

Islamic Religious Elements in Therianthropic Folklore and Their Potential for Animated Character Design

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ABSTRACT : Indonesia is a large nation that has a lot of cultural heritage from folklore with therianthropic characters that reflect the cultural characteristics of each region. This descriptive qualitative research focuses on examining the religious elements of the therianthropic characters in Indonesian folklore and their potential for designing animated characters. The object of study was selected using a purposive sampling technique from four folktales from four large islands in Indonesia as primary data, namely the legend of Lembu Sura (Gunung Kelud), Cindaku, Burung Arue and Talokot, and Siluman Ular. Secondary data was taken from related scientific publications. Content analysis is used to reveal the implied messages of religious elements contained in the four folktales. The results of the research show that: (1) The four therianthropic stories and characters are all based on religious stories and have the potential to be adapted into animated films. The therianthropic form and its superpower to incarnate or take permanent form is a symbol of religious elements and representation of people's belief in the power of God and supernatural powers; (2) The integration of Islamic religious elements in themes, characters, narratives, conflicts and resolution of folklore has transformed into a metamorphosis concept which has implications for people's understanding and participation in traditional to modern religious practices; (3) Therianthropic characters and religious elements in folklore have great potential to be explored in animated characters to respond to social changes and technological developments that have an impact on people's understanding of religion. The collaboration between therianthropic and Islamic religious elements is also very contributive in conveying story messages visually and spiritually, and has even become a very appropriate medium for promoting local cultural heritage on the international stage.

KEYWORDS : Islamic religious element; therianthropic, Indonesian culture; folklore; religion

I. INTRODUCTION

Every nation throughout the world has folklore that informs about their culture and characteristics, including the language they use, traditions, costumes, dance, music, as well as their moral values, ethics and local wisdom [1]. Likewise with the Indonesian people. Data from cultural statistics for 2021 shows that Indonesia has 944 folk tales consisting of 477 fairy tales, 372 legends and 95 myths [1]. These three categories are in accordance with the classification of folk prose stories by William R. Bascom (1965), they are: (1) myth, (2) legend, and (3) fairy tale [2].

In each folk tale there are artistic elements that characterize it, whether in form, nature or value. Each story also has traditional characteristics and traits [3], both in the presentation of the plot and the characters of the characters. Extraordinary (super) characters in folklore, although played by humans, are often assisted by magical creatures [2]. Humans with an therianthropic form with certain characteristics in their character, supernatural creatures and extraordinary powers are a special attraction for folklore [4].

One of the elements that builds folklore is the character inherent in the characters [5]. In general, the form of conveying the character, traits and behavior of these fictional characters can be direct in the depiction of their character in descriptions, tellings, or expositives, while the conveying of values is indirectly implied in the characters activities such as in dialogue, traits, behavior and his thoughts [6]. Religious and moral values are often attached to characters who have superpowers, so that the existence of these characters becomes central to the story. This character can take the form of a human, animal, demon, or even a supernatural creature related to the religion or community beliefs that underlie and shape the story.

This is in accordance with the three orientations of religious or belief systems, that is : (1) related to religious and religious beliefs or emotions, (2) related to human attitudes towards the supernatural, and (3) related to religious ceremonies. These three orientations of religious or belief systems are related to human attitudes towards the supernatural world and are reflected in many folk tales. Belief gives rise to imagination, and imagination gives rise to stories and characters. Because it is based on religion and belief, stories about these figures and characters shape culture [7].

Based on this reality, a research problem arises regarding how the potential for theanthropic characters in folklore with a religious background becomes a source of inspiration and potential for the development of animation. In this research, folk tales with therianthropic characters (a combination of humans and animals) and super characters are explored with a religious background and the beliefs surrounding them to reveal their potential to be used as religious animated characters.

A review of the characters of the therianthropic figures has been carried out by previous research. The article entitled *The Potential of Therianthropic Characters in Folk Stories for Animation* by Ranang Agung Sugihartono and Sigit Purnomo Adi in *Arts and Design Studies* volume 106 (2023) describes ten therianthropic characters in folk tales that have the potential to be used as animated characters. There are ten therianthropic characters who have a combination of human and animal forms [8]. The difference with this article is that this article focuses more on folklore based on the religious aspects behind it. Because it describes ten (10) therianthropic characters in folklore that have the potential to be used as animation, the article still has a common thread or continuity with this research.

