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THE METAETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S ONTOLOGICAL STATUS IN TANTRIC TEACHINGS: A PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF CALON ARANG MANUSCRIPTS

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the ontological status of God in Calon Arang Manuscripts and interpret it metaethically. Calon Arang, as an original Tantric literary work from the Nusantara's ancestors, is an interesting subject to examine in terms of its ontological view of God and the ethical implications that arise from it. Tantrism essentially conceptualizes God dualistically, depicting God in conflicting forms or elements, which are considered the cosmic basis of the world. This study highlights such dualistic tendencies and identifies potentially significant metaethical implications. An in-depth analysis is conducted utilizing a metaethical approach, specifically the school of natural determinism. This school believes that the moral laws that apply in human reality are in accordance with natural laws, so humans cannot determine objective morality with certainty. The ethical implications of God's ontological status in Tantric teachings are understood as a result of this natural determinism. This research places God's ontological status as the material object and uses natural determinism as the formal framework. Research methods include description, holistics, deduction-induction, and heuristics. With this approach, this research seeks to detail and unravel the complexity of the ontological view of God in the Calon Arang Manuscripts, while exploring the ethical implications that can bring a deeper understanding of this Tantric text.

Keywords: Tantrism, Natural Determinism, Ontological Status of God, Metaethics

I. INTRODUCTION

Tantra is one of the branch sects of Shaivism Hinduism or also often called Shaivism which in its development also influenced the main teachings of Buddhism, especially in the Mahayana tradition. This sect is a "secret sect" which later in Indonesia was practiced into a syncretism between Hinduism and Buddhism and is known as the core of *Siwa-Buddha* (Wiriati, 2018: 94). In Hindu tradition, this teaching centers on the ritual worship of Bhatari Durga Mahisasuramardhini and Bhatari Kali as the mother of Bhairavas. As *Shakti* Shiva, the position of Bhatari Durga and Bhatari Kali is more prominent than the position of the god (*deva*) himself. If traced further, it can be found that elements of Tantric teachings can be found even from the early period of interaction between the Aryans and the Dravidians in India. In ancient India, the basics of Tantrism can be seen from the practice of worshiping the Mother Goddess or Goddess of Prosperity by the Dravidians, in one of the verses containing hymns, described that the Mother Goddess or Goddess of Fertility is an incarnation of the power of *Shakti* which is the support of the universe.

In general, Tantrism or Tantric philosophy can be understood as a terminology that refers to the synthesis of various main motifs in Hinduism, both in terms of its religious doctrine and in terms of its philosophical system. Terminologically, the word *Tantra* comes from two words, namely "*tan*" which means "development" or "sustainability", and "*tra*" which means religion or has more or less the same meaning (but refers to different scripture) so that an understanding can be drawn that this word can be interpreted as "a continuation or development of long-existing teachings". The purpose of the doctrine of Tantra or Tantrism is to continue and develop the form of the core teachings in traditional Hinduism which previously existed in the Four Vedic Books. Therefore, many students and researchers of Tantrism place this teaching as the Fifth Veda because its teachings are considered to surpass or

overcome the main teachings that existed before (Evola, 1992: 1-2).

Tantra teachings, like the teachings of Hinduism in general, also direct and guide its adherents to achieve as much as possible the highest spiritual level, namely enlightenment. In the context of Hinduism, enlightenment is a form of self-realization in the state of *moksha* where the body and soul disappear without a trace because they have reunited with the ultimate reality known as *Brahman*. Even though they make enlightenment the ultimate goal of their mystical practice, Tantric practice may seem unusual, especially to some people who are used to the ethical perspective of the Abrahamic religious system, so they will consider it dirty or even immoral. In the past, Tantric practices among followers of Hinduism were carried out with rituals that were the opposite of the practices commonly carried out by *Yogis* (Hindu mystics/Hindu Monks). *Yogis* generally strive for enlightenment by doing various good things such as giving love and kindness to all living being and others (*Bhakti Yoga*), doing selfless kindness to God (*Karma Yoga*), deepening religious knowledge and knowledge of self/ultimate self (*Jnana Yoga*), perform *samadhi* or ascetic practices (*Raja Yoga* and *Astangga Yoga*) as the final phase in an effort to achieve enlightenment in the form of *moksha*. In addition to practicing Yoga, *Yogis* usually also practice asceticism such as not killing other beings, not eating meat, not getting drunk, and celibacy by not having sexual intercourse in any form (Aziz & Yusuf, 2021: 12). Tantric people, on the other hand, perform the exact opposite rituals, such as those described in the Kali Mantra, namely (Wiriati, 2018: 95):

*Sadayam bhaamsaca miinam ca mudraa
naithuna se vaca, ete panca makara syu
mokshadaah kaluyuge.*

The above sentence means something like this:

Getting drunk, eating meat, eating fish, practicing sexuality and meditation, will lead to Moksha in this *Kaliyuga* Age.

This quotation from the *Kali Mantra* was later used as the basis of the mystical-religious practices of Tantric adherents. The set of practices is known as *Pancamakara Puja*, which includes:

- a. The practice of eating raw fish (*Matsya*)
- b. The practice of eating meat and blood (*Mamsa*)
- c. The practice of drinking alcohol to the point of drunkenness (*Mada*)
- d. The practice of sex in graves or setras (*Maithuna*)
- e. The practice of Meditation (*Mudra*)

The legitimacy of the practice of *Pancamakara Puja* is reinforced by a quote from the *Mahanirvana Tantra* which reads (Wiriati, 2018: 95-96):

*Pautvaa pitvaa punah pitvaa yaavat patati
bhuutale, Punarutyaya dyai potvaa
punarjanma ga vidhate.*

