



DIGITAL COMIC CHRONICLE OF CALONARANG BALADEVA BY TANTRAZ COMICS BALI

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Abstract:

Purpose: This digital comic of Trantraz Comic Studio is attractively packaged, displaying visuals different from other comics in Indonesia and able to provide new nuances in the story's packaging. The visual appearance is more contemporary and modern. Digital comics are digitally based on their delivery to readers. They are paperless in digital form, borderless because they are not limited in size or format and timeless because of their durability across time, which may not be possible in paper media. This research aims to explain and describe the meaning and ideology contained in digital comics by Tantraz Comics Bali.

Research methods: An interpretative qualitative method is used in this research, emphasizing the disclosure of process and meaning in order to be able to capture a variety of qualitative information with descriptive clarity for a comprehensive conclusion in an interpretative manner.

Findings: Comics have forms and types of stories and elements in comics in detail. Types of comics are educational comics, promotional comics, puppet comics and martial arts comics. In comics, there are themes, narratives, illustrations and character designs made by the demands of the story that reflect the nature and personality of the character.

Implications: The ability to perform a work of art greatly influences the ability to digest and understand beauty.

Keywords: ideology, meaning, digital comics, Tantraz Comic

INTRODUCTION

Comics are a medium used to express ideas with images often combined with text or other visual information. The history of comics in Indonesia can be traced back to prehistoric times, which can be seen in religious monuments made of stone. The stories are in relief images on temples in Java and Bali that tell stories from the world of Mahabharata and Ramayana puppets. Borobudur Temple also has reliefs that tell the story of Siddhartha's birth. According to the Borobudur Conservation Center records, there are 1,460 story relief panels in the Borobudur Temple building, arranged in 11 rows around the temple building, and 1,212 decorative relief panels. The heritage in the form of relief images can also be seen in lontar images, which are now often called comics because the images are made chronologically, telling stories and stories about life advice sourced from Hindu or Buddhist teachings that developed when the lontar was made. According to Boneff [1], there are several types of comics, including wayang, silat, and humor. Wayang comics are often called illustrated classic stories because classic wayang repertoires inspire these repertoires.



The digital comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva is a comic by the nation's children that has been able to penetrate the international market share; even this comic is better known abroad than in Bali. This comic is produced by Tantraz Comics Bali, led by Mr. Ary Wicahyana. This comic has educational elements that can provide more insight for readers. The digital comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva is unique because it takes a story set in 1016 in East Java with inserts of Kawi literary words. 2013, the first Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva comic was released in English. The launch was in collaboration with Kinokuniya and Periplus. Along the way, the comic was published until the third volume, and Tantraz Comics Bali became increasingly recognized. The comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva with the character Kebo Parang uses English. The use of English aims to show the ability of Indonesian children to be great and able to penetrate the international market. The comic by Tantraz Comics Bali that has been circulating is the Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva from episode 1 to episode 5, the first Indonesian digital literary comic to penetrate the world in a bilingual version, namely Indonesian and English.

The story idea presented in the digital comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva, in general, is based on a sequential order of images, prioritizing literary value but not reducing the meaning of the images shown, and the continuity of this comic is very clear. This digital comic takes the story idea from Calon Arang from Java, is packaged attractively, displays different visuals from other comics in Bali and Indonesia, and can provide a new nuance in the story packaging. The name of the Baladeva comic, different from the Calon Arang story, is interesting to study and has become a phenomenon among comic fans. If you look at the name Baladeva or Baladewa, he is Krishna's older brother because he was born as the son of Vasudeva and Devaki. However, because of his destiny not to die at the hands of Kamsa, he was born by Rohini due to a fetal transfer incident. Of course, it would be fascinating if the writer could find out what meaning is contained in the naming of this Baladewa comic, which is very closely related to the background theme of the story Calon Arang, which comes from East Java. At the same time, Baladewa is a story from India. This combination of names is exciting to study, so it will provide knowledge to understand the meaning and ideology behind the comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva. Apart from the above, in the Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva comic, some identities can be explored for more in-depth study, including color, illustrations, layout, text, and typography. The Baladewa comic's coloring technique from the first to the last episode always uses the same technique. Likewise, in terms of layout, trenches always appear in this comic.

