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THE WISDOM OF WAYANG KAMASAN: A MORAL COMPASS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract

The deterioration of the Earth's ecosystem and its subsequent impact represents a mounting concern. The increase in crimes against humanity, the destruction of the natural world, and the extinction of animals is a matter of grave concern. The objective of science is to address the damage through a scientific approach. However, in order to instill a sense of moral responsibility, it is becoming increasingly necessary to adopt an approach that is rooted in ancient traditions. This paper focuses on wayang kamasan, a traditional communal art that has been maintained since the 14th century and is synonymous with value-laden tradition. The objective of this paper is to examine the wisdom of wayang kamasan from the perspective of Emmanuel Levinas' moral philosophy in order to ascertain its relevance in the context of sustainability. The research analysis revealed that the values inherent to wayang kamasan encompass transcendent, wisdom, vital, and utilitarian values. These values represent the nexus of artistic practice and traditional aesthetics, influencing spiritual experience, moral conduct, and the exercise of wisdom in action. The wisdom inherent in wayang kamasan offers a robust foundation for directing moral responsibility towards sustainability.

Keywords: Wayang Kamasan, Axiology, Moral, Sustainability

I. INTRODUCTION

The detrimental impact of human moral deviation on the planet has reached a critical point, becoming a global phenomenon that is a cause for significant concern. The accumulation of human-inflicted crimes, environmental destruction, and wildlife extinction has contributed to a significant increase in further damage to the Earth. In conclusion, the aging Earth is becoming increasingly populated with a multitude of damages that collectively render it an increasingly unsuitable habitat for humans. As indicated by Winkler et al. (2021), approximately three-quarters of the Earth's surface has been altered by humans over the past millennium. The conversion of land use is a primary indicator of biodiversity loss (Powers and Jetz, 2019: 323), and the lack of moral concern from humans has deeper implications for decision-making within the system. Human moral agency is responsible for the decision-making process of how they treat the world around them; it is about whether the world will be improved or worsened.

The idea of sustainability arises from the moral responsibility of humans towards the damage they have caused. They strive to find answers to minimize damage through science. The scientific approach mentioned here is not limited to technical sciences such as renewable energy and natural sciences (MacArthur dkk., 2020: 1). Practices and philosophies of ancient wisdom that have stood the test of time are also becoming increasingly necessary (Kakoty, 2018: 3216). As Ramli dan Lugiman, (2012) promotes in their writing, traditional shadow puppetry can also contribute to the future well-being of society. The provision of education through traditional cultural heritage reflects their identity. Traditional culture has valuable qualities that contain the essence of Indonesian human wisdom, which can act as a shield against the negative impacts of global development.

The above statements direct this paper to explore the power of values behind traditional culture. This paper focuses on the traditional culture of wayang painting from Kamasan Village, Klungkung Regency, Bali. Wayang Kamasan is a communal art of the people of Kamasan Village,

whose existence is estimated to have existed since the IV century (Lasminah, 1981: 25). Historical evidence of the historical journey of wayang kamasan can still be witnessed on the ceiling of the Kerta Gosa building which was once the territory of the Klungkung kingdom (Laksmi, 2013: 207-208). It depicts various meaningful philosophical stories such as Ni Dyah Tantri, Biwa Swarga, Adi Parwa, and Pelelindon (Ahmad, 2017: 61-63). In its development, wayang kamasan paintings have also emerged with improvised stories set in contemporary phenomena such as covid-19 (Kompas, 2022). Rooted in the structural foundation of wayang kamasan as a communal art and the identification of the reflection of local wisdom behind it, it is interesting to discover the wisdom behind wayang kamasan in the specific context of how it has the power to direct human moral responsibility to the earth.

This study argues that the values behind wayang kamasan include transcendent, wisdom, vital, and utility values. These values are an intersection of artistic practice and traditional wayang kamasan aesthetics, which then shape spiritual experience, morality, and wise action. The wisdom of the values behind wayang kamasan provides a strong foundation for guiding moral responsibility. To develop this argument, Emmanuel Levinas' philosophical view on the concept of moral attitude is used. Although this is limited to the scope of communal society in Kamasan Village, the strong moral responsibility of the lowest societal base is a strong support against further damage. The result of this discussion concludes that the value of wayang kamasan as a traditional culture implicitly has the power to become a guide towards awareness of moral responsibility.

