

Spiritual Reposition in Tantri Kamandaka Comic Book and Reliefs of Jago Temple: Story of the Friendship of Swans and Tortoises

Nur Iksan¹, Mayang Anggrian², Sony Sukmawan³
{iks@ub.ac.id¹, mayang14@ub.ac.id², sony_sukmawan@ub.ac.id³}

Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia^{1, 2, 3}

Abstract. Globalization in the perspective of social interaction, is happening all around the world as a form of new world order; various cultures around the world are related and affecting each other, so as what is happening in Indonesia. Globalization with the development of information and communication media, has brought positive impact in the development of sciences and other things. But it also has negative impacts: culture shock, awareness crisis, and spiritual crisis; while spirituality becomes an important aspect in human as an individual facing reality. It is the control of human's life. Starting from the said problem, it is a necessity to have a strategy to strengthen the nation's identity sourced from Indonesian local wisdom. This is a strategic cross-cultural paradigm move in globalization by going universal-particular, sourced from Tantri Kamandaka which is based on Jago temple reliefs that is contextualized on current era. This research uses qualitative interpretivism method with interdisciplinary approach to explain the spiritual values from comic, specifically on the story "The Friendship of Swans and Tortoises" as an educational media effort for value internalization to build character integrity awareness on young generation.

Keywords: Spirituality, Tantri Kamandaka, Comic, Awareness

1 Introduction

We have been dealing with globalization in the 21st century such as the access to retrieve information and communication, which is the internet. It can be done easily and quickly through gadgets which are held by almost every layer of society and there is no age restriction in accessing internet. Globalization in the social interaction perspective happens in various areas in the world as a form of new world order; indirectly impacting the relationship among cultures and affecting each other. The cultural relationship is also happening in Indonesia, manifested in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Article 32 about "The state shall advance the national culture of Indonesia". Subsequently, to answer the needs of era, the article is amended and developed in the Reformation Era into "The state shall advance the national culture of Indonesia among the civilizations of the world by assuring the freedom of society to preserve and to develop cultural values.", which is a cultural effort that must be directed towards civilized, cultural, unity progress, by not denying new materials from foreign cultures that are developable or that could enrich Indonesia's culture and elevate its humanity. Concretely, every citizen is eligible to access and obtain information, also to communicate to contact with foreign cultures.

The impact of globalization makes communication and information improvement becomes easier, it also affects great developments on economy, health, politics, transportation, and even sociocultural sector. However, it still has its own negative effects. Negative effects occur due to vulnerability and not prepared enough yet to translate foreign cultures continuously from various cultures which are consumed constantly by Indonesians. If we are to agree, it cannot be separated from the role of knowledge to know oneself whether it is in personal or communal domain, and vice versa, thus, we become amazed and more dependent on external knowledge that is unrelated to ourselves.

The condition above is very contradictive with the human's part as a potential creature blessed with a mind, expected to grow their potential in thinking processes by gaining knowledge. Thinking is done continuously and it is crucial in all duration of human life. Human think and gain knowledge in order to do advancement (quality) of humanizing human. Armed with knowledge, human can refurbish, criticize, renew, delete what have been inherited or its own creation, and even create something new and innovative.

Knowledge is a gateway to explain the universe. The word "knowing" itself, realizing its existence and as means to give meaning to its experience and as a guide in its existence. Thinking, in the perspective of Islam itself is a form of human nature. It is not quite surprising when the first verse to descend, which was *iqra'*, was a command for human to read. *Iqra'* according to Quraish Shihab means to read, to study, to convey, etc. This general command is not limited to literature that is coming from god, which is Al-Qur'an, or any events in the universe that are visible to human. Also in the perspective of Christianity, "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit." (Proverbs 14:8, KJV). This understanding puts knowledge on the fundamental point of religious teachings, and emphasizes the activity of reading and thinking as the essence of human as a spiritual creature.

Spirituality becomes an important aspect in human as an individual facing reality. It is the controller of human's life. Spirituality is an abstract thing inside human that always demand to be fulfilled. [1]: spirituality can help someone to find the meaning of their life, motivate them to always think and do good, maintaining harmony with god, nature, and society, including finding peace of mind and heart. The definition can be concluded that spirituality induces human to do good things, and it saves human from downfall, also open the way to transform oneself into something more meaningful.