Second, Indah Puspowati's 2012 research entitled *Javanese Religion in the Story of Seh Jangkung in the Folklore*, Column of Djaka Lodang magazine [*Religi Jawa dalam Cerita Seh Jangkung Rubrik Cerita Rakyat Majalah Djaka Lodang*] which describes the forms and techniques for conveying Javanese religion in folklore [9]. The difference with this research is that this research focuses on exploring the religious elements of the therianthropic characters and their potential in creating animated characters.

Third, the article entitled *Building an Indonesian Folk Story Animation Film* [*Membangun Film Animasi Cerita Rakyat Indonesia*] by Heri Setiawan which was published in the PROFETIK Communication Journal. This article presents a discourse on animated film production which is made easier by technological developments by utilizing Indonesian folklore [10]. From the literature review above, it can be said that this research is different from previous studies, because it focuses on theanthropic characters in folk tales with a religious background. This position has important value in efforts to extract reference sources for developing religious-based animated character designs.

Folklore and its religious and cultural values and norms can be disseminated using animation as a medium. This effort is made to find characteristics and uniqueness among various folk tales from other nations, so that when explored in animation, these characters will be able to compete globally. This is in line with the opinion that *"Only by grasping the spiritual connotation of folk culture, interpreting its soul and essence and giving it new vitality can we better spread the folk culture to the world in animation"* [11]. The importance of studying folklore characters to be developed into animation has also been conveyed by Nigerian researcher as follows: *"It was therefore concluded that for the Nigerian high school students, animation films derived from their cultural folklore could provide educational opportunities, serving an avenue for the formal propagation of cultural values and norms"* [12].

II. METHOD

Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this research describes the religious values contained in the therianthropic figures and characters in Indonesian folklore, with the object of study of folklore selected using purposive sampling techniques in four folktales from four large islands in Indonesia, they are *The Legend of the Lembu Sura* from Java, *Cindaku* from Sumatra, *Arue and Talokot Birds* from Kalimantan, and *Siluman Ular* from Sulawesi. The primary data is the folklore which has been published in the form of a book with an ISBN and the secondary data is extracted from scientific publications such as journal articles, manuscripts, and popular scientific articles from websites and mass media articles which discuss folklore and therianthropic.

Data was collected through a literature study of the folklore mentioned above, then analyzed using qualitative content analysis with the stages of preparing data, determining units of analysis, arranging categories and coding schemes, testing coding schemes on text examples, coding all texts, assess coding consistency, draw conclusions, and report findings [13]. The use of this analysis technique can reveal messages in folk tales, especially those related to the therianthropic characters and religious elements in the stories.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Synopsis of Indonesian Folk and Therianthropic Stories

Many folktales in various regions have therianthropic characters, it is the embodiment of forms between humans and animals that represent superpowers, which are believed by local people [14]. The four folktales that have therianthropic characters and will be analyzed in this research are *Legends of Lembu Sura*, *Cindaku*, *Arue and Talokot Birds*, and *Siluman Ular*. These four folktales have the same characteristics as follows: (1) they are both based on religious stories, (2) they come from different islands, (3) they have therianthropic characters, and (4) they have the potential to be adapted into works. others, including animated films. The legend of *Lembu Sura* comes from the island of Java, *Cindaku* from the island of Sumatra, *Siluman Ular* from the island of Sulawesi, and *Arue & Talokot* from the island of Kalimantan. The following is an overview of folklore and the therianthropic manifestation of each character:

1.1. Legend of the Lembu Sura (Mount Kelud)

The legend of Lembu Sura tells the origin of the formation of Mount Kelud, which is a volcano that is geographically located in three districts in East Java, namely Blitar, Kediri and Malang. Blitar has 6 sub-districts and 79 villages, while Kediri has 3 sub-districts and 19 villages located in the Mount Kelud disaster-prone area (BPS, 2014). This legend is very deeply rooted in the minds of the local people who were directly affected by the eruption. This legend has a main character named Lembu Sura who is phenomenal because of his form and supernatural powers. The figure of Lembu Sura is described as a mythological creature with a human body but the head of an ox (cow). The form and supernatural powers of Lembu Sura are described as follows: "*Rikala Raja arep mukul gong tanda penutupan sayembara wis mari, ujug-ujug teka sawijining pemuda rupane elek, siraha awujud lembu, pengin adu nasib, pemuda iku jenenge Lembu Sura* [When the King was about to hit the gong as a sign of the closing of the contest, suddenly a young man with an ox's head came to try his luck, this young man was named Lembu Sura]"