The spiritual practices in this *Pancamakara Puja* are in sharp contrast to the common practices in the Hindu tradition. In the past, practitioners of meditation or asceticism were usually categorized into the *Brahmin* group. These *Brahmins* consist of those whose lineage comes from the *Brahmin* lineage and some also come from other castes such as the *Ksatria* group which in fact comes from the royal nobility who deliberately detaches themselves from all state affairs and focuses on spiritual-religious affairs. Meanwhile, the Tantric practitioners in the Hindu tradition actually abandoned their caste position, including those from the *Brahmin* group. They deliberately took the position of outcasts or perhaps could be aligned with the *Pariahs*. Tantric practitioners specifically make Bhatari Kali the Core Goddess they worship, they associate themselves as people who literally eat and serve their own sins. The process of devouring the sins goes through stages as stated in the *Pancamakara Puja*. The process is ontologically believed to be in accordance with the function of Bhatari Kali as a goddess whose material nature includes all substances in this universe, as *Shakti* Shiva who has the function of dissolution, of course there is no substance in this universe that cannot be purified including sin. By confessing and swallowing sins manifested by the practice of eating meat, drinking blood, getting drunk, having sex, offering feces and urine and closed with meditation, and praying to Bhatari Kali, Hindu Tantric practitioners who worship Bhatari Kali believe that all the sins they

have committed will eventually be dissolved and purified again through worship of the feminine personification of *Brahman* that is Bhatari Kali (Ballentine, 2010: 190).

There is a refutation of the practice by the Bhairavas of Tantrayana. Sedana, in his article, explains that the meaning of *Pancamakara Puja* is as follows (Sedana, n.d : 1):

- a. *Matsya* (fish): Meaning, be a fish that dives into the river/sea of life. Do not reject life and leave the world.
- b. *Mamsa* (flesh): Meaning, while diving into worldliness, keep an eye on the wildness of the flesh. The flesh here is understood as lust and ego (selfishness).
- c. *Mada* (intoxication): Meaning, drink and sip spirituality, despite living in the material world. Drink the spirituality until you are intoxicated with it.
- d. *Maithuna* (sex): Meaning, achieve spiritual orgasm, unite the *atman* with *Shakti/Kundalini*. Make a real effort for this.
- e. *Mudra* (same as meditation): Meaning, achieve *moksha* merge with the *Brahman*.

Sedana emphasized that the real meaning of the word "drunk" in the *Kali Mantra* and *Maha-Nirvana Tantra* is "drunk on spirituality", in other words the terminology is just a metaphor. This also applies to all aspects of the practice of *Pancamakara Puja*, that eating fish, eating meat, sex and meditation are all just parables where what remains the focus is straight spiritual practice. According to Sedana, Tantra teachings emphasize recommendations for life practices to continue to enjoy worldliness but still have a high consensus on the value of spirituality. Regardless of what Sedana stated and emphasized in his writings, the fact that Tantric teachings are textually based on the *Kala Mantra* and *Maha-Nirvana Tantra* in history remains and this cannot be denied. The influence of these textual teachings can still be felt today. Even though it originates from textual practice, this practice ontologically presents its own interpretation and philosophical analysis which is quite in-depth and provides different meanings

and perspectives but is still worth reflecting on (Sedana, n.d: 1).

Tantric practice is essentially based on the opinion that the religious practices carried out in the first era, namely the *Kritayuga* era or the *Satyayuga* era, are no longer suitable for people living in subsequent eras, especially the final era, namely the dark age or *Kaliyuga* era. Many people consider that Tantric practices are sufficient to elevate people beyond their conditions and various problems related to the issue of death. Therefore, it is believed that only through Tantric practices based on *Shakti* (*Shakti-sadhana*), is the most suitable and effective practice to be carried out in the contemporary era or *Kaliyuga* era. Basically, the emergence of the Tantra school can be said to be a form of self-criticism regarding several characteristics of spiritual practices at that time (Evola, 1992: 2). The characteristics of the criticized spiritual practices include:

- a. Emptiness and stereotypical ritualism
- b. Mere speculation or contemplation
- c. Any asceticism that is one-sided

Although it seems full of ritual practices that are considered full of immoral actions with the exception of *Mudra* (Meditation), the practitioners of *Pancamakara Puja* in Tantra teachings consciously or unconsciously ontologically have placed themselves as a counterweight to the cosmic order. In Hindu cosmology, it is explained that everything in nature comes from a single source known as *Brahman*. The word *Brahman* can also be understood as God, more precisely the unconditioned God who is the principal element of all that exists. This *Brahman* is also often called *Tat* or *That* whose existence is eternal, which transcends *turiya* (consciousness) and all other states in the unconditioned absolute realm. The supreme *Brahman* or *Para-Brahman* exists without *prakrti* (natural form), without attributes (*nirguna*), It is never an object of cognition, and can only be understood through the practice of *yoga* to achieve knowledge of the reality of the self (*atma-jnana*). *Brahman* is the *niskala* (spirit) element that can only be achieved by maximizing the *niskala* element also present in humans and cannot possibly be achieved by

relying solely on the *sakala* (physical) element, namely the body and empirical experience. However, both elements must be present because after all, both the *niskala* element and the *sakala* element are derived from *Brahman*. In order to reach *Para-Brahman*, both *niskala* and *sakala* must exist, both must unite to arrive at *Brahman* as the ultimate reality (Woodroffe, 2008: 1-5).

This apparent dualism of all substances in reality is a description of the reality of *Brahman* which has been given certain moral and gender characteristics. *Brahman* with masculine, light, and passive properties is identical to the embodiment of Shiva, then *Brahman* with feminine, dark, and active properties is identical to the embodiment of *Shakti* (Shiva's wife). These two aspects that are an integral part of *Brahman* cosmologically describe life, this is symbolized through the *lingga* and *yoni* that exist in almost all temples or places of worship of Shiva. *Shakti* and Shiva are the embodiment of a couple that forms the macrocosm, it is equivalent to the position of day and night that exist alternately and complement each other in order to maintain the continuity of life on Earth. In the lower order, the microcosm, this aspect is seen in the existence of humans and other creatures with two contrasting genders, male as the masculine aspect and female as the feminine aspect. The coming together of these two contrasting aspects (the sexual act) will be the beginning of new life, in other words, the birth of the cosmos. Therefore, this aspect of sexuality can be sacred in Hinduism as such, not least for the Bhairava Tantrayana tradition. For Tantric practitioners, the birth of the cosmos as well as the peak of enlightenment is when Shiva in the form of Bhairava actually unites with one of the elements of *Shakti*, namely Bhairavi. This meeting is depicted in a picture full of greed and lust typical of "leftist" methods, then realized in the ceremonies of eating meat, drinking alcohol, and sex (Urban, 2010: 103).