II. METHOD

The article discusses Wayang Kamasan, which is an object of material culture. The article discusses Wayang Kamasan, which is an object of material culture. It is an iconography of Wayang Purwa (traditional wayang) that has been transformed into a form of painting. The mention of wayang kamasan cannot be separated from its regional context. As one of the oldest surviving traditional painting arts that

has remained free from foreign influence, Wayang Kamasan maintains its distinctive traditional characteristics. There have been numerous studies on wayang kamasan, covering its form, values, and transformations. However, there has been little discussion on the specific values in the context of their relationship to consciousness development that fosters moral responsibility for sustainability. There have been numerous studies on wayang kamasan, covering its form, values, and transformations. This provides a relevant foundation for bringing wayang kamasan as an object of study to discover ideas and concepts regarding approaches that can be taken for human sustainability.

The paper presents qualitative research based on primary and secondary data sources. The text is free from grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, and punctuation errors. No changes in content were made. Primary data was collected through field observations, purposive sampling interviews with selected individuals (painter groups), and documentation. Secondary data was obtained through a literature review of journal articles and related publications. The language used is clear, concise, and objective, with a formal register and precise word choice. The sentences and paragraphs create a logical flow of information with causal connections between statements. Data exploration refers to the collection of data on the wisdom and values of Wayang Kamasan that are related to moral concepts. The text adheres to conventional structure and formatting features, with consistent citation and footnote style. Each part of the data contains key points that direct this writing towards the research objective.

The participants involved in data collection were a group of wayang kamasan painters. The selection of participants was based on their relationship and understanding of wayang kamasan. In the field, recommendations from the participants were also very helpful in determining each informant involved. Some of the participants involved were the Kamasan Village Government, the Klungkung State

Owned Enterprises House, and primarily painter groups such as Mangku Muriati and Wayan Pande Sumantra. Each part of the entire data has important key points in every research process conducted in this study.

The research process was carried out in several stages, including: first, formulating the problem, which in this paper is the issue of moral awareness that has implications for the intention of society to fulfill their moral responsibilities to the earth, including all aspects within it; second, data collection accompanied by data reduction obtained through observation, interviews, and literature review. If observations and interviews are used to determine the material object (the wisdom of the wayang kamasan) and research variables (the issue of moral responsibility), then literature studies are directed towards exploring the formal object, namely Emmanuel Levinas' philosophy on moral attitudes. Finally, conclusions are drawn. The presentation or writing of data analysis connects the wisdom of the wayang kamasan with the concept of moral attitudes.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a systematic exploration of the values underlying the traditional culture of Wayang Kamasan, situated within a specific context, and their relevance to moral responsibility. The initial section (**3.1 Wayang Kamasan and Its Values**) of the Results and Discussion will provide a detailed elaboration on the findings pertaining to the values of Wayang Kamasan, which were previously confined to a moral context. The following section (**3.2 Morals as Responsibility**) elucidates the concept of morals in accordance with the moral philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. This foundation of moral concepts will subsequently be employed to establish a connection between the findings of value and the context of sustainability in the final section. The subsequent section (**3.3 Sustainability: Aligned Spirituality, Social, and Environmental**) elucidates the concept of sustainability. The final section (**3.4 Wayang Kamasan as an Approach Towards Moral**

Development) establishes a profound and analytical correlation between Wayang Kamasan values and Emmanuel Levinas' moral philosophy to examine their relevance to sustainability.

3.1 Wayang Kamasan and Its Values Value is an attribute that symbolically exists in Kamasan wayang paintings. In experiencing art, values emerge that are actually determined by how the whole human being is (Soetomo, 2003: 77). In other words, aesthetic values cannot be separated from intra-aesthetic and extra-aesthetic factors. The intra-aesthetic factor is related to the visualization of works of art that influence society's life, such as identity, taste, style, social status, personality, and mentality. Meanwhile, the extra-aesthetic factor is related to external influences in the process of creating art, such as culture, religion, education, norms, social, politics, and ideology (S. Iswidayati Isnaoen, 2006: 82). This provides an understanding of the reasons behind the use of Hindu stories, such as Ramayana and Mahabharata, in their artistic practices. As seen in the images below, the habitus of the Hindu-affiliated community is very strong. Artistic practices that are affiliated with the Kamasan community's way of life produce a traditional aesthetic that is rich in wisdom values as a basis for community guidance.