In the next text, it is described: "*Delek kasuyatan iku, Dewi Kilisuci cepet-cepet mblayu menyang istana karo nangis, ngkrasaake nasibe, amarga dhewekwe kudu duwe bojo Lembu Sura, wong sing elek lan duwe endas lembu* [Seeing this fact, Dewi Kilisuci immediately ran to the palace while crying, contemplating her fate, because she had to marry Lembu Sura, a young man with an ox's head]". Lembu Sura is depicted as a human with an ugly face and an ox's head, which is in sharp contrast to Dewi Kilisuci who was a king's daughter. In the next text, it is said that Lembu Sura was angry and uttered a "*sepatan*" (curse) and an expletive that read: "*Yoh, Kediri mbesuk bakal pethuk piwalesku sing makaping-kaping, yaiku Kediri bakal dadi kali, Blitar dadi latar, lan Tulungagung dadi kedung* [Alright, next Kediri will get double punishment from me. Kediri will become a river, Blitar will become a terrace, and Tulungagung will become a dam]" [15]. The curse was uttered by Lembu Sura when he was trapped in the crater well he dug, because it was covered by rocks at the will of Dewi Kilisuci, who he wanted to be his wife.

Javanese people believe in mountains as sacred places and are usually inhabited by spirits, ancestral spirits, or gods [16]. This legend confirms the awesomeness of Mount Kelud, which is known for its eruptions and the impact of their eruptions. Residents of Blitar, Kediri and Tulungagung still believe that Mount Kelud is the abode of the Lembu Sura buried by Dewi Kilisuci. Another story about Lembu Sura is told in another version of the folk tale with the titles *Dewi Kilisuci* (1999) [17].

1.2. Cindaku Myth

The island of Sumatra, especially around Mount Kerinci in West Sumatra, is a habitat for various flora and fauna, including the Sumatran striped tiger (*panthera tigris sumatrae*) [18]. In this area there is a community tradition called "tiger tradition", which is closely related to the Malay community group who inhabit the island of Sumatra [19][20], because there is the Cindaku myth, or the myth about tiger humans that believed by the community to be the guardian of the forest on Mount Kerinci. They are thought to have lived on earth, long ago [21][22].

As told by Harun Pasir in an article entitled Tiger Myths in the Oral Traditions of the Kerinci Community in Jambi, Sumatra [*Mitos Harimau dalam Tradisi Lisan Masyarakat Kerinci di Jambi Sumatera*], this myth about tigers tells the story of a human named Bujang Nunggal and a tiger princess named Pasemah, namely the daughter of a king who is the incarnation of a tiger, which was stabbed by Bujang Nunggal while farming in the forest with his wife [21]. Because Bujang Nunggal succeeded in treating Pasemah, he was made the tiger king's son-in-law and gave birth to a son from Pasemah. Once, Bujang Nunggal took his wife, who was the incarnation of the tiger, and her child to the foot of Mount Raya where his first wife was. However, on the way, Pasemah violated the taboo of the tiger king by drinking water directly with his mouth. Finally he returned to being a tiger.

The story continues when Bujang Nunggal's two sons with different mothers met and fought, until a peace agreement was made which became a kinship bond between humans and tigers, which until now are considered the ancestors of the Kerinci people [23]. Mystically, the Kerinci people believe that tigers have "earth ears" or know what is happening in human life, or what is often referred to as Cindaku [21].

Cindaku is believed to be the power possessed by someone with magical knowledge inherited from their ancestors. Not everyone in the Kerinci area is Cindaku. Only the descendants of Tingkas (children of Bujang Nunggal and Pasemah) have supernatural talents, are spiritual, and are able to absorb the knowledge given by Cindaku. Cindaku itself is a magical tiger which is thought to originate from the incarnation of the gods who inhabit the mountains in Sumatra. Some religions hold certain animals to be sacred, and some worship certain animals or make certain animals taboo for religious purposes [24] [25].