Hypothetically, the condition of external knowledge dependency puts Indonesians on a spiritual crisis. The spiritual crisis is worsened by their culture shock; the situation where people is at disadvantageous position because of culture. This occurs when one is facing a new culture with the lack of ability to understand the whole contextual values of the original culture consumed. Also, people tend to misunderstand their own cultural values to justify the application of adopted cultural values and the inability of value system as the foundation for social interactions in certain culture.

The negative implication of culture shock can be identified by consumptive culture, individuality, social discrepancy, fading patriotism and nationalism, and traditional cultures eroding in Indonesia. Generally, we are able see this from the existence of westernization and currently there is Korean wave or *hallyu*, and arabization. The efficiency of accessing mass media makes it easier to move values outside Indonesia and have the society adopt them into their lifestyle, views, and even guide for their life. On the extreme case, ending up in lost generation problem, which are identity crisis, morality crisis, ideology crisis, and even mental crisis.

Starting from the problem above, it is necessary to have a strategy to strengthen the nation's identity from local wisdom, values that have rooted and become the foundation for Indonesia as

a way to emphasize national identity and personal identity of Indonesians. The problem can be minimized by going back to the original local cultures, or as “root” of self [2]. This is a form of moral revitalization to recover Indonesian cultures. By learning from the past, we can reflect on the good things and implement them in the current life; even they can be projected into a better future.

Practically, the effort has been made to minimize various identity crisis by bringing up cultural values and characteristics of Indonesia, which one of them is carved on the walls of Jago temple. Reliefs of Jago temple on the first level contains the story of Tantri Kamandaka, which contains lots of moral values that are relevant to nowadays lifestyle. The moral values such as respect, politeness, cooperation, kind, humble, sincere, peaceful, and responsible. These values are conveyed in fragments of fables with the meaning that humans and even animals can accept logical consequence, no matter if it is good or bad, depending on what they have done. Tantri Kamandaka manuscript and Jago temple reliefs as the subject matter to be transformed into a comic book. This comic book can be projected as a learning media in the effort of value internalization to build integrity awareness on young generation.

Through entertainment or learning media, internalization value can be established to push character’s integrity awareness on young generation. Also as a media for value and knowledge transformation development sourced from culture. In the process, innovation will be synthesized from popular media, comic book from Tantri Kamandaka manuscript which is a classical ancient Javanese stories and Jago temple reliefs where it is the manifestation of Indonesian local wisdom. One of them is to specifically explain spiritual values from the story “The Friendship of Swans and Tortoises”.

Based on explanation above, this is intended to introduce back local wisdom and accompanying the flow of growth of young generation so that it will not be disbanded from its historical roots. Also the usage of comic book visuals makes it easy to convey moral values for character building and aesthetic values of artifact, also a tribute towards creative processes from the era of ancestors to current generation of Indonesia.

2 Research Method

The approach used in this research is interdisciplinary method that is compared with various knowledge field, such as history, literature, fine art, psychology, and other fields related to social humanities. The method used is qualitative interpretivism. Data collection technique is through interviews, observations, and document studies. Primary data is collected from the comic book visualization that is done through data validation process of results from interviews with archaeologists and Jago temple reliefs correlated with Tantri Kamandaka. Secondary data are from documentations and literatures. Analysis process by data transcription and the mapping is based on the problems descriptively through interpretivism approach. Then, composing and classifying data that are relevant to find conclusions.

3 Finding and Discussion

3.1 Comic: Particularism – Universalism in Social Representation

In globalization flow, it is certain to face ever-moving cultural crossovers, putting the society on culture shock from modernism and positivistic resulting in identity, existential, and even spiritual crisis. This understanding puts combinations in every cultural aspect to become a way to solve Indonesia's identity crisis problem. This strategy is projected in the form of comic book with the subject matter of Jago temple reliefs and Tantri Kamandaka as the narrations and visual ideas.

Comic is a form of pictorial literature ... long ago in Indonesia it was matched with pictorial stories or stories in the form of Figures [3]. Comic in term of composition is an arrangement of storytelling images and often supported with text, it is intended to convey information to the reader. As an information medium, comic can be utilized for education and public announcement medium. This opportunity is used practically. Comic can be made for personality and character building, because it is interesting, exciting, easy to read, and stimulates kids' imagination [4].

Comic's role as an education media has a huge impact in providing quick comprehension for its readers about something with educational substance [5]. This educational role is included in Tantri Kamandaka manuscript. It has moral values that is adopted into comic script and is arranged by contextualizing the current situation and condition; this means creating narration as a form of giving understanding of new values derived from local wisdom and as a bargaining value for identity crisis.