Based on the attraction to comics and other comic objects, researchers try to explore the development of comics in Indonesia. Therefore, the development of comics by Tantraz Comic Bali will be analyzed through the success in creating digital comics, such as Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva. In this case, the object is the comic work of the first episode of the digital comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva entitled Way of The Tiger.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses interpretative qualitative research methods to emphasize the disclosure of process and meaning to capture various qualitative information with

descriptive clarity for interpretative overall conclusions. The research paradigm is a framework that explains how researchers view the facts of social life and how researchers treat science or theory. The research paradigm also explains how researchers understand a problem and research criteria as a basis for answering research problems [2].

The location of this research is in Denpasar. According to Djajasudarma [3], the research location is one of the characteristics or requirements of research, which can be done in the field, library, and anywhere. The location of this research was carried out flexibly according to the conditions and situation of the researcher. This research was conducted with the intermediary of computer and internet technology by taking or downloading Baladeva digital comics as the primary data source so that the place for data collection can be done anywhere. In addition, researchers also conducted research at the Tantraz Comic Bali studio in Denpasar, where this comic was produced.

The type of data can be divided into primary and secondary data. Primary data is data that the author directly collects from the first source; the data taken is qualitative data in the form of visual and audio data. The primary data source in this research is the digital comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva. While secondary data is data from sources that are not directly to researchers, secondary data is used in the form of interviews with practitioners engaged in digital comics, documents in the form of books, journals, articles, printed and online newspapers regarding digital comics, and everything that has relevance to the research topic.

FINDINGS

This research will discuss the meaning and ideology behind the digital comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva entitled Way of The Tiger. The goal is to discover the cultural reality's content behind it. The content in the digital comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva can be in ideology, interests, or others. In-depth research is needed to find out the ideology in the comic. This digital comic could contain local, global, and even capitalist ideologies. The existence of Wayang Beber, wayang reliefs, Balinese Wayang Parwa, Javanese Wayang Purwa, and several other puppets reflects that the existence of puppets in Indonesia is the forerunner of a culture of bringing inanimate objects to life while having a soul [4].

The French philosopher Destutt de Tracy first introduced the word Ideology in 1796. This word comes from the French *idéologie*, a combination of two words: *idéo*, which refers to ideas, and *Logie*, which refers to logos, the Greek word for explaining logic and reason. Destutt de Tracy uses this word in its etymological sense as "science which includes the study of the origins and nature of ideas or ideas." In his book, Piliang [5], Ideology is defined as a system of beliefs and value systems and their representation in various media and social actions. Ideology is ideas that guide human behavior [6]. Antoine Destutt de Tracy coined the word Ideology in the late 18th century to define the "science of ideas. The word Ideology etymologically comes from Greek which consists of the words *idea* and *logia*. The *idea* comes from *idein*, which means to see. The *idea* in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary means "something existing in mind as the result of the

formulation of an opinion, a plan or the like" (something that exists in mind as a result of the formulation of a thought or plan). Meanwhile, logic comes from the word *logos*, which means word. This word comes from *legein* which means to speak, *logia* means science. In general, the definition of Ideology is a systematic collection of ideas, ideals, views, or ideas in the form of concepts that can be used as principles, opinions, goals, and directions for survival, including in the national life of a nation and state.

Raymond William in Eriyanto [7], classifies the use of ideology in three domains: First, a system of beliefs held by certain groups and classes. *Ideology* is an action-oriented belief system organized into a coherent system. Ideology is a collection of beliefs and disbeliefs (denials) expressed in sentences with the value of pleading and explanatory statements. In this context, it is divided into fundamental ideology and operative ideology. *Fundamental ideology* is the fundamental principle that believes in achieving the ultimate goal and grand vision.