Cindaku is also called a human tiger or imitation tiger. "In the past, the land of Kerinci was inhabited by the Cindaku tribe or tiger people" [26]. This mythological creature has been a story passed down from generation to generation, even as far away as Malaysia, and is called a *harimau jading-jading* (imaginary tiger). Apart from the Cindaku, the Kerinci area is also known for another type of tiger, called the *sabek* (friend) tiger, which is considered not as special as the Cindaku.

The myth of Cindaku is known by the Minangkabau people who also respect tigers, and call them *datuak, inyiak, inyiak rimbo, or inyiak balang*. This myth became the inspiration for the martial arts school of tiger silek (silat) with the *kurambik* weapon, means a small knife similar to a tiger's claw [27]. Meanwhile, outside Sumatra, specifically in West Java, there are also known white tigers (*maung bodas*) which are associated with Prabu Siliwangi, who is said to have transformed into a white tiger at the end of his life [28].

Cindaku is described as a creature that can stand upright like a human and has a human body with a head like a tiger [29]. Cindaku does not have a curve on her upper lip which is located under her nose after changing her form into a human. Apart from that, he is also depicted carrying a machete tucked into his waist, which comes from his tail [24]. Related to this, during the colonial period, there was a book entitled *Malay Sketches* written by Sir Frank Athelstane Swettenham (1884) and translated by Zubaidah Ibrahim (2003) in the title *Concerning the Malay People* [*Perihal Orang Melayu*]. In the book it is said as follows: "*The people of a small country in Sumatra called the Kerinchi nation have the power to transform themselves into tigers*" [30].

1.3. The Folklore of the Arue and Talokot Bird

The folklore of the Arue and Talokot Bird originates from the Kanayatn Dayak Tribe, Kepayang Village, Mempawah Regency, West Kalimantan. The tale of the Aroe and the Talokot Bird tells the story of two young brothers who changed their body into birds because of disobedience to their parents [31]. The two brothers had angered their parents by neglecting to look after the drying rice. They were also punished to sleep outside the house and shiver in the cold because of it. However, because they were angry, their parents cursed their two children to become birds who were free to fly anywhere.

Instantly, their bodies shrank and became covered with feathers. They were very shocked and disturbed by the changes that occurred in their bodies. "*Wow... little brother, why have our bodies turned into birds and become feathered like this,*" said the older brother" [32]. Both of their bodies were covered in hair up to their heads, even though their heads were still human heads. Their parents were also surprised when they saw their two children, even though they could still recognize their faces [32]. "*I don't know Mum, Dad, we don't even know why our bodies are like this, maybe it's Mum and Dad's curse on our naughtiness.*" said the older brother. The term "curse" describes the extraordinary power of a mother's words. Moreover, when the older brother said the sentence again: "*Let it be, ma'am, everything has happened again. The curse can no longer be lifted.*" The curse began with the mother's words which were actually intended as punishment for the child who was disobedient. "We regret punishing you earlier. Our intention was to deter you both, but fate said otherwise," said the mother in a resigned tone. "*Let us be birds. I became the Talokot bird and my sister became the Arue bird,*" said the older brother [32]. This dialogue teaches about the importance of obeying parents, because in Dayak society the teaching applies that what parents say must always be obeyed by their children [33].

The older brother's dialogue with his younger sibling said: "I choose the bush as my place, while you who are younger would be better off living in the lower bushes" [32]. The term "forest" here indicates a special place in the beliefs of the Dayak people. In this case, folklore among the Dayak ethnic group says that the forest and its surroundings are seen as a symbol of mystical power. Regarding this, the Dayak tribe believes that the Marang forest is guarded by *Jubata* (God) [34]. They also firmly believe in myths, including the myth of Jubata as the guardian of the Marang forest.

The relationship between God, the forest, and humans in the folklore of the Arue and the Talokot Bird is in line with the Dayak philosophy which states "*Basengat ka`jubata*" which means that human life depends on the Almighty God [35]. The Dayak Kanayatn people also highly uphold their cultural values [33]. This is reflected in the Arue and Talokot folklore. Residents of Kepayang Village in Pontianak Regency still believe that the Arue bird and the Talokot bird are human incarnations [32].