It is a strategic way in cross cultural paradigm between globalization and the universal-particular which is coming from local wisdom. Based on Robertson's opinions are (1) tradition keeps developing universal-particularly with its continuous significance, (2) particular and universal issues have already linked together as a part of global connections [6]. In the visual of the comic based on Jago temple artifacts. Reliefs with each part of Tantri Kamandaka frame is put on the oasis in the story development with the background of current era.

The creative process is a form of interpretation of Tantri Kamandaka manuscript approach with Jago temple reliefs to explain the cultural evanescence that is being faced. In creating an art, artwork come in a contextual relation with the time and space of the presence of said artwork [7]. The relation of creation process and the context of the presence of artworks put Tantri Kamandaka comic book as the social representation from what the writers confront in explaining local wisdom values to answer the problems faced in the globalization era.

The creative process is a form of interpretation of Tantri Kamandaka manuscript approach with Jago temple reliefs to explain the cultural evanescence that is being faced. In creating an art, according , artwork come in a contextual relation with the time and space of the presence of said artwork [7]. The relation of creation process and the context of the presence of artworks put Tantri Kamandaka comic book as the social representation from what the writers confront in explaining local wisdom values to answer the problems faced in the globalization era.

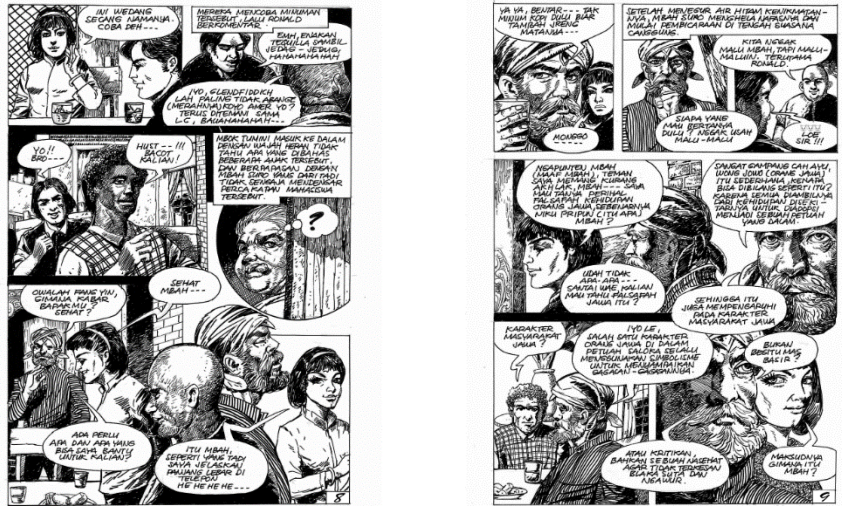


Fig. 1. Fragments of the story from Tantri Kamandaka and Jago Temple reliefs.

3.2 Spirituality: Manifestation of Comic Interpreting Experience

The process of making comic by arranging narration from Tantri Kamandaka, contextualized with the condition of current era is a substance renewal from the original narration without removing values contained within the fables in Tantri. Substance renewal is done for value continuity oriented towards the *ultima*. This means in the creative process by the research team is intended towards academic responsibility by answering identity crisis in young generation. Moreover, it becomes a call to optimize the potential for critical, argumentative thinking about transcendental things, which is creation of comic as self actualization in reverence. in the editor's note, ultima tendency and renewal is a seepage of spiritual motivation [8].

This portion puts spirituality on a kind of motivation of action to find the meaning of life, doing kindness, way of transforming oneself, and the intention to reach harmony with god, society, and environment. it is illustrated in the spiritual journey that human will always find renewal endlessly it is immanent and only in the scope of godliness [8]. The understanding emphasizes that spirituality can find its journey in human in their daily life, manifestation, and actualization interpreting experience.

Spirituality has various meaning definitively among figures, religions, experts, and cultural practitioners. One of them is spirituality as something that has power of autonomy and is able to vitalize or move the other thing outside itself, whether it is divine or not [9]. This view identifies unknown and infinite spirituality. Others also tried to identify spirituality. Syamsudin and Azman [1], spirituality covers 4 (four) themes, which are (1) as a source of value, meaning, and beyond-the-self intentions, including sense of mystery and self-transcendence, (2) a way to understand life, (3) inner awareness, and (4) personal integration. These classifications put spirituality in a vast dimension in every human activity. From the variety of the vast spirituality, putting values that can be manifested on human products, whether it is material, product of thoughts and organization system in the society. One of these spiritual dimensions is manifested in the moral values coming from Tantri Kamandaka and carved in Jago temple reliefs. A

collection of fables as a form of human nature association visualized to animals; where the story is put as the narrations for the comic book. One of them is “The Friendship of Swans and Tortoises”.

