a complex phenomenon of cultural and religious hybridity. Historically, this site was part of the central area of the Majapahit Kingdom, which had Hindu-Buddhist characteristics. However, the existence of an Islamic tomb believed to be the resting place of Sheikh Jumadil Kubro makes Troloyo a symbol of the meeting of two great religious traditions: Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic. This indicates a process of transculturation. "Transculturation refers to the process whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture. While subordinate people do not usually control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for" (Nazir et al., 2025; Pasopati et al., 2022; Riyanto, 2011).

Troloyo also contains archaeological elements reflecting traces of Majapahit civilization, such as tombstone fragments, red brick buildings, and ancient artifacts, which coexist with Islamic pilgrimage practices. In practice, the local community still performs rituals such as nyekar (visiting the grave), incense burning, flower scattering, and ascetic practices that do not fully reflect orthodox Islamic doctrine, but rather represent a syncretic legacy of Hindu-Javanese traditions and local beliefs. "The syncretistic abangan variant of Islam incorporates elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, and indigenous animistic beliefs... ritual practices such as incense burning, flower offerings, and meditation are remnants of earlier religious systems" (Geertz, 1960). This reinforces the concept of hybridity as explained by Homi K. Bhabha (1994), namely the third space where identity, culture, and beliefs undergo a dynamic process of reshaping and influencing each other.

Furthermore, interviews with several sources reveal that the community still believes in sacred days for seeking blessings. This practice not only marks the locality of Javanese Islam but also demonstrates that the Troloyo graves function as sites of memory that are not entirely subject to a single narrative of Islamization, but rather serve as a forum for negotiation between modernity, religion, and ancestral cultural heritage.

Troloyo Cemetery as a Hybrid Space

This subsection presents the results of field observations and interviews with Mr.

Joko, a village facilitator and a member of the Troloyo tourism office, and Mr. Suwarno, a security officer, to identify the hybrid elements present at this burial site. These field findings demonstrate how Islamic, Hindu-Buddhist, and modern values intersect to form a dynamic religious space.

Islamic Aspects at Troloyo Cemetery

Troloyo Cemetery is an ancient burial site with a strong influence of Islamic tradition. This is evident in the tombs of important figures such as Sheikh Jumadil Kubro, believed to be the ancestor of the Walisongo (Nahdlatul Ulama), and several other figures, including Sunan Ngudung, Patas Angin, and Temenggung Satim Singomoyo.

Data 1

"The most visited grave is the tomb of Sheikh Jumadil Kubro. Because Sheikh Jumadil Kubro is punjer (oldest) from Walisongo on the island of Java" (Mr Joko – Village assistant and tourism office)



Documentation Image 1.1 Tomb of Sheikh Jumadil Kubro

These quotes and documentation show that the tomb of Sheikh Jumadil Kubro occupies a central and most crowded location among the other sites in Troloyo, frequently visited by pilgrims. Referred to as the "punjer," or oldest of the Walisongo (Nahdlatul Ulama). Sheikh Jumadil Kubro is considered a key figure in the spread of Islam in Java. This highlights the Islamic aspect of Troloyo Cemetery, where the burial site serves not only as a final resting place but also as a spiritual and historical space within the Islamic tradition, particularly the Islam inherited from the Walisongo.

The practice of pilgrimages to the tombs of saints is part of Muslim expression, combining elements of spirituality, reverence for holy figures, and the preservation of Islam. In puritan Islam, a sect within Islam that emphasizes the purification of religious teachings by returning to the primary sources, namely the Quran and Hadith, practices such as grave pilgrimages accompanied by prayers for or glorification of saints, as well as bringing flowers, scattering flowers, burning incense, and reciting specific prayers, can be considered heretical or even idolatrous. However, in Java, this practice is widely accepted as part of the cultural heritage.

In the context of Islamic hybridity, this quote also reflects the process of blending Islamic teachings with Javanese culture. Homi Bhabha's (1994) theory of hybridity explains that identity is not pure but is formed through a blending space called the third

space. The term "punjer" itself is a Javanese cosmology referring to a center of spiritual power, which was later attributed to an Islamic figure, Sheikh Jumadil Kubro.