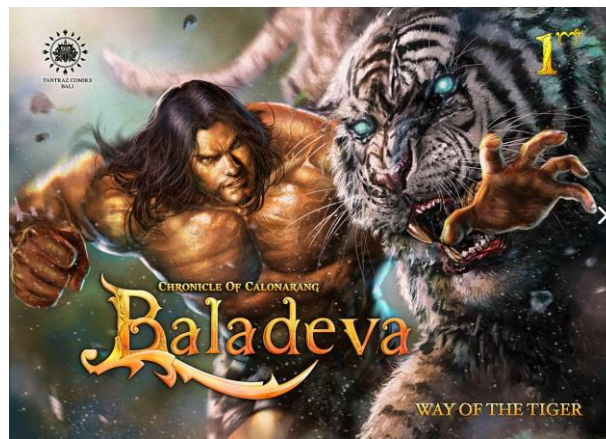


Figure 1. The cover of the comic Chronical Of Calonarang, Baladewa entitled Way Of The Tiger

Chronicle of Calonarang Baladewa is Indonesia's first digital literary comic that penetrated the world in a bilingual version, namely Indonesian and English. Literary works manifest the meaning that the author wants to convey through literary works. The meaning of a literary work will be successful if the meaning that the author wants to convey through his work can be understood and accepted correctly by the reader. To interpret this, the role of semiotics becomes very large. The things that are studied are signs that exist in language and culture. According to Barthes, structural narrative analysis methodologically comes from the early development of structural linguistics, as its final development is text semiology or semiotics. In this case, the researcher uses the theory of Roland Barthes, one of the structuralist thinkers who practised Saussure's linguistic and semiological models. Barthes' theory explains two levels of signification, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation is the explicit relationship between the sign and the reference or reality in the sign. At the same time, connotation is the aspect of meaning related to feelings and emotions as well as cultural values and ideology [8]. According to Lechte in Sobur [9], there are five codes that Barthes studied, namely: a) Hermeneutic codes or riddle codes revolve around the reader's hope of getting the "truth" to the questions raised in the text; b) Semic codes or connotative codes offer many facets. In the process of reading, the

reader develops the theme of a text; c) Symbolic codes are the most distinctive structural, post-structural aspect of fiction coding according to Barthes' concept; d) The proairetic code or action/behavior code, as the main equipment of texts that people read, means that all texts are narrative; e) The gnomic code or cultural code, is the text's reference to objects that are already known by the culture.

According to Barthes [10], connotation is synonymous with the operation of ideology, which he calls 'myth'. It reveals and justifies the dominant values prevailing in a particular period. Barthes compresses ideology with myth because, in both terms, the relationship between connotative signifier and connotative signified occurs in a motivated manner [11]. Ideology exists as long as culture exists. In the book, S/Z Barthes discusses connotation as an expression of culture. Culture manifests itself in texts. Thus, ideology manifests through various codes that seep into the text as essential signifiers, such as character, setting, point of view and others [9]. Barthes applied his semiology in almost every field, such as fashion, advertising, film, literature and photography. Barthes' semiology refers to Saussure by investigating the relationship between signifier and signified, not only there. Barthes also sees another aspect of signification, namely myth.

a) Comic Themes

The birth of the comic titled "Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva" was inspired by the Calonarang mythical legend that often appears in traditional stage arts and plays, fairy tale books and even novels written by Pramoedya Ananta Toer. The idea behind working on this comic is to retell the Calonarang story with a contemporary plot to make it easier for readers, both children and adults, to understand. The storyline is based on the 11th-century Javanese folk legend of King Airlangga of the Hindu-Buddhist Kingdom. As in the story, Calonarang is depicted as an evil figure who spreads disease throughout the kingdom.