The thematic spiritual study is projected to analyze the story of The Friendship of Swans and Tortoises, with the results of comic visualization and writers’ interpretation which as follows: First, the scene of Father and Mother Swan flying very low to approach their close friends, the tortoise couple in the edge of a lake. This scene can be categorized in a study with the theme of spiritual inner awareness and personal integrity. In inner awareness, the presence of stimuli and the emerging sensation when the swan couple see the tortoise couple, their close friend, on a drying lake due to a long drought. They immediately approach the tortoise as a spontaneous reaction from inner awareness and personal integrity. It cannot be separated from the swan couple’s awareness on the living habitat condition of a receding lake.



Fig. 2. A part of Tantri Kamandaka comic, the swan couple approaching their close friends, the tortoise couple (Writer, 2021).

In Buddhism teaching, awareness (*sati*) has a very important role in maintaining mind control. This includes awareness of external conditions, which are objects or conditions outside the body and internal conditions such as the awareness of the condition of the body, feelings, and mental or thoughts. The relationship of spontaneity on the condition of social environment emphasizes spirituality as multidimensional; which is an existential dimension that leads to orientation and the meaning of life, while transcendental dimension is a form of relation with god the almighty creator. As a social (public) creature, human cannot be separated from their social environment, family, and larger social spaces.

In the scope of existentialism psychology, self-awareness is a capacity that enables human to live as an individual functionally, a complete personality. “The higher human’s awareness is, the more complete their personality.” [10]. The statement states that human cannot be separated from humanity moral values wherever they are. The role of awareness is also functioned to make a decision based on subjective awareness, a central problem in conveying the meaning of “there is” human personally [11]. Awareness is an achieved mental condition on someone who is always oriented towards the real truth and humanity’s truth. We must realize that life is not only

are angry when they hear what the dogs said, that the thing brought by the swan couple was bull manure. Here, the tortoises cannot comprehend fully their capacity as a spiritual creature that is inseparable from self-awareness. An awareness on their positive and negative traits and the awareness on external conditions, also elements that are able to support and hinder social conditions dealt or the surrounding environment.

Fifth, the swan couple continuing their journey sad and disappointed, thinking about the reason why their close friends could not commit to what they suggested. They throw the branch away and fly away to Manasasara lake.



Fig. 6. A fragment of Tantri Kamandaka comic, the swan couple continuing their journey without the tortoises (Writer, 2021).

In the scope of existence, human awareness is manifested on the subject, not the object, and it is not just present. It always emerges from “not me” into “me”. The aware “me” will always show intentionality as a subject that leads to an object [14]. As human position themselves to transform their stance, it is also a form of relationship with nature and their social spaces. This happens on the sadness of the swan couple seeing their close friends trying to respond the insulting dogs which makes the grip loosens and they end up falling down.

From the comic visualization interpretation fragments above, with the theme of spiritual study can be seen in the form of table as follows:

Table 1. The Theme of Spiritual Study

No	Fragments from The Friendship of Swans and Tortoises storyline	Spiritual Values
1	Father swan and mother swan then fly low and approach their close friend (A swan couple meets a tortoise couple on the side of a lake)	Inner awareness and personal integration
2	The tortoise bites the middle of a wood branch and the swan couple cooperate to bite the tip of the branch, on the right side is the father and on the left side is the mother.	Understanding life

No	Fragments from The Friendship of Swans and Tortoises storyline	Spiritual Values
3	The swan couple then fly away, carrying two tortoises, the father tortoise (Durbudi) and his wife, mother tortoise (Kacapa). Then they go for a long journey to Manasasara lake.	Beyond the self
4	The saying of the dog couple is also heard by the tortoise couple; because they do not accept that they are compared to dried bull manure, the tortoises get angry, it sparks their anger. Their mouths urge them to reply to the father dog.	Personal integration, inner awareness, and self-transcendence
5	The swan couple continue their journey sadly and disappointed, because of the fact that their close friends could not commit to their suggestions. The branch then is thrown and they fly away to Manasasara lake.	Inner awareness

4 Conclusions

As spiritual creatures, which is blessed with a mind; humans are expected to grow its potentials in thinking processes to gain knowledge because it is needed for the progress (quality) of humanizing human. It is used to refurbish, criticize, renew, delete, what have been inherited or the product of their creation, and create new, innovative things.