The element of uniting these two contrasting things in the ontology of the birth of the universe later became a kind of foundation for other schools of spirituality, one of which is Buddhism. Buddhism which was influenced by Tantra became known as Tantrayana Buddhism

or Tantric Buddhism. The word Tantra in Buddhism has more or less the same meaning as that explained in its Hindu version. In Hinduism, the word Tantra means hidden teachings. Meanwhile, in Buddhist terminology, this word has the meaning of "hidden mantra". Like Tantrism in Hinduism, Tantrism in Buddhism also directs its practitioners to achieve enlightenment as much as possible (Gyatso, 2011: 155). Tantra in Tantrayana Buddhism is divided into three aspects or types, namely Father Tantra, Mother Tantra, and non-dualism Tantra. The difference between the three, lies in the difference in the way of expression, and the difference in the definition of the words used. Father Tantra in its personification is depicted as an assembly of male gods or a retinue of male gods, Mother Tantra in its personification is depicted as an assembly of female goddesses or a retinue of female goddesses, and non-dualism Tantra consists of images of gods and goddesses blending into one another, at which point there is no separation between Father Tantra and Mother Tantra. Symbolically, Father Tantra is always depicted as a dot, while Mother Tantra is always depicted as a *mandala*. In Buddhist Tantra, the *mandala* is described as a circular shape that becomes the medium for meditation. Then the mind that is focused on it is described as the dot/mind equivalent to blood and sperm, which will eventually fertilize it. This focused mind is identical to the Tantric Father who eventually meets the Tantric Mother symbolized in the form of a *mandala* (Dragpa, 1996: 44).

Many Buddhist scholars have criticized the inclusion of Tantra in Buddhism, seeing it as a perversion of the teachings. Basically, Buddhism focuses on self-realization by rejecting any form of personification, but by adopting Tantra, consequently, the personification of masculinity and femininity of transcendent supernatural entities whether we like it or not must be accepted. The main point that Tantric Buddhism emphasizes is the secrecy of religious teachings and practices. Practitioners, both teachers and students, believe that the more secret a teaching is, the greater the blessings and goodness it produces, on the contrary, the more people who know about one's spiritual practices, the less

blessings and goodness will be obtained. We must admit that to understand Tantra in Buddhism requires more effort. Therefore, an explanation of this will be presented in more detail and more fully in the results of this study. It can be drawn a problem that becomes urgent in this research, namely whether the concept of Father Tantra and Mother Tantra in Tantrik Buddhism is the same as the concept of *Shakti-Shiva* in Tantrik Hinduism, then whether the secrecy in the practice of Tantrik spirituality in Buddhism is the same as the secrecy of the practice of *Pancamakara Puja* in Tantrik Hinduism? This is interesting to be researched further and in detail.

This research will focus on efforts to understand the concept of God in Tantric teachings through the study of *Calon Arang Manuscripts*, so that it is hoped that there will be a complete justification of how the position or ontological status of God in Tantric teachings. *Calon Arang Manuscripts* is a scripture that tells the story of Calon Arang or Ki Rangda (Widow), the master of black magic, who likes to practice divination and spread disease. She had a daughter named Ratna Manggali, who although beautiful, found it difficult to get married and find a mate, because at that time no one dared to propose her, because the young men in the village of Jirah/Girah where she lived were afraid of her mother who was a black magic expert and liked to do divination or witchcraft. Because no one dared to propose to Ratna Manggali, Calon Arang was so angry that he sacrificed a young girl to goddess of Durga in a temple. Calon Arang also practiced magic to bring about disasters that eventually devastated Jirah Village and the State of Daha. King Airlangga, who ruled over the land of Daha in the *Calon Arang Manuscripts*, was disturbed that his people were suffering because of Calon Arang's actions. He asked Mpu Baradah, one of his advisors, to solve this problem. After that, Mpu Baradah sent his student, Mpu Bahula, to marry Ratna Manggali in order to get the chance to steal Calon Arang's book of spells. That way, Mpu Baradah could learn Calon Arang's magic and get the key to defeating Calon Arang, where he was eventually defeated (No Name, 1995: 1-71). It is said that

Calon Arang's magic comes from the power of Goddess Durga, the king of demons and spirits. In Hinduism, Goddess Durga is the manifestation of Dewi Uma, a *Shakti* of Lord Shiva who was cursed for sin. Iconographically in the Hindu tradition, Goddess Durga is depicted as a sinister and angry figure. Goddess Durga has three aspects, of which the Kali (Bhairavi) aspect is the sinister one. Her bulging eyes, protruding tongue, long fangs, and dangling breasts, are then depicted in the figure of Rangda. As one of the *Shakti* of Lord Shiva, the worship of Goddess Durga as the negative aspect of Lord Shiva, with the medium of human flesh and blood sacrifice performed by Calon Arang told in the scripture, is a form of realization of Tantric teachings. This element of Shiva in his *Shakti* is contradictory to the aspect of Shiva as Bhatara Guru who is the Most Kind and Wise. This has implications for the image or ontological status of God that is not as usual. This has implications for the ethical status of God as a source of justification for morality that is considered as good as God in other religious traditions. Therefore, analyzing the metaethical implications that emerge becomes important in this study, where the results can later be used as a basis in acting upon moral contradictions in God that are also projected in reality through daily life (Wirawan, 2019: 6).