Data 2

"Those buried in the Troloyo area are Sheikh Jumadil Kubro, Temenggung Satim Singomoyo, Patas Angin, Roro Kepyur, Mbah Pekih, Sunan Ngudung, and many more." (Mr Joko – Village assistant and tourism office)

This quote demonstrates that the Troloyo burial complex serves as the resting place for many important figures, both those of Islamic descent and those from the local royal or aristocratic circles. Figures such as Sheikh Jumadil Kubro and Sunan Ngudung played significant roles in the history of the Islamization of Java, and the presence of their tombs emphasizes the Islamic aspect of Troloyo as a sacred, spiritual, and revered site by Muslims. The tradition of pilgrimages carried out by the community also serves as a vibrant and deeply rooted expression of religiosity there. The presence of various figures from diverse backgrounds in one burial area demonstrates the reverence accorded to figures considered to possess high spiritual and social value by the community.

However, the presence of other figures such as Temenggung Satim Singomoyo, Roro Kepyur, and Mbah Pekih, not all of whom came from orthodox Islamic traditions, as well as the presence of local ritual practices in the burial area, indicates the existence of religious hybridity. In the view of Homi K. Bhabha (1994), this condition is an example of a "third space," a mixed space where cultural identities and practices are not pure, but are formed through a process of negotiation between local values and global religious values. In Troloyo, Islamic values are not present in a completely orthodox form, but are mixed with the Kejawen belief system and remnants of Hindu-Buddhist traditions, creating a form of Islam that is uniquely Javanese. The respect for all buried figures, regardless of their strict spiritual background, indicates that the local community interprets sacredness not from religious orthodoxy alone, but from tradition, spiritual values, and cultural heritage. This is a real form of Islamic religious hybridity in Troloyo, which reflects a religiosity that is flexible, dynamic, and full of cultural negotiations.

Data 3

"The one covered with white cloth indicates the tombstone is still original (with Arabic inscriptions)." (Mr. Suwarno – Cemetery Security)



Documentation Image 1.2 White cloth covering the gravestone

This quote indicates the presence of visual and symbolic markings on certain gravestones in the Troloyo cemetery complex, indicating their authenticity and Islamic status. Arabic inscriptions on gravestones are a hallmark of Islamic tombs, primarily as proof of the Muslim identity of the deceased. The white cloth coverings also have spiritual significance and reverence in Islamic tradition, signifying that the gravestones are considered sacred, authentic, and worthy of preservation. Thus, this quote reinforces the Islamic aspect of Troloyo Cemetery, stating that the site is not merely an archaeological site but also a sacred place for the Muslim community, containing Islamic relics that are still preserved symbolically and spiritually.

However, the use of white cloth as a marker of the sanctity of gravestones also contains symbolic elements typical of local traditions, because the practice of covering or wrapping sacred objects is not unique to Islam, but is also often found in Javanese rituals or other syncretic cultures. This is where the hybridity of Islam emerges clearly. According to the theory of Homi K. Bhabha (1994), such practices are part of a cultural mixing space called the third space where Islamic symbols such as Arabic script and shrouds interact with forms of Javanese spiritual respect, creating new meanings that are neither purely Arabic-Islamic nor purely Javanese. Covering gravestones with white cloth symbolizes the fusion of Islamic beliefs about the sanctity of graves and local spiritual respect for sacred objects. Thus, Troloyo represents Islam lived in a local cultural context, where authenticity and sacredness are measured not only by religious doctrine, but also by the symbolic meanings instilled by the community from generation to generation.

Data 4



Documentation: Image 1.3: The Recessed Wall



Documentation: Image 1.4: Directional Sign



Documentation: Image 1.5: Entrance Gate to the Cemetery Area

Figure 1.3 depicts an inscription on the wall of one of the tombs. Written in Arabic (إذا ضاقت في الأرض ذرّعا فسلم على أهل القبور) which translates as: "If you feel confined on earth, then convey greetings to the people of the graves." This meaning is a form of spiritual expression that is very distinctive in Islamic tradition, particularly in the context of grave pilgrimages.

The presence of this inscription on the wall of one of the tombs (the structures protecting the tombs) indicates that the tombs in Troloyo are not only resting places, but also contemplative spaces that invite reflection for Muslims. This expression contains a reminder of the transience of life, invites humans to surrender, and seek inner peace by remembering death, an important teaching in Islam.