1.4. Siluman Ular Myth

The myth of the Siluman Ular comes from a folk tale entitled *Princess Andi Tenripada* [*Puteri Andi Tenripada*] from South Sulawesi. Apart from Sulawesi, several regions in Indonesia also have folk tales of this type of Siluman Ular. In Kalimantan there is the Tangkalaluk snake, in East Nusa Tenggara there is the Giant White snake, and in Java there is the demon snake Nyi Blorong [36]. In Central Kalimantan there are Human Snakes and Seven-Headed Snakes, in Bengkulu there are Ndaung snakes, and in the Talaud islands there are demon snakes Sara'a Island.

This folklore from South Sulawesi tells the story of the life journey of a young man named La Upe, who leads by example to get a better life. During his travels, La Upe helped many creatures who were affected by disaster, such as helping an injured grandmother, saving a fish that was about to be eaten by a crocodile, helping a bird that was being tortured by a child, freeing a white monkey wrapped around a large snake, and defeating a snake demon named Petta Tenricaca E Gau' na, who for years has been influencing Princess Andi Tenripada with her stealth magic.

Princess Andi Tenripada herself is a terianthropic creature with the body of a snake but with a human head or a demon snake [37]. Finally, La Upe succeeded in conquering the snake demon that was influencing

Princess Andi Tenripada with a stick called La Mappatunru. He succeeded in freeing Princess Andi Tenripada from the influence of magic, married her, and became king.

In the story, Petta Tenricacca E Gau'na is referred to as a "strange creature" who is often asked for advice by Princess Andi Tenripada. The term "strange creature" in this mythical narrative is mentioned four times. For example: "After saying that, the strange creature disappeared." The term "stealth" for Petta Tenricacca is also narrated fifteen times, either as a magical demon, a strange demon, a cruel demon, or a snake demon [37]. To strengthen this demonic character, in the narrative and dialogue the term "snake scales" is also mentioned, such as: "Just tell him, ask him to bring you the body parts (scales) of Petta Tenricacca E Gau'na." Apart from that, the term "magic" is also used in narration and dialogue, for example: "I'm grateful that the princess has escaped the influence of magic. This stealthy act must be eradicated," said La Upe [37].

Apart from narrating the manifestation of a snake demon, this story is also equipped with illustrations of snakes with human bodies. His hands were human-like, he had a human head, and his ears were swooping upwards. The extraordinary magical powers possessed by the character Petta Tenricacca E Gau'na in this folk tale are in line with the beliefs of the Bugis tribe who consider the dragon snake to be a symbol of tremendous power [38]. In the cosmology and mythology concept of the Bugis tribe, every activity must receive the blessing and protection of the dragon snake. So, the dragon is considered by the Bugis tribe to be a god and is personified as the god *Boting Langi* [38], which means "upper world" or the highest level of this world which is believed to be the abode of Dewa Langi, or Dewata SeuwaE, or God the Almighty [39].

Table 1. Therianthropic figures and religious elements in folklore

No.	Folk Stories & Their Origins	Religious Elements	Therianthrop hic Figure	Therianthropic Embodiment			Super Power
				Head	Body	Foot	
1	Legend of Mount Kelud or Lembu Sura (Java)	The relationship between human attitudes and super powers outside themselves	Lembu Sura	Ox (cow)	Human	Human	Digging a volcanic crater & so on
2	Cindaku (Sumatra)	The relationship between human attitudes and superpowers outside themselves	Cindaku	Tiger	Human	Human	Change shape (incarnate) into a human tiger
3	Arue & Talokot Birds (Kalimantan)	The relationship between human attitudes and the supernatural power of the mother's curse (parents)	Arue & Talokot Birds	Human	Bird	Bird	Change shape into a bird
4	Siluman Ular (Sulawesi)	The relationship between human attitudes and forces beyond their abilities	La Upe & Petta Tenricacca E Gau'na	Human	Snake	Snake	In the form of a snake-man who has magic, hypnotic powers, and incarnates in a human body or transforms into a human

From the discussion in table 1 above, several points of findings regarding therianthropy can be formulated, they are: (1) The religious elements and beliefs contained in folklore are included in the category of human attitudes towards the power of God or supernatural powers outside themselves; (2) Aspects of the physical manifestation of therianthropic creatures in folklore can be categorized into two, namely: having human heads but animal bodies and legs; having the head of an animal but the body and legs of a human; and (3) Have super character and power to change shape (incarnate) or be permanent (fixed).