II. METHOD

The analysis used in this research refers to the philosophical analysis method of Anton Bakker and Ahmad Charris Zubair (1990: 67-71), as they have explained in their book, namely Philosophical Research Methodology. This method is a hermeneutic method with the following analysis flow:

Description

Providing a descriptive explanation of what God is as well as an understanding of God's ontological status, what Tantra or Tantrism teachings are and how they influence the world of Indonesian thought, what *Calon Arang Manuscripts* is and what philosophical aspects it contains, then finally what it is Ethical reflection in ethical studies.

Holistics

Thoroughly understand the ontological status of God in Tantric teachings through the interpretation of *Calon Arang Manuscripts*, then provide an ethical reflection on the moral implications that may arise in it.

Deduction and Induction

Carrying out a logical analysis of the views of Tantric teachings on the ontological status of God and His divine attributes which are studied through *Calon Arang Manuscripts*. This analysis is carried out through two logical approaches, namely through deduction logic and induction logic. The results of the logical analysis obtained will then be used as a basis for ethical reflection as part of an ethics study, which in this research functions as a formal object or can also be understood as a research analysis tool.

Heuristics

This ethical review of the ontological status of God in Tantric teachings, which originates from an in-depth study of *Calon Arang Manuscripts*, aims to find a new philosophical construction, through a synthesis between ethical concepts in the study of ethics as its formal object and the ontological concept of God in the teachings. Tantra is studied using *Calon Arang Manuscripts* as the material object.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Ontological Status of God in Tantric Hinduism

Using the perspective of Tantric Buddhism to explain the reality of divinity in Tantrism is the most possible method. This is because in Tantric Buddhism it would be vague to talk about God because Buddhism in general does not talk about the existence of God in its doctrine. The distinction between masculine and feminine transcendental qualities is only found in Father Tantra and Mother Tantra as explained earlier, while the middle way is Non-Dualism Tantra. Complementing what was briefly explained in the introduction, in Tantric Hinduism, God is referred to as *Brahman*. In the Vedic tradition, it is explained that *Brahman* is the purest element of God, the term can also be translated as "divine power". *Brahman* basically has no form, the state of formless *Brahman* is also known as *Para-Brahman*, which is an ontological state of

Brahman realized without *prakriti* (attributes). No attributes means no form, no image, and no nature. People who are familiar with Abrahamic religions and Western philosophical traditions will certainly be confused by this realization of God without attributes in *Para-Brahman*, because what is the difference between no attributes and non-substantive attributes? That is the fundamental question. There is a difficulty when the words *Brahman* and *Para-Brahman* are translated into English, because there is no equivalent. In English, the word "being" can be equated with the word "present" and the opposite of these two words is nothing and absence. If these words are used in a particular way, then none of them can qualitatively be attached to the words *Brahman* and *Para-Brahman*, because ontologically the word *Brahman* itself qualitatively includes all existing qualities or vice versa does not include any quality (Woodroffe, 2008: 5-6).

It can be said that the most basic ontological status of this *Brahman* and *Para-Brahman* can be described as "state in nothingness" or "nothingness in state". He (God) exists but cannot be conceptualized, and He is not conceptualized but exists. By analogy, the existence of *Brahman* or *Para-Brahman* is similar to air or wind, which cannot be seen, is intangible, and odorless, but exists and can be felt. Basically, *Para-Brahman* is the *nirguna* or *niskala* aspect of *Brahman*, so the word *Para-Brahman* is also often referred to as *Nirguna Brahman*, which means more or less the same thing, namely God without attributes or God without any qualities, in other words, in this *Para-Brahman* phase God will not be achieved by human reason and perception. In religious literature, the word *Brahman* or *Para-Brahman* is usually rarely used, the word that is often used to designate it is usually the word *Tat* or *That*, sometimes also said as *Tat Sat*. Although it has no qualities or attributes, *Para-Brahman* or pure *Brahman* has a position as a subject or potential, which in turn in the Vedic theory of emanation is placed as the source of all existing forms of god (Woodroffe, 2008: 6).

The concept of God in Hinduism does not stop at the or *niskala* aspect, so *Para-Brahman* or

Nirguna Brahman is not the only explanation of God in Hinduism. It can be said that the *nirguna* or *niskala* aspect is only the initial phase for other forms of divinity. Unlike other religious traditions that usually have only one single conception of God, Hinduism has several forms or conceptions of divinity. From this fact, it can be understood that the concept of divinity in Hinduism is essentially dynamic and not static. The implication of this is that each sect in Hinduism has a different conception and view of God from one and another. Before entering into these particular conceptions of God in Hinduism, especially in Tantrism, it would be nice to first understand another phase of *Brahman* or the advanced phase of *Brahman*, namely *Saguna Brahman*, which is also referred to as the *saguna* or *sakala* aspect of *Brahman*. In this phase *Brahman* is already attached to certain attributes or qualities, in other words *Brahman*, which is none other than God, has properties that can be understood by human perception and rationality (Mumford, 1988: 6). In the Brahmanic tradition, there is a theory that is so important in relation to the discussion of the ontological status of *Brahman* or God in this *sakala* or *Saguna Brahman* phase, the theory is known as the theory of emanation. In the Western philosophical tradition, the theory of emanation is associated with a neo-Platonist figure, namely Plotinus. Plotinus held that emanation is a theory that explains that everything is created from matter emitted by God. This theory is illustrated to work like a beam of light emanating from a light source, where the light source is identified as God (Blackburn, 2013: 271-272).