In Figure 1.4 are the directions for 4 graves which when written in Arabic الكبير مقام سيد (Tomb of Sheikh Jumadil Kubro), جمعل (Tomb of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Al-Tawil), شيخ عبد القادر الطويل في تنقو, إبراهيم (Sheikh Maulana Ibrahim) and شيخ مولانا سخاهه (Sheikh Maulana Syekhah) clearly reflect the Islamic aspect in Troloyo Cemetery.

Figure 1.5 shows the entrance to the cemetery area which is inscribed with the "I means Which) أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأشهد أن محمداً رسول الله. (reads which sentence Shahada testify that there is no God but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." The Shahada sentence contains a very deep religious meaning in Islamic tradition. The Shahada sentence is the core of a Muslim's faith which is the first pillar of Islam and the statement of monotheism which is the basis of all Islamic teachings. Thus, the presence of this sentence at the gate of the cemetery shows that the Troloyo Cemetery area is symbolically and spiritually identified as an Islamic space (Firdaus & Yamasari, 2024; Mahfudz et al., 2024; Pasopati et al., 2025; Sidomulyo, 2012). The Shahadad sentence at the entrance can also be interpreted as a spiritual reminder for pilgrims to maintain their awareness of monotheism during their pilgrimage.

At first glance, these elements reflect the sacredness of Islam in the context of pilgrimage, as they encompass teachings about death, monotheism, and reverence for saints. However, upon closer examination, these three elements do not exist within a purely orthodox Islamic framework, but rather coexist with elements of local Javanese culture

(Firdaus & Yamasari, 2024; Mahfudz et al., 2024; Pasopati et al., 2025; Sidomulyo, 2012). For example, the Arabic inscription on the wall of the jungkup (Jungkup) that reads, "If you feel cramped on earth, convey greetings to the people of the grave" is a theologically Islamic phrase, yet its meaning aligns closely with Javanese practices that honor spiritual connections with ancestors through grave pilgrimages.

The signposts containing the names of Islamic figures such as Sheikh Jumadil Kubro in Arabic script do indeed indicate Islamic influence, but the local community recognizes him as a "punjer," or center of spiritual power in Javanese cosmology, not simply as a religious scholar (Firdaus & Yamasari, 2024; Mahfudz et al., 2024; Pasopati et al., 2025; Sidomulyo, 2012). The signposts containing the names of Islamic figures such as Sheikh Jumadil Kubro in Arabic script do indeed indicate Islamic influence, but the local community recognizes him as a "punjer," or center of spiritual power in Javanese cosmology, not simply as a cleric.

The shahada at the entrance of the tomb, juxtaposed with the typical Majapahit architectural fence, symbolize the process of Islamization that does not eliminate old traditions but rather integrates Islamic values into local forms familiar to the community. This is what is known as Islamic hybridity, where Islamic teachings undergo a process of negotiation and blending with local traditions, thus forming religious practices that are not entirely derived from a single source (Firdaus & Yamasari, 2024; Mahfudz et al., 2024; Pasopati et al., 2025; Sidomulyo, 2012). Within the theoretical framework of Homi

K. Bhabha (1994), this condition indicates the formation of a third space emerging from the confluence of two distinct cultural systems: transnational Islam and local Javanese spirituality.

Aspects of Modernity at Troloyo Cemetery

Although Troloyo Cemetery is a historical site steeped in traditional and religious values, the presence of modern elements cannot be ignored. In recent decades, the area has undergone a number of changes reflecting the process of modernization, both physically, socially, and functionally.

Data 5

"There are foreign visitors, usually just for sightseeing." (Mr. Joko–Village Facilitator and Tourism Office)

This quote demonstrates the modern aspect of the function and perception of the Troloyo tombs. While previously positioned as sacred and spiritual spaces within Islamic tradition and local culture, Troloyo has now also become a cultural and historical tourism destination, including for foreign visitors who come not for ritual purposes, but rather to explore historical, architectural, or simply exotic experiences (Bezar et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023; Iswati, 2018; Laila et al., 2022). This reflects the transformation of sacred spaces into part of the modern tourism industry, where tombs are treated as cultural objects to be visited and consumed secularly.