Figure 1. Part of wayang Kamasan painting at Kerta Gosa (source: private documentation, 2022)



Figure 2. Wayang Kamasan painting at Pande Sumantra's House (source: private documentation, 2022)

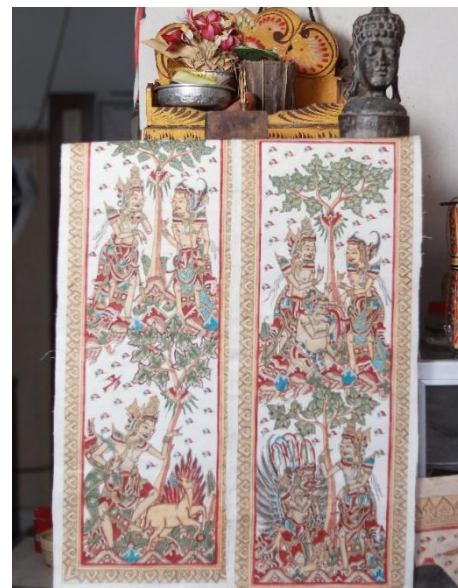


Figure 3. Wayang kamasan as shrine ornaments (private documentation, 2022)



Figure 4. Wayang Kamasan Painting "1st Covid-19" (Copyright by Mangku Muriati)



Figure 5. Suciarmi, Sutasoma and Kala (Australian Museum, 2011)

The presence of values in wayang kamasan encompasses four levels of value, namely transcendent, wisdom, vital, and utility values. These values can be arranged in a hierarchical pyramid structure, with transcendent value at the top, followed by wisdom value, vital value, and utility value forming the base of the pyramid. These values can be arranged in a hierarchical pyramid structure, with transcendent value at the top, followed by wisdom value, vital value, and utility value forming the base of the pyramid. The mapping of these values is supported by Max Scheler's view of the hierarchy of values based on their alignment with the polarity of the value system of the wayang kamasan.

Firstly, transcendent value can be defined as a value related to the depth of spiritual fulfilment obtained (Parmono, 1993: 49). The preference for transcendent values in Wayang Kamasan is closely tied to the function ascribed to it by the community in the context of ritual practice. Wayang Kamasan has historically played a significant role in the ritual practices of the Kamasan community. Moreover, the artistic techniques employed in these rituals transcend mere sensory gratification, as they evoke a value preference that is not limited to sensory pleasure. In its own visual context, the Wayang Kamasan painter utilizes stories of divinity or figures of gods to reach the spiritual realm.

Secondly, the value of wisdom is a value based on the Kamasan community's preference for Wayang Kamasan concerning aesthetic values (related to beauty and ugliness), moral values (right and

wrong), and just and unjust values. This value preference has significant implications for intellectual development, particularly in terms of fostering human awareness and capacity for ethical discernment. In the context of society, the intellectual knowledge gained from the experience of the value of Wayang Kamasan aesthetics provides the capacity to further absorb the wisdom of the soul.

Thirdly, vital values are related to important life preferences such as health, physical fitness, and general well-being (Jirzanah, 2016: 94-95). Symbolically, these values are present in the painting 'Covid-19' (**figure 7**) by Mangku Muriati. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about an experience of redefining life. These values are presented symbolically for reflection on human vitality and its influence on nature as a place of living (Mangku Muriati, interview, September 6, 2023).

Fourth, utility value can be defined as a value preference related to the use of Wayang Kamasan for purposes of recreation, such as entertainment or the fulfillment of economic aspects. In such preferences, the value of Wayang Kamasan is contingent upon the relationship between perceptive feelings and the objectification of Wayang Kamasan. This can be exemplified by the commodification of Wayang Kamasan. The commodification of Wayang Kamasan for the tourism industry represents a value preference on the part of society to obtain economic value from Wayang Kamasan in an optimal manner. In addition to the different functional arrangements, the production processes, forms, and qualities of Wayang Kamasan for ritual and commercial purposes will also differ.