The concept of emanation in Hinduism, which has its roots in the Brahmanic tradition, is more or less the same. *Saguna Brahman* or God with attributes (*prakriti*) is a state where God is bound by certain properties which also implies certain divine forms. *Brahman* that has manifested in certain properties and forms is actually not the full *Brahman*, it can be said that the form has become a partition of *Brahman*, which is known as *atman*. Animals, humans, and all entities that are emanations of *Brahman* have *atman*. Like the beings who are at a lower level, God or in this context is *Saguna Brahman* also has an *atman*,

it's just that the nature is different from the nature of the *atman* in humans and animals. *Atman* in the form of Gods or *Saguna Brahman* still carries the true nature of *Brahman* including supernatural qualities or supernatural powers, while naturally not in the *atman* in humans and animals. Basically, the quality of entities in Hinduism is gradual, the higher the quality goes up and the lower the quality goes down. In short, if *Brahman (Para-Brahman)* is described as the highest peak, with perfect (unimaginable) quality, then one level below it there is *Saguna Brahman* or God's creature who has a partial quality of *Brahman (Para-Brahman)* but that quality is still supreme or supernatural, one level below that there are humans who still inherit the potential wisdom of *Saguna Brahman* and *Brahman (Para-Brahman)* but naturally do not inherit their supernatural abilities. As for animals below humans, they naturally lack the wisdom and supernatural qualities of *Para-Brahman*, *Saguna Brahman*, and humans. In this case, it becomes clear that the lower one goes, the good qualities gradually diminish (Zimmer, 1953: 242).

It has been briefly explained above that in Hinduism there is an emanative form in God that makes it possible for God to take on certain forms and shapes according to the nature of what it represents. This emanative form also exists in Tantra or Tantrism. God in Tantra or Tantrism is also described in certain qualities or forms. Unlike major schools such as Shaivism and Vaisnava that make the *Mahadeva* figures (Shiva and Vishnu) the center of their teachings and worship, Tantrism makes the *Mahadeva's* spouse the center of their teachings and worship. The couple is referred to as *Shakti*. Hence Tantra or Tantrism is also often referred to as Shaktism. Tantrism places the feminine form of *Shakti* in a special way, as a form that complements *Mahadeva*, Tantra views *Shakti* as a form whose role is more than *Mahadeva* itself. Before entering into an explanation of why the figure of *Shakti* is important in Tantric teachings, it would be nice to first understand the reason why *Brahman* or God also takes a female form or a feminine form (Woodroffe, 2008: 4-5).

In Hindu cosmology views that this reality is essentially born from the meeting of opposites, everything that exists in this reality is ontologically a pair of opposites, Heaven is opposite to Earth, noon is opposite to night, and male is opposite to female. In the divine reality of Tantric teachings, these opposites but also pairs, are referred to as Shiva and *Shakti*. Shiva or generally referred to as *Mahadeva*, symbolizes the masculine nature that is identical to men, while *Shakti*, which is Shiva's partner, symbolizes the feminine nature that is identical to women. These two opposing aspects must be present, if one is missing then the order of the cosmos will be chaotic and worse the cosmos will experience stagnation or even worse, the cosmos will experience extinction (Woodroffe, 2008: 5).

In general, Tantrism does place *Shakti* or the feminine form of God (Goddess) in a very special light, but that does not mean that Shiva as the counterpart to *Shakti* becomes unimportant. Shiva must remain because the two are a pair that can never be separated. Both functionally exist to complement each other. That is because each lacks the opposite element present in their partner. Therefore, in addition to the feminine God element, another subject of concern for Tantric teachings is about the union of *Shakti* who is the feminine form of God with Shiva as her partner. The union is absolute and must occur, therefore the aspect of Shiva also becomes important because it is impossible for the union to be realized if the material aspect of the connection is not there (Feuerstein, 1998: 77-79). The meditative aspect of Tantrism basically requires the realization of awareness, this awareness is symbolized as Shiva. But in the process, awareness cannot be achieved without energy, this energy is symbolized as *Shakti*. Therefore the Shiva aspect must remain because if the Shiva aspect is lost then *Shakti* will lose its meaning, and for Shiva itself the *Shakti* aspect must remain because if *Shakti* disappears then Shiva will never reach enlightenment or his highest consciousness. The union of the two opposing aspects of divinity, which in this context is referred to as Shiva (masculine) and *Shakti* (feminine) is the essence of the depiction

of the nature of God who creates, without the meeting of these two aspects the world would never be born. In Tantric teachings, the meeting is symbolized as a sexual meeting, therefore Tantrism fundamentally places sexuality as a sacred spiritual practice. The sacred meeting that combines the two divine elements, namely the masculine element and the feminine element, is symbolized as a God with two qualities or two attributes referred to as Ardhanarisvara, which is a half-male and female God figure, which is also symbolized as a state where perfect awareness has been fully achieved, which in one of the Hindu terminologies is known as *parasamvid* (Feuerstein, 1998: 78-79).

From the above, it can be understood that God in the view of Tantrism or Tantric teachings is always related to certain characteristics and forms, and in the context of Tantrism, the main dominant characteristics and forms are feminine characteristics and forms. Although this feminine nature and form is more prominent, the opposite nature and form, namely the masculine nature and form, remains important. From the above it can also be understood that the union of *Shakti* as the embodiment of God's feminine nature and Shiva as the embodiment of God's masculine nature is important in the teaching system of Tantric philosophy, because the union is ontologically symbolic of the union of all opposing aspects in this entire reality, which is the condition for the birth and development of the world. In other words, God at this point is understood dualistically. The big question remains, why does this feminine aspect or image of God remain important in Tantra or Tantrism? What exactly is the deepest meaning of *Shakti* as a feminine form of God? In the next paragraph, we will specifically explain the reason why *Shakti* or the feminine aspect of God is important.