In the context of religious hybridity, according to Homi K. Bhabha (1994), the presence of foreign tourists and the shift in the function of tombs into public spaces constitute a form of third space formed not only by the negotiation of Islam and local culture, but also by the influx of global values and modernity. Therefore, the Troloyo tombs possess multiple identities: sacred for Muslim pilgrims, mystical spirituality for adherents of local traditions, and educational history for modern tourists (Bezar et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023; Iswati, 2018; Laila et al., 2022). This diversity of meanings indicates that the identity of the Troloyo site is fluid and constantly changing, making it a

clear example of a religious space that lives and adapts through various cultural layers, including modernity.

Data 6



Documentation Image 1.6 Ceramic tombs

Modernity at Troloyo Cemetery is also evident through the physical renovation of the burial area, such as the use of ceramic tiles on the burial floor. This is part of a modernization and spatial planning effort that prioritizes cleanliness, comfort, and visual aesthetics in accordance with contemporary public space standards. The ceramic tiles reflect the intervention of modern technology and lifestyle into traditional spaces, indicating that the site is not only sacredly maintained but also adapted to the practical demands of today's society, both in terms of maintenance, tourism, and pilgrim comfort (Bezar et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023; Iswati, 2018; Laila et al., 2022).

From the perspective of cultural hybridity, aptly described by Homi K. Bhabha (1994), the combination of traditional elements (sacred persons' tombs and Javanese Islamic pilgrimage) with modern elements (ceramic floors, semi-permanent buildings, public sanitation) creates a third space where sacred values are not eliminated but instead merge with modernity. Troloyo, in this case, has shifted from an ancient pilgrimage site to a space where traditional spirituality, local culture, and modern technology coexist and continue to evolve (Bezar et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023; Iswati, 2018; Laila et al., 2022).

Hindu-Buddhist Aspects at Troloyo Cemetery

Traces of Hindu-Buddhist culture at Troloyo Cemetery are clear evidence that this site is a multicultural space that has undergone transformations across time. Before becoming a burial complex for Islamic figures, the Troloyo area was under the control of the Majapahit Kingdom, a Hindu-Buddhist kingdom that dominated East Java from the 13th to 15th centuries.

Data 7

"Hindu-Buddhist influences persist, as evidenced by the use of gravestones on the graves in the Troloyo complex. These gravestones are a product of Hindu- Buddhist culture." (Mr.

Suwarno – Cemetery Security)

This quote emphasizes that although Troloyo is known as an Islamic pilgrimage site, traces of Hindu-Buddhist culture also persist in visible physical form. Gravestones, stone structures that form a protective barrier or marker over graves, are a legacy of Hindu-Buddhist culture that were once used to mark the graves of nobles or spiritual figures, and hold symbolic value in ancient belief systems. The presence of gravestones at the graves of Islamic figures in Troloyo demonstrates that they did not replace previous cultural forms, but rather adopted and preserved them in a new context (Bezar et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023; Iswati, 2018; Laila et al., 2022).

In the hybridity theory proposed by Homi K. Bhabha (1994), this condition reflects the formation of a third space, a blending cultural space where Islamic elements are not present exclusively but rather merge with local heritage. Troloyo has become a symbolic site of a previous civilization. The use of gravestones is evidence that the community's religious identity was formed through the fusion of old beliefs and new teachings that were adapted historically and culturally.

Data 8

"Some people bring incense, but it's not permitted to be lit at the tomb of Sheikh Jumadil Kubro, while it's permitted at other tombs, such as Temenggung Satim Singomoyo and Patas Angin." (Mr. Joko – Village Facilitator and Tourism Office)

This quote explains the contestation of spiritual meanings and practices within the same cemetery complex, namely Troloyo. The use of incense, which is part of rituals in both Hindu-Buddhist and Javanese traditions, indicates that some communities still practice forms of ancestor worship with non-Islamic spiritual approaches. However, the restriction on incense burning at the tomb of Sheikh Jumadil Kubro, a central figure in the Walisongo network and a powerful symbol of Islam, indicates an effort to preserve orthodox Islamic values at certain points within the tomb complex. Meanwhile, the permission to burn incense at other tombs, such as Temenggung Satim Singomoyo and Patas Angin, indicates that the site remains open to more syncretic local spiritual expressions.