Cultivating knowledge is human nature, as the gate to explore the universe and as a guide of their existence. This action has an important part in the perspective of Islam, identified on Q.S Al-Alaq, which is *iqra'*, a command for the human to read. Every human must struggle to change their character orientation from being not productive to being productive. The effort must be done consciously to advance and develop themselves to improve their fate. It is written in the Al-Qur'an:

Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. (Surah Ar-Ra'd:11)

It is supported by al-Qur'anul Kareem verse, which is:

Then He proportioned him and breathed into him from His [created] soul and made for you hearing and vision and hearts [i.e., intellect]; little are you grateful. (Surah as-Sajdah/32:9)

These views from the verses shows that the typical psychological qualities/functions such as common sense, self-awareness, imagination, love, etc; are already granted in the beginning of human's existence. Al-Qur'an shows other dimensions in human beside physical (biological) dimension and psyche (psychosocial) dimension, which is soul (spiritual) dimension and develop further into psyche functions. While in the perspective of Christianity, "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit." (Proverbs 14:8, KJV), and "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." (Galatians 6:3, KJV). This general command is certainly not restricted to religious scriptures coming from god only. But it also comes from traditional values that is inherited and act as Indonesia's cultural foundation. Self-awareness helps us to see ourselves proportionally, so we do not underestimate or overestimate ourselves. People with optimal self-awareness will be confident, but also humble.

The correct saying from Javanese philosophy for the spiritual value of the story "The Friendship between Swans and Tortoises" is "*Sebegja-begjane wong kang lali, luwih begja kang eling lan waspada*" (Those who are attentive and aware will get better luck than those who is

oblivious). This proverb is taken from Ranggwarsita teachings, in Kalatidha manuscript verse 7, which is a reminder not to follow the flow (*anut grubyuk*). If human wants to be lucky and safe anytime anywhere, they must have a strong personality, remember their god and be aware of any worst possibility. Most importantly, nowadays where our culture is suffering from multidimensional crisis: spiritual, identity, and cultural crisis. It is time for us to dismantle the cultural roots as a way to actively argue in the pluralistic global culture.

References

- [1] Syamsuddin and A. Azman, "Memahami Dimensi Spiritualitas Dalam Praktek Pekerjaan Sosial," *J. Inf. Permasalahan dan Usaha Kesejaht. Sosisal*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 111–119, 2012.
- [2] B. Sugiharto, *Kebudayaan dan Kondisi Post-Tradisi: Kajian Filosofis Atas Permasalahan Budaya Abad-21*. Yogyakarta, 2019.
- [3] M. Susanto, *Diksi Rupa: Kumpulan istilah & Gerakan Seni Rupa (Edisi Revisi)*. Yogyakarta, Bali, 2012.
- [4] E. B. Harlock, "Psikologi Perkembangan: suatu pendekatan sepanjang rentang kehidupan," in *Penerbit Erlangga*, 6th ed., Jakarta, 2012.
- [5] I. Maharishi, *Komik, Dunia Kreatif Tanpa Batas*. Yogyakarta, 2011.
- [6] R. Robertson, *Globalization – Social Theory and Global Culture*. London, 1992.
- [7] A. I. Saidi, *Narasi Simbolik Seni Rupa Kontemporer Indonesia*. Yogyakarta, 2008.
- [8] A. Adlin and Ed, *Spiritualitas dan realitas kebudayaan kontemporer*. Yogyakarta, 2007.
- [9] Y. A. Piliang, *Dunia yang Dilipat: Tamasya Melampaui Batas-batas Kebudayaan*, Edisi Revi. Yogyakarta, 2004.
- [10] S. I. Lathief, *Psikologi Fenomenologi eksistensialisme*. Lamongan, 2010.
- [11] N. Iksan, "Subjektivitas Kolektif: Krisis Eksistensi Dalam Karya Seni," *J. Stud. Budaya Nusant.*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 53–63, 2019, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21776/ub.sbn.2019.003.01.04>.
- [12] H. P and A. B, *Psikologi Perkembangan Islami : Menyingkap Rentang Kehidupan Manusia dari Prakeselahiran hingga Pasca kematian*. Jakarta, 2006.
- [13] H. D. Bastaman, *Integrasi Psikologi dengan Islam: menuju Psikologi Islam*. Yogyakarta, 2011.
- [14] Muzairi, *Eksistensialisme Jean Paul Sartre: sumur tanpa dasar Kebebasan Manusia*. Yogyakarta, 2002.