The story of Calonarang, as retold in fairy tales, plays and novels, shows similarities with today's life about the struggle between good and evil in human life. It is an eternal battle that never ends and takes millions of human victims and civilization. However, the most valuable lesson in this story is chivalry and human sacrifice to bring goodness as the winner.

b) Narration

The Chronical Comic of Calonarang, Baladewa, entitled Way of The Tiger, tells the story of the actions of the martial arts figures of Java. The story tells of Kebo Parang's journey into the wilderness. Kebo Parang travelled to the forest to train himself to be strong. Kebo Parang is a dashing young man with extraordinary physical strength. He lives alone in the wilderness, accompanied by a White Tiger who has been his playmate and fighting partner since childhood. He always practised fighting with this White Tiger until he gained extraordinary strength. The story begins when the White Tiger suddenly disappears, and a few days later, Kebo Parang meets a mysterious woman named Nyai Kalini. Kebo Parang was curious; he tried to understand her appearance.

Nyai Kalini was a blacksmith and warrior who mastered a high level of *kanuragan*. Kebo Parang expressed his desire for Nyai Kalini to be his student and follower.

Nyai Kalini agreed to Kebo Parang's wish, and from then on, Nyai Kalini became Kebo Parang's teacher and guide who would lead him to an adventure to open his horizons of knowledge. Kebo Parang's adventure began when he was injured, holding back a meteor sent down by the Gods. Kebo Parang's prana was drained and required him to search for the eternal ice flower as a cure. Kebo Parang went on adventures exploring new and unfamiliar places, meeting true friends and formidable opponents. He discovers ancient schools, hermitages and kingdoms that eventually lead Kebo Parang into a political situation full of intrigue that he had never imagined.



c) Characters

This comic by Tantraz Comics Bali with the story of Calonarang is made using digital techniques equivalent to the best-selling animated images on the European market. Along the way, the books sold at a price of 300 thousand rupiah per book sold in thousands in Europe. Many comic fans ordered this book despite the cheap shipping costs. However, digital comic sales in Indonesia are indifferent to Europe. Public interest in Indonesia needs to be deeper towards digital comics. Domestically, this comic only sold around 200 books, unlike in Europe, where sales reached thousands of books. The developments in Indonesia made Ary feel sad and disappointed because it was difficult for his nation to appreciate the work of his people. One of the reasons the digital comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva does not sell as it does in Europe is because the comic book price is so high that comic fans in Indonesia do not buy it. Tantraz tries to educate through e-books (digital books) in Indonesian and English which can be downloaded to read anywhere. Tantraz Comics Bali is collaborating with Indosat and several banks to expand the reach of this digital comic. According to Ary Wicahyana, literary works are usually difficult to sell because young people in this era's culture of reading them is decreasing. To make this work popular and noticed by the target audience, Ary made a breakthrough by presenting a traditional story background with contemporary and modern visual characters. Tantraz Comics Bali tries to provide as interesting a touch of illustration as possible to arouse young people's interest in reading, then market it through e-books. They opened the door as wide as possible so that Tantraz could be used by Indonesians who create cultural literature and strive to educate society and the world together.

According to Ary Wicahyana, he is very proud to have brought literary comics from Indonesia to the world stage with digital technology. Tantraz Comics Bali wants to produce extraordinary comic works and become a milestone in Indonesia's comics world. Seven years ago, Ary dreamed and looked for ways in which foreign companies could utilise Indonesian talents and show the world that young talents could compete at the international level. This nation's talents must be valuable in their own country and become a source of pride. He also looked for these talents not only on the island of Bali. Ary gathered dozens of children from various regions in Indonesia at the Tantraz Comic Bali studio. They unite their vision and mission to work on stringing ideas and stories, picture by picture, and all processes are passed carefully and patiently to produce a spectacular work (Source: Interview on May 12, 2020).