From Homi K. Bhabha's (1994) perspective on hybridity, this situation reflects the emergence of a third space, or cultural meeting place, where Islamic practices and Hindu-Buddhist traditions are not completely opposed, but rather negotiated based on the social and symbolic context of each tomb. Troloyo becomes an arena where Islamic sacredness and local spirituality are dynamically negotiated, forming a pattern of religiosity that is not uniform, but rather plural and fluid, adapting to the identities of the buried figures and the beliefs of the community, which still maintains ancestral elements and pre-Islamic cosmology.

Data 9

"There is also a Hindu-Buddhist tomb, located at Tomb 7, near Princess Anjasmara or Princess Kenconowungu. Tomb 7 is the security guard of the Majapahit kingdom." (Mr. Suwarno – Tomb Security)

This quote clearly reveals that the Troloyo complex is not only the resting place of Islamic figures, but also important figures within the Hindu-Buddhist power structure of the Majapahit kingdom. The presence of the tombs of royal guards and princesses of Majapahit nobility in the same complex as the tombs of Islamic saints and scholars indicates the overlapping layers of history and spirituality in Troloyo.

Within the framework of religious hybridity, according to Homi K. Bhabha's theory

(1994), this condition reflects the formation of a third space, where a new religious identity emerged from the blending of two systems of meaning: the Hindu-Buddhist traditions of the kingdom and the Islamic teachings that arrived later. Thus, Troloyo became not only an Islamic pilgrimage site but also a living historical space that housed the legacy of an ancient civilization as well as new spiritual practices, forming a complex, dynamic, and layered religious identity (Kusdianto, 2015; Riyanto, 2011; Saputro et al., 2025; Umar & Lawan, 2024). The presence of the tombs of Hindu and Buddhist figures in this single pilgrimage area also demonstrates symbolic tolerance and negotiation of sacred space, where Islam does not exert a hegemonic presence but coexists and even allows traces of the past to persist as a valued part of local identity.

Data 10



Documentation of Image 1.7 Wall depicting the Surya Majapahit



Documentation Image 1.8 Tombstone cover depicting Surya Majapahit

The presence of the Surya Majapahit logo found on the walls and gravestones of the Troloyo cemetery complex serves as a strong visual marker of the persistence of Hindu-Buddhist symbols of greatness in what is now known as an Islamic pilgrimage site (Kusdianto, 2015; Riyanto, 2011; Saputro et al., 2025; Umar & Lawan, 2024). Surya

Majapahit, a Hindu-style sun symbol that symbolizes the power and spirituality of the Majapahit kingdom, historically represents the center of cosmic power and divine authority in Hindu-Buddhist teachings.

From the perspective of religious hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha (1994), this is a concrete manifestation of third space, namely a new cultural space that emerges when two symbolic systems, namely Islam and Hindu-Buddhism, meet, negotiate, and absorb elements from each other. Troloyo is thus not only a Muslim pilgrimage site, but also a cultural heritage space that houses the collective memory of local civilization, where Hindu-Buddhist symbols of power such as Surya Majapahit continue to be given new meanings and functions in the community's spiritual practices (Kusdianto, 2015; Riyanto, 2011; Saputro et al., 2025; Umar & Lawan, 2024). This phenomenon reflects that Islam in Troloyo does not exist in an orthodox and singular form, but rather grows organically within a local cultural landscape rich in symbolism and history, resulting in fluid, syncretic, and contextual religious practices.

Conclusion

Troloyo Cemetery exhibits a blend of Islamic, Hindu-Buddhist, and modern elements. The presence of the graves of Islamic figures such as Sheikh Jumadil Kubro demonstrates the strength of Islamic tradition in Troloyo. This suggests that the Islam that developed in Troloyo was not purely orthodox, but rather blended with local culture and ancient traditions. Using Bhabha's theory of third space, Troloyo can be understood as a cultural meeting place that is constantly changing and evolving. The identities formed within it are the result of a process of negotiation between various influences. Therefore, Troloyo is not only a historical site, but also a reflection of how culture and religion can coexist, adapt to each other, and form new, distinctive and contextual forms of religiosity. Awareness of this hybridity helps us understand that religiosity in Indonesia is rich, multi-layered, and inseparable from local cultural roots and its long history.

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