Based on the analysis of the four folk tales above, the manifestation of the therianthropic and religious elements in the characters was found as the physical form of the characters and their religious background were

described narratively. “As symbols, animals help us to understand important religious concepts such as purity, sacrifice, morality, and creation”[25].

2. Integration of Islamic Religious Elements in the Therianthrope Character of Four Indonesian Folk Tales

Archipelago folklore has long been an integral part of Indonesia’s cultural heritage, containing elements of magic, mythology and local wisdom [40]. It is known that Islamic religious elements greatly influence the therianthrope themes in Indonesian folklore with a deep spiritual dimension. Therianthropy in the context of Indonesian legends is the phenomenon of characters in folklore who take the form of or can be transformed into part human and part animal, or also become natural objects as a result of a curse received, due to agreements with supernatural beings, the effects of superpowers they have, or other magical powers [41][42]. This concept is often found in Indonesian legends which are rich in mystical stories.

The people of the archipelago have long accepted the values and teachings of the Islamic religion which shape their thought patterns and daily lives. Values such as justice, courage, loyalty and devotion are an integral part of culture and tradition which are reflected in various aspects of life [43], included in their folklore. In Indonesian legends, the therianthrope theme is closely related to Islamic religious elements, which have deep significance for the local community, making these stories have moral and spiritual messages that inspire and teach life values.

In the field of art and creativity, the therianthrope theme with Islamic religious elements also has a big influence on Javanese society. These stories are often adapted into traditional performing arts such as wayang kulit, wayang orang, or ludruk, and have become an inspiration for the creation of modern works of art such as films, literature and other fine arts [42]. The therianthrope integration of Indonesian legends with Islamic religious elements has formed an inseparable part of Indonesia’s cultural heritage. Through these stories, Islamic religious values are conveyed in an interesting, moving and inspiring way for the next generation [44].

2.1. Religious Elements for Animation Inspiration

The following are religious themes in folklore that can inspire animated characters from Indonesian archipelago figures:

2.1.1. Islamic Religious Elements in the Therianthrope Character of the Legend of Lembu Sura (Gunung Kelud)

The legend of Lembu Sura (Gunung Kelud) is a folk tale that is rich in elements of Islamic religion and Javanese mythology. Physical transformation and strength are one of the themes, where humans are transformed into natural objects as a result of actions or curses. As a legend, this story has moral values such as religious values and tolerance [18]. Although this legend has its roots in pre-Islamic Javanese culture, Islamic religious elements have seeped into the narrative along with the spread of Islam in the area around Mount Kelud [45][41]. Values such as loyalty, justice, and forgiveness are important in Islamic teachings, reflected in the characters and conflicts in this legend.

Lembu Sura is a legendary figure in ancient Javanese mythology who is the main character of the legend of Mount Kelud. The complete story comes from Javanese folklore which has been written in various forms, including poetry, fairy tales and wayang plays. Lembu Sura is said to be a half-human, half-ox who has super strength and also has a religious character. Therefore, he is considered a symbol of spiritual power by the Javanese people. The story is often considered an allegory or metaphor for human struggle in facing life’s trials and illustrates the concepts of justice, courage and wisdom. In Javanese shadow puppet stories, Lembu Sura is often depicted as a wise figure, full of courage, and fight against evil to protect truth and justice.

Some quotes from the Lembu Sura legend include: “Nothing is impossible for those who are brave and surrender to justice. True strength does not only lie in the physical, but also in spiritual strength and courage of the heart. In the darkness, truth is the light that guides our steps.” Complete references to the Lembu Sura story and the quotations above can be found in various sources, including books on Javanese mythology, folklore, and studies of Javanese culture, both in the form of live performances, recordings, and writings [46].

The legend of Mount Kelud illustrates the complex integration between elements of Javanese mythology and Islamic religious values. Through the therianthrope theme, this legend not only tells an interesting story, but also contains deep moral and spiritual messages for the Javanese Muslim community to this day. Thus, religious themes that might be explored in animated characters from the Lembu Sura folklore or the Legend of Mount Kelud are: (1). A symbol of the spiritual power of Javanese society; (2). Allegory and metaphor for human struggle in facing life's trials; and (3). The concept of justice, courage in fighting evil to protect truth and justice, and wisdom.