The character's appearance will be seen from the needs of how the traits and personality are created per the story. Character depictions can be of various kinds; there are antagonists (evil characters) and protagonists (good characters). There are several types of characters based on their style: caricatural, fable, and accessible style. Meanwhile, anatomical construction describes the anatomy of the human body, which consists of head construction, body construction, following hands and feet, and the pose of the movement (Gunawan: 2013, 44-48). This view is beneficial to increase understanding of the various characters in digital comics. The relevance to the case to be raised is closely related, namely digital comics delivered through online media.

Table 1. Character Visualization and Connotation

Visualization	Connotations
 <p data-bbox="300 1048 472 1081">Kebo Parang</p> <p data-bbox="603 1048 743 1081">Nyai Kalini</p> <p data-bbox="855 1048 1011 1081">White Tiger</p>	<p data-bbox="1070 692 1362 792">The main character is a character who has a knightly spirit.</p>
 <p data-bbox="587 1435 703 1469">Enemies</p>	<p data-bbox="1070 1117 1302 1249">The supporting character as the perpetrator of the crime.</p>

d) Illustrations

Illustration elements are essential in visualizing characters and backgrounds that describe the space and time of events that occur in comics. By the comic theme set in the year 1016 in East Java, the character illustration is also related to the background illustration that describes the atmosphere of the space where the character is either set in the wilderness or the sky. Denotatively and connotatively, illustrations can build a complete narrative. This can be seen in the depiction of the wilderness, the atmosphere of battle and the environment where the character is located.

Table 2. Characters Illustration and Backgrounds

Illustrations	Visual	Denotations	Connotations
Character	Expressions	Face, body, clothes	Sad, angry, hateful, scary

			right, fancy
Backgrounds	Ambience, wilderness	Nature, property	Forest atmosphere, sky

This literary comic is a work by Tantraz that aims to stimulate the younger generation to become familiar with literature and history, such as royal stories. Ary hopes that this comic can attract the younger generation's interest to explore other histories. Under the leadership of Ary Wicahyana, Tantra Comic Bali was able to create characters so that all the scenes were close to nature with detailed colouring techniques. This comic was first published in 2013, and now volumes four and five are already in circulation. In 2016, Tantraz tried education through e-books (digital books) in Indonesian and English. In this e-book, Baladeva is not alone. Through his latest novel, Tantraz collaborates with several literary writers from Bali, such as Cok Sawitri. Tantraz is a digital book vessel for all Indonesian literary and cultural works, especially for those with difficulty printing and selling them. Cok Sawitri did not expect Tantraz to penetrate internationally through digital technology so well. He entrusts his latest novels, such as Karna, to digital printing with attractive visuals and detailed illustrations. One writer from Surabaya named Edwin Pudjiono, who joined Tantraz said that Tantraz Comics Bali is an incomparable literary forum. "Creative and innovative young people like this must be supported. They make sacrifices for the name of Indonesia to be respected by the world," said Edwin [12].

CONCLUSION

A work of art must attract visitors to stay for a long time watching and enjoying what is displayed on the screen, canvas or other media. The ability to display a work of art is greatly influenced by our ability to digest and understand beauty. It is one of the elements of beauty that must be considered in creating works of art, both visually and logically. The digital comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva can educate people about their life journey until they finally get what they want. This comic has visual power through the four elements mentioned, namely theme, narrative, illustrations and character traits that relate to the social values of society because it is based on the story of Calonarang, which occurred during the time of King Airlangga, the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom in East Java. The visual elements of the Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva comic can represent the characters involved in the event and the atmosphere that represents the event. In the long term, the Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva comic can be used as inspiration to create comics with other themes/story ideas so that the nation's young people will be interested in reading and studying history again. The ideology in the comic Chronicle of Calonarang Baladeva can contain local ideology. All elements in comics, including themes, narratives, illustrations and characters, contain local ideology but are packaged with a modern appearance to attract young people's interest in reading them.

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