In other words, wayang kamasan contains a dialectical relationship with the everyday nature of humans. The integration of artistic practice and the aesthetics of the traditional wayang kamasan intersect to form an experience of value. Mapping the values behind wayang kamasan reflects a practical basis that unites essence with the appearance of phenomena that contain ideology. In other words, wayang kamasan contains a dialectical relationship with the everyday nature of humans. In other words, wayang kamasan contains a dialectical relationship with the

everyday nature of humans.

3.2 Responsibility of Morals

Emmanuel Levinas' perspective on morality offers a significant contribution to the discourse surrounding the relationship between morality and sustainability, which humans endeavor to achieve. Levinas's conceptualization of morality is inextricably linked to the notions of ethical responsibility and accountability. In his ethical theory, Levinas identifies the ethics of responsibility as the primary axis of ethical action. Responsibility is understood as a concrete concept, whereby the subject "I" is both responsible and concrete in action (Sobon, 2018: 70-71). This is further translated into the existence of a responsibility that is grounded in the "I." Furthermore, Levinas emphasizes that this concrete form of responsibility extends from the "I" to others (Levinas, 2007: 194).

Levinas' perspective on responsibility relates to the acquisition of ethical sensitivity, which allows intuition to develop and understand what is right and good. This fosters a rational will for humans to realize their human existence. Levinas believes that every philosophy has the imperative to directly address human values and meanings (Levinas, 1984: 191-203). In human relations, oppression can lead to conflict and destruction. Responsibility plays a crucial role in ethical action (Lemanto, 2022: 33). It is an existential fact that arises from commitment and decision-making, rather than from principles or origins, and is therefore beyond knowledge. Thus, the concept of responsibility does not dictate what we must do, but rather emphasizes that it is an existential and unavoidable aspect of our lives.

This philosophical concept of responsibility cannot be directly applied to everyday life. It serves as a foundation for understanding our nature and responsibilities towards others, rather than a concrete guide. In practical situations, it influences our perception and response to external factors, rather than providing strict rules for human action. Responsibility directs us morally towards wise action in broader relations, namely spiritual, social, and environmental. It is important to note that this concept is always context-dependent and subject to individual judgment.

3.3 Sustainability: Alignment of Spirituality, Social, and Environmental Aspects

The local culture has the capacity to influence the formation of bowel movements. In a social context, society forms a culture that can facilitate the management of risks. Society, through the medium of culture, develops the capacity to adapt and overcome the threats to poverty. As Järvelä (2023: 03-04) has previously observed, numerous studies have demonstrated the potential efficacy of local culture in mitigating environmental risks. Local culture, although still evolving in the context of the contemporary global era, can provide a fundamental foundation for the development of local social norms and the implementation of change from within (Adger et al., 2013: 115-116). Local communities can act as agents of transformation, influencing the evolution of desires (Järvelä, 2023: 09). In summary, local heritage can be conceptualized as a constituent of network and environmental resilience, supporting the transformation of poverty.

The cultural capital of Wayang Kamasan plays an integral role in maintaining the resilience of the Kamasan community. The Kamasan community is structurally an indigenous community, which signifies that it is a community that is bound by communal values. From the perspective of the religion adopted by the Kamasan community, these communal values can be understood to signify that the Kamasan community is a Hindu indigenous community. The indigenous community in Kamasan, like the indigenous community in Bali, adheres to a governance structure based on the principle of *Tri Hita Karana* (THK). THK accommodates the order of human-spiritual relations (*parahyangan*), human-social relations (*pawongan*), and human-environmental relations (*palemahan*) Sukarma (2016: 84). THK concerns the manner in which these three relations are harmoniously connected in order to achieve societal welfare (Asmiwyati et al., 2015: 628). THK are values that are organized from the Balinese people's beliefs about achieving prosperity (Roth & Sedana, 2015: 164). The Balinese people adhere to the belief that society cannot be considered as a single entity capable of fulfilling its own welfare. Instead, they

perceive society as being integrated with aspects of a godly life (*parahyangan*), social interdependence (*pawongan*), and ecological quality (*palemahan*). These three aspects of THK serve as guiding principles for the Balinese people in their daily activities.