More deeper, there is a tendency for Tantric elements to appear more often in Shaivism and Vaishnavism, but rarely in the core teaching of Brahmanism, which places God the Creator as its central figure. This is not without reason, because in principle *Shakti* and Brahma are functionally the same, even the meeting between *Shakti* and Shiva will result in the birth of the

World. Brahma as the God of Creation is naturally in charge of all matters of creation. Therefore, it can be understood that *Shakti* herself is Brahma itself in a certain sense, the difference is only a matter of terms and conditions. On the one hand, *Shakti* requires certain conditions to creating, while on the other hand Brahma does not require certain conditions and conditions to creating. In the Brahmanic tradition, *Brahman* is the infinite creator, while *Shakti* is the root of all that is finite. Although slightly different, they are both creators. For the gods that come under Brahma, nothing is born or appears by itself, they are born from the medium that causes it, and that is *Shakti*. The gods are *Brahman* with certain limits of quality, in other words they are *Saguna Brahman*. In Tantrism, *Shakti* is the root of all limited existence, since the gods have limited qualities, therefore it is certain that they must be born from *Shakti*. Although on the one hand, *Shakti* has characteristics that can be categorized as *Saguna Brahman*, but in its function as the mother of the gods, *Shakti* has the same position as *Para-Brahman* or *Nirguna Brahman*. It is this function that makes the *Tantrikas* or Tantric practitioners so highly respect *Shakti* who is almost equal in nature to *Brahman* and Brahma (Evola, 1992: 21).

The whole explanation above can be understood that in general Hinduism provides categorization regarding the description or ontological status of God. The category of the description of divinity is divided into two. God without certain attributes or qualities is referred to as *Para-Brahman*, *Nirguna Brahman*, or *Niskala Brahman*. While God with certain qualities and attributes is referred to as *Saguna Brahman* or *Sakala Brahman*. Broadly speaking, *Para-Brahman* or *Nirguna Brahman* is God who overcomes all images and conceptions that can be created by humans, the nature of *Para-Brahman* is absolutely transcendent. On the other hand, *Saguna Brahman* can be said to be a condition in which God is bound by certain qualities and forms, the nature of *Saguna Brahman* can be immanent, because in this condition God can manifest himself in the world that humans can sense. From the description

above, it can also be concluded that Tantrism conceptualizes God dualistically as something that contradicts each other. The opposition in the form of divinity is a symbol of reality which is structurally built of conflicting elements either substantially or essentially. In simplifying the symbolization of these conflicting qualities, Tantrism reduces them to the masculine nature represented by Shiva and the feminine nature represented by *Shakti*.

Although built on opposition, the theological concept in Tantra or Tantrism, still gives specialty to the feminine element or in this context to *Shakti*. This is not without reason, it is based on the *Tantrikas* own view that *Shakti* is functionally similar and even almost identical to Brahma, which is the highest spiritual entity in the Brahmanic tradition that places *Brahman* and Brahma as the center of worship. The similarity referred to by the *Tantrikas* lies in the function of creation, where the *Tantrikas* himself believes that *Shakti* is the root of all finite things and the mother of the gods. In the Brahmanic tradition there is Brahma the infinite creator, in the Tantric tradition there is *Shakti* who creates finite entities. Back to the contradiction, that is the core doctrine of Tantric philosophy. If examined more carefully, this contradiction that is the foundation for God could have ethical consequences and implications. The unification of the two contradictory elements in the Tantric teachings can imply that there can never be moral judgment if one aspect of judgment is missing. From this a hypothesis can be drawn that there can be no goodness if the opposite, namely badness disappears or is deliberately omitted, in other words, badness must remain as a measuring tool for goodness, and vice versa, goodness must remain as a measuring tool for badness. This ethical implication is still a hypothesis, it still needs to be tested and the ethical school used to test the hypothesis must be raised and explained first. Therefore, further exploration of the *Calon Arang Manuscripts* and metaethical identification in testing the hypothesis needs to be carried out.

The Ontological Status of God in *Calon Arang Manuscripts*

The *Calon Arang Manuscripts* is a story, chronicle or prose text that was allegedly born at the end of the Majapahit Empire. The author of this text has never been identified by name and the exact date it was written. Broadly speaking, the story is based on the philological research of Poerbatjaraka. The *Calon Arang Manuscript* published by Poerbatjaraka is based on several ancient manuscripts that he researched. These include manuscripts coded LOr 4562, LOr 5279, and LOr 5387. These three manuscripts formed the basis of the *Calon Arang* story published by Poerbatjaraka. However, the first manuscript, LOr 4562, according to Poerbatjaraka, contained a convoluted word structure, so he focused more on the two later manuscripts, LOr 5279 and LOr 5387. After being translated and officially published by Poerbatjaraka under the name *Calon Arang*, the manuscript then became the main text that became a reference for further research, such as by C. Hooykaas and J. Gonda. In addition to being a reference for scientific research, the *Calon Arang* manuscript, which was the work of Poerbatjaraka, also inspired Pramoedya Ananta Toer to compose his novel entitled *Cerita Calon Arang*, which was first published in 1954 (Kurniawan, 2020: 1954).

As one of the religious texts of the cultural heritage of the Majapahit Empire era, of course the *Calon Arang Manuscripts* has a religious style that also originated in the Majapahit Empire era, where historically during the late Majapahit Empire, the religious styles that were very influential at that time were Hinduism and Buddhism. However, what is interesting about the age of this text is that its content does not only represent one tradition but two traditions at once, which in the era of the Majapahit Empire there was a fusion between two religious traditions, namely Hinduism, especially from the Shiva tradition and Buddhism, which was later understood as the *Siwa-Buddha* religious teachings. This teaching can be said to be a syncretic of Hinduism and Buddhism, in other words, the meeting point of the both religious tradition. It is known that the *Calon Arang Manuscripts* is indeed indicated as a story that preaches the teachings of *Siwa-Buddha*, because it is known that *Calon Arang* as the main

character in this story does represent the teachings of Shiva by making Durga an object of worship, while Mpu Baradah, who is the opposite character to Calon Arang, is known to be a figure who represents Buddhism, especially from the Mahayana (Tantrayana) tradition. Basically, Hinduism/Shivaism and Buddhism are two different teachings, but in Indonesia, especially during the Majapahit Empire, the both teachings can unite very well and complement each other. The unification of both different religious teachings is not without cause, the unification between the teachings of Shivaism and Buddhism occurs because of the intermediary or similarity that makes it united, in this context is the teaching of Tantra or Tantrism which is found both from the Hinduism and from the Buddhism (No Name, 1995: 1-71).