2.1.2. Islamic Religious Elements in the Therianthrope Character of the Cindaku Myth in Sumatra

The Cindaku myth is one of the folk tales of the Minangkabau people in West Sumatra which is rich in Islamic religious elements. This story tells of a person who experienced a transformation into a tiger after going on a long spiritual journey in the mystical forest on Mount Kerinci. A key aspect of the Cindaku myth is the transformation of the main character into a tiger. After undergoing a series of tests and facing various obstacles, he finally turned into a tiger as part of his spiritual journey. Although this myth maybe originates from pre-Islamic culture in Sumatra, elements of the Islamic religion have seeped into the narrative along with the spread of Islam in this region [47]. Values such as patience, courage, and piety are important in the teachings Islam is reflected in the characters and conflicts in this myth, which were later adopted by the Minangkabau people.

In the Cindaku myth there is a quote that reflects the transformation of the main character into a tiger as part of his spiritual journey. An example of a quote from this myth is: "With a firm heart and strong faith, Cindaku stepped into the dark and mysterious forest, ready to face her destined destiny"[48]. Cindaku's transformation into a tiger in this myth can be interpreted as a symbol of spiritual change and growth. In the context of Sumatran society with an Islamic religious background, this transformation represents the search for the meaning of life and devotion to God [49].

The Cindaku myth is an interesting example of the integration of Islamic religious elements in folklore in West Sumatra. Through the therianthrope theme, this myth not only tells an interesting story, but also contains deep moral and spiritual messages that are still relevant for today's Minangkabau muslim society. Thus, religious themes that might be explored in animated characters from the Cindaku folklore are: (1). A person's religious transformation after undertaking a spiritual journey; (2). The values of patience, courage, and piety; and (3). Spiritual growth from the search for the meaning of life and devotion to God.

2.1.3. Elements of Islamic Religion in the Therianthrope Character of Arue and Talokot in Kalimantan

The story Arue and Talokot Bird is an interesting example of Kalimantan's cultural heritage which is rich in Islamic religious elements. This story comes from the Dayak tribe in Kalimantan which tells the story of two brothers who experienced a transformation into birds, as a result of their actions and fate [50]. One of the key aspects of the story Arue and Talokot Birds is the second transformation this brother became a bird. Arue turns into an owl, while Talokot turns into a sparrow. This transformation becomes a spiritual journey and catharsis for both brothers.

Although this story maybe has roots in pre-Islamic culture in Kalimantan, Islamic elements have seeped into the narrative along with the spread of Islam in Kalimantan. Values such as obedience to parents, forgiveness, humility and piety which are important in Islamic teachings are reflected in the characters and conflicts in this story [51]. In this story, there are quotes that reflect that the two brothers' transformation into birds was part of their spiritual journey: "With hearts full of regret and humility, the birds Arue and Talokot accepted their destiny that had been determined by the Creator"[52].

The transformation of the two brothers into birds in this story can be interpreted as a symbol of spiritual transformation, which has implications for the religiosity or spirituality of the characters. In the context of Kalimantan society with an Islamic tradition, this transformation becomes a metaphor for the search for the right way of life and devotion to God. The story Arue and Talokot Birds is an interesting example of the integration of Islamic religious elements in folklore in Kalimantan. Through the therianthrope theme, this story not only conveys an interesting story, but also contains deep moral and spiritual messages that are still relevant for the Muslim community in Kalimantan.

Thus, the religious themes that might be explored in the animated characters from the Arue and Talokot Bird folk tales are: (1). Changes in a person's life as part of a spiritual and cathartic journey undertaken; (2). Values of justice, forgiveness, forgiveness, humility and piety; (3). A symbol of spiritual transformation as a reflection of the integration of religious and cultural elements in society.

2.1.4. Islamic Religious Elements in the Therianthrope Character of the *Siluman Ular* in South Sulawesi

The story *Siluman Ular* (Snake Demons) is an interesting example of the cultural heritage of the people of South Sulawesi which is rich in elements of Islamic religion, which tells the story of a person who underwent a transformation into a snake after being involved in a magical battle with a supernatural creature. This transformation turns him into a snake demon, who then has to find a way to regain his human form [53].

The main aspect of the story *Siluman Ular* is the human form of a snake which has magical and hypnotic powers and can incarnate in a human body. This transformation not only changes the character physically, but also has profound consequences for the people around him. Although this story has its roots in pre-Islamic traditions in Sulawesi, Islamic religious elements have seeped into the narrative along with the spread of Islam in Sulawesi. Values such as justice, steadfastness, and repentance which are important in Islamic teachings are reflected in the characters and conflicts of this story.