The Wayang Kamasan plays a pivotal role in elucidating the nuances of socio-political processes, thereby enabling THK in its pursuit of realizing its goals. The principle of THK management towards socio-environmental conduciveness demonstrates that Balinese society is not solely a political entity; rather, it is a cultural and traditional society (Roth & Sedana, 2015b: 170). This representation necessitates further and critical thinking regarding the socio-environmental transformation in Bali. Kamasan society, in its capacity as a social actor, employs cultural capital (Wayang Kamasan) as a political instrument to initiate sustainable transformation. This provides a compelling rationale for investigating the reasons behind the moral messages conveyed by Wayang Kamasan, as reflected in its narratives, symbols, and artistic practices.

3.4 Wayang Kamasan as an Approach Towards Moral Development

The values inherent to wayang kamasan, including those of a transcendent, wisdom, vital, and utilitarian nature, symbolize the profound richness of the values that underpin it. These values are conveyed through artistic practices, including narrative and visual aesthetic elements, which are intrinsic to the cultural worldview and way of life that has been transmitted from one generation to the next. The integral unity of THK provides a nuanced perspective and guidelines for community life, offering valuable wisdom for the direction of artistic works towards becoming meaningful and imbued with the essence of life. The objective is to establish a comprehensive understanding of the community's collective purpose, which cannot be attained in isolation from the interwoven structures of religious, social, and natural continuity systems. Each component must be in harmonious alignment, as the disruption of any one of them will compromise the integrity of the entire system of human life. Wayang Kamasan offers a

compelling illustration of the necessity for moral responsibility in the pursuit of sustainability.

The intersection of the value of wayang kamasan and the moral context is found in the pursuit of sustainable harmony. The values of wayang kamasan, as a traditional art form, promote the capacity for reflective thinking. Traditional art has the ability to create experiences that are relevant to specific contexts, as noted by McGlynn dan Gunderman (2014) in their discussion of how the paintings of Michelangelo or Da Vinci can serve as moral education. Similarly, Munteanu et al (2013) stated that individuals who enjoy art possess knowledge of human values. Inclusively, the moral responsibility conveyed through art provides opportunities for character improvement (Rosala, 2016: 17). Previous discussions have found correlations between traditional cultural arts and morality. The values of wayang kamasan also reflect a progressive capacity for sustainability.

The integration of artistic and aesthetic practices in the kamasan wayang tradition creates a valuable experience. The mapping of the value behind wayang kamasan reflects a practical basis that unites the essence with the appearance of phenomena containing the ideology of the community. Local communities strongly believe in maintaining the balance of *parahyangan*, *pawongan*, and *palemahan*. Local communities have become empowered subjects in realizing personal and public welfare. They have built a grassroots movement for sustainability by capturing emotions and reflecting on their experiences. This suggests that the values behind these communities can drive awareness of moral responsibility.

Awareness of moral responsibility can lead to a desire for a better life. The term 'better' is often associated with the concept of 'well-being', which encompasses various aspects of human life, including economic, social, political, and human rights. The term 'better' is often associated with the concept of 'well-being', which encompasses various aspects of human life, including economic, social, political, and human rights. The term 'welfare' is often used to describe this broad concept of well-being. The term 'better' is often associated with the concept of 'well-being', which

encompasses various aspects of human life, including economic, social, political, and human rights. Levinas argues that individuals have a moral responsibility to support the well-being of others and the earth. This awareness of moral responsibility can lead to a holistic transformation of the world for the better.

The values of wayang kamasan reflect the particular form of traditional art as an agent of value and are indicative of the quality of traditional art and culture. Art provides the viewer with the experience of reflecting on moral responsibility and demonstrates the potential involvement of the kamasan group of painters in the sustainability agenda. These values, rooted in local knowledge, can also have global applications. Although wayang kamasan cannot be used directly as a learning tool in formal classrooms, it can be used inclusively to convey moral messages and introduce the richness of traditional cultural arts.

IV. CONCLUSION

The collision of fetishized phenomena and cultural arts can foster new ethics in a person. The ethic of responsibility is the starting point of all human consciousness. Appreciating art values can maintain the longing for a better and more prosperous life. Transcendent value, wisdom value, vital value, and utility value are authentic values of wayang kamasan that maintain a negating character. Aesthetics mediates these values to realize sustainability.

Further study is required to understand the wisdom of wayang kamasan values from a moral perspective and analyze their relevance in the context of sustainability. This paper aims to pave the way for future research.

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