Another sources that can be used to understand this unification of Shivaism and Buddhism are a collection of religious texts that Delodpeken-Denpasar named *Jñānasiddhānta* and several texts written during the Majapahit era such as *Kuñjarakarna* and *Arjunavijaya*. The *Jñānasiddhānta* text explicitly shows the blending of teachings and concepts from Hinduism and Buddhism. The blending is not aimed at the forms that are indicated to be different, but rather at the blending of the Supreme principle with all its manifestations. In Chapters III, V, VI and XXV found that the five *Tathāgatas* in Buddhism are equated with the five manifestations of Shiva and this is also found in *Arjunavijaya*. In the *Kuñjarakarna* text there is a quote that clearly shows the unity between Shiva and Buddha. The quote when translated reads (Soebadio, 1985: 50-51):

"We are Shiva, We are Buddha, simply means that the Supreme Principle equates itself in both Shiva and Buddha."

This quote is in line with the fact that King Keṛtanagara of the Singasari Empire was buried under the name *Sivabuddha*. In the hierarchical structure of ancient Javanese society, the king was regarded as the highest principle within his state, and thus logically deserved to be equated as the highest principle. It makes sense, then, that the name was given because of the unification of principles between Shivaism and Buddhism that

had occurred since that time (Soebadio, 1985: 51).

Back to the *Calon Arang Manuscripts* which is the object of material in this study. As one of the ancient Javanese texts with a strong *Siwa-Buddha* and Tantric element, it is natural that the story will touch on elements or discussions about the Supreme Principle or in language that is more easily understood as God. As is also implied in the texts of *Jñānasiddhānta*, *Arjunavijaya*, and *Kuñjarakarna*. However, it becomes a challenge when trying to inventory the divine values of a story text, as the researcher must carefully scrutinize terms or diction that may implicitly relate to the Supreme Principle or God ontologically. There are several conversations and sequels in the *Calon Arang Manuscripts* that indicate the image of God in the story, namely (No Name, 1995: 10):

"Ratna Manggali and her mother Ki Rangda are isolated, and they're the only two of them are Buddhists in the neighborhood. Not only do they have different religions, but the people there do not like Ki Rangda's appearance, who is always suspicious and hostile. Indeed, since the death of her husband, who died of black magic, Ki Rangda has been pursuing heresy to *Hyang Bhagavati*, the Goddess Durga, the Goddess of Misguidance. There was a grudge bubbling up inside her chest. She does not know who to take it out on because her husband's killer has never been traced."

In that quotes, the name of Durga is mentioned, which is one of the manifestations of *Shakti* Shiva as a Goddess with negative connotations. As explained in the teachings of Tantrism, this implies that Shiva as the positive aspect of God is depicted in a pair with the opposite aspect, namely the negative aspect, which in this case takes the form of Durga or *Hyang Bhagavati*, which is indeed a symbol of the Goddess of misguidance. In other sources it is even mentioned that Durga is the Goddess of Disease and the Goddess of Black Magic. At this point, *Brahman*, which is the cosmic aspect of various things that exist, can in fact manifest itself in a

negative form, in other words *Brahman* as the source of natural laws, concepts, morals, and various existing entities also has various qualities that also exist in reality, in this case the quality of bad nature. Another interesting point from the above quote is that Ki Rangda or Calon Arang who serves Durga turns out to be Buddhist, so this is a sign that Calon Arang may indeed have syncretized between Hinduism in this context Shivaism (because he worships *Shakti* Shiva) and Buddhism. So it becomes clear that in addition to the Tantric element, *Calon Arang Manuscripts* is also *Siwa-Buddha* in character. In the *Calon Arang Manuscripts*, the figure of Brahman or God also appears in a positive form when King Airlangga is holding the *Panca Wali Kerasa* Ceremony, where the ceremony is carried out together with all the people of Daha. During the ceremony King Airlangga shouted in front of a burning fire and incense fragrance, the King prayed that all misfortunes, diseases, and plagues in his country could be completely eliminated. After the prayer was uttered, Shiva or *Hyang Shiva* appeared in the center of the ceremonial fire. In the *Calon Arang Manuscripts*, Shiva gently said to King Airlangga (No Name, 1995: 36-37):

"The plague in the village was spread by Calon Arang or Ki Rangda, the widow of Jirah. The widow cannot be defeated by anyone except by the High Priest Mpu Baradah."

The description above gives a hint that even Shiva is a positive manifestation of Brahman. As explained in Tantrism, *Brahman* in a certain form is known as *Saguna Brahman*, which actually still has limitations. In Tantrism, it is explained that positive elements exist to complement negative elements, and vice versa, negative elements exist to complement positive elements. These elements exist to complement each other and not to eliminate each other. That is why in the *Calon Arang Manuscripts*, Shiva is only instructed King Airlangga to meet Mpu Baradah if he wanted to solve the plague, because Shiva considered that Mpu Baradah had enough wisdom to awaken Calon Arang. From a Tantrism point of view, this implies that the appearance of Shiva in the *Calon Arang*

Manuscripts above signals that in any aspect of life the aspects of Shiva (good/positive) and *Shakti* (bad/negative) will both remain and cannot be eliminated or destroyed, the only thing that can be done is to reduce or increase their tendency and intensity. Tantrism believes this reality is formed or created based on opposing elements. In other words, Shiva and *Shakti* will always exist together as well as good and bad as the ethical implications of God's existence in the form of Shiva and *Shakti* will also always exist together in the reality of human life.

The Natural Determinism Review of God's Ontological Status in Tantric Teachings based on *Calon Arang Manuscripts*

Based on the above explanation, it is found that *Calon Arang Manuscripts* places God in a dualistic manner. This dualistic position is based on the view that God is depicted in opposing but complementary traits. If explained in human reality, God is depicted in a masculine nature identical to Shiva and a feminine nature identical to *Shakti*. This masculine and feminine nature of God is an image of a reality that is always moving to create. Tantra considers that creation moves and proceeds on two aspects or traits, which in this context are the masculine aspect or trait synonymous with men and the feminine aspect or trait synonymous with women. This aspect of creation from opposing elements can also be understood as the cosmological dimension on which the process of creation is based (Woodroffe, 2008: 4).

This ontological view also has implications for the ethical consequences that can arise in human reality. As far as is known, the assessment of human morality is basically based on two categories, namely good and bad moral judgments. There is no other standard that can be given to a moral action, even if it is possible for there to be another standard then the assessment is free from these two categories, namely the category of good moral judgment and bad judgment. The situation where no moral standards are given is often understood as ethical nihilism (Mangunhardjana, 1997: 162-165).

As has been explained, Tantrism places God or *Brahman* as a quality that accompanies the universe, thus God and the universe are two

identical things. If the quality of God is described as dualistic (Shiva-*Shakti*), then the same thing applies to the reality of the universe. This has metaethical implications for human morality. If the structure of all reality is based on the conflict of two opposing elements, then human morality is also based on these two principles. Therefore, it is fundamentally impossible for morality to be built from just one moral basis, in other words human morality must be based on a binary dualism between good and bad, where these two values can never be eliminated from each other. From the explanation above, the metaethical school that can be used to analyze the metaethical implications of God's ontological status in the Tantric teachings above is natural determinism or could also be said to be "ethical naturalism". This is based on the tendency of Tantric teachings to equate the attributes of God that exist in reality with the attributes of the universe. Natural determinism itself holds the view that the moral laws that exist in human reality are based on the laws that apply in the reality of the universe. Because the implications of God's ontological status in Tantric teachings relate to nature and are analyzed here using natural determinism, the moral aspects in Tantric teachings of course also have a dilemmatic dimension as found in natural determinism. In determinism, there is a dilemma which explains that humans as metaethical moral agents can never be truly responsible for their actions. This is because reality itself has a certain quality, and this quality absolutely influences the moral judgments that humans may make (Blackburn, 2013: 237-244). If analyzed from the perspective of ethical determinism, then the metaethical implications of God's ontological status in Tantric teachings which are identified with the nature of the reality will of course also be bound by the dilemmatic laws which are also found in the discourse of natural determinism or ethical naturalism, namely that an objective moral justification that seeks to demonstrate just one particular type of moral view is impossible to create. This is because there is a dualistic view that covers all existing reality, including moral reality. By saying that there is a single fundamental moral value, this reality means

violating the dualistic rules that are the fundamental doctrine of Tantra teaching itself.

Analysis of the dilemma of natural determinism really appears in *Calon Arang Manuscripts* because it is known that the appearance of the Durga in the story is proof that God can appear in an evil figure. In Tantrism, Shakti is the manifestation of *Brahman* in negative nature. Durga in the *Calon Arang Manuscripts* has a negative connotation, because in the text it is said that Durga is the Goddess of Misguidance. This negative meaning in the image of God can give the implication that God has bad qualities, just as reality also has bad qualities or values. Thus, metaethically, God's ontological status can have the implication that God is also the source of bad moral values (No Name, 1995: 10).

In the *Calon Arang Manuscripts*, an image of God or *Brahman* appears in a positive quality and form, this form is Lord Shiva. God in the form of Shiva is always depicted as a gentle and wise figure. And this figure is the opposite of her *Shakti*, namely the evil and angry Durga. Metaethically, this indicates that God is the source of good morality. From the two quotes above, we get an understanding that God metaethically contains good moral value and bad moral value, where these two moral value are implications of God's ontological status which fundamentally consists of two opposing elements (No Name, 1995: 36-37).

The teachings of Tantra, which are inventoried from *Calon Arang Manuscripts*, metaethically agree and disagree, will also fall into the dilemma of determinism which will always be trapped in determining with certainty a certain quality, because like the union between Shiva and *Shakti*, they will never be eliminated from each other. Likewise with morality, at any given time the moral judgment that a person can make may differ depending on space, time and the natural factors that are the benchmark. Just as natural laws can occur and occur randomly, the application of moral teachings in Tantra teachings can also change as the natural laws themselves shift and change. The danger that can certainly also occur in this metaethical assessment of the implications of God's ontological status is that Tantrism will be trapped

in ethical relativism and ethical nihilism if the deadlock in assessing moral objectivity are continues (Mangunhardjana, 1997: 41-43).

IV. CONCLUSION

The results of this research answer all the questions that are the main problems in the problem formulation. The main questions include, what is Tantra teaching and how does *Calon Arang Manuscripts* reflect it ethically. This main question has been answered in full. It has been explained that the Tantra teachings that developed in the Hinduism tradition represent God in the figures of Shiva and *Shakti*, whereas in Buddhism they represent the Father Tantra and the Mother Tantra, which are opposites to each other but become one unity which is the basis for all existing cosmic reality. This dualistic status of God has metaethical implications for natural determinism. This school holds the view that basically the moral decisions that humans can or may make are influenced by factors that have a strong influence in nature. Therefore, this research also finds that the ontological status of God discussed in this research has significant metaethical implications for the choices humans can make. In the metaethical analysis that has been carried out, an answer is obtained that in a natural deterministic way, humans will never be able to separate their morality from bad moral choices, which humans have always avoided. This is because morality in Tantric teachings is an implication of God's ontological status in the form of a binary option, both of which can never be completely eliminated in reality. Goodness must remain, and cannot possibly completely disappear from the moral choices created by humans, because it is a benchmark for badness, and vice versa, badness cannot be completely eliminated and avoided because it is a benchmark for goodness. This research also concludes that in the end Tantrism will not be able to escape the dilemma of natural determinism because in the end Tantrism will also be trapped by a moral choice bias because the measurements for good and evil cannot really be concluded.

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