In this story, there is a quote that reflects the main character's transformation into a snake as part of his spiritual journey. "With a heart full of regret, the main character asks forgiveness from Allah SWT and promises

to improve himself so he can return to being human”[54]. The transformation of the story character into a snake in this story can be interpreted as a symbol of spiritual experience and a test of faith. In the context of South Sulawesi society which has an Islamic tradition, this transformation represents a journey to find the right way of life and repentance to God [55].

The story *Siluman Ular* is an interesting example of the integration of Islamic religious elements in folklore in South Sulawesi. Through the therianthrope theme, this story not only conveys an interesting story, but also contains deep moral and spiritual messages, which are still relevant for the people of South Sulawesi today. Thus, the religious themes that might be explored in the animated characters from the *Siluman Ular* folklore are: (1). Representation of the search for identity and the right way of life (God); and (2). Spiritual and moral messages to get closer to God.

In the four folktales above, religious elements and moral values are integrated into the narrative, characters, and are reflected in the conflict and resolution of the story [42]. Although not all Indonesian folklore explicitly combines therianthrope with Islamic religious elements, the concepts of metamorphosis and spiritual transformation are closely related to the religious teachings adhered to by the people who own these folktales [56]. However, religion in a broad sense is all forms of tradition and culture in society, including folklore and anthropology, which describe how individuals and society understand, practice and identify themselves with their religious beliefs [43][40]. This concept covers a wide range of phenomena, from participation in traditional religious practices to the emergence of new forms of spirituality in modern contexts.

The presence of therianthrope stories with religious nuances is a symbol for this phenomenon, where religion, social change, and technological developments have had a significant impact on the way humans understand and practice religion. Symbols in stories and therianthrope characters in folklore can be used as a basis for analyzing the factors that influence changes in religiosity in contemporary society [57][58]. Thus, therianthrope folklore with religious nuances is important to explore. as a response to these changes.

3. Opportunities for Transforming Cultural and Religious Heritage into Designing Animation Characters

Each folk tale has its own charm to explore. Folk stories are rich in imagination, illusory exaggeration, rich and colorful, and unique charm [59]. Folktales are integral to the cultural heritage of any people [60]. Many other countries have also explored their folklore to develop the art of animation. Folktales pass on their knowledge and general cultural heritage to new generations [60]. Animation can be used to pass on the knowledge and values contained in folklore to the next generation, even throughout the world, as it is said that *“Animation has become a good channel to disseminate information and knowledge. In animation, folk culture can be vividly presented to people all over the world”*[11].

Belief in religion and superpowers (magical powers) has become a concern of Indonesian society since the birth of animism and dynamism beliefs believed by ancestors. At that time, people’s attention was focused on extraordinary powers that came from outside themselves. *“Public beliefs are assessed as the whole of the knowledge that is perceived by the individual or the society naturally and supernaturally”* [61]. Apart from that, nature also shows extraordinary power to humans with all its events [62]. *“In traditional mythological stories, characters often have divine and supernatural abilities”* [63]. All of the statements above are very supportive for designing religious animated characters.

Human attitudes towards supernatural forces outside themselves are still common today. Therefore, characters related to religious systems continue to be an important concept in preparing character characterizations in story texts that will be performed. The creation of religious animated characters with therianthrope characters needs to be linked to religious elements and systems (beliefs), because both this is a unified concept for depicting super characters in the animated characters created. The integration of religious elements in therianthrope stories into animation design is in line with the opinion that *“Ethnic culture is unique and diverse, which can provide rich creative inspiration and became material for the character design.”*[63].

Therianthrope characters in the Legend of Lembu Sura (Gunung Kelud), Cindaku, Arue and Talokot Bird, and the *Siluman Ular* have great potential to be explored as religious animated characters. This is important for the younger generation to do so as not to give the impression of being “lazy” and thus becoming a product market for animated films from abroad. The folklore of *Timun Mas* (Central Java) and *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* (Riau), which were claimed as belonging to Malaysia and made into animated films, is quite a lesson for all of us [64]. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out an in-depth study of the character development of folklore characters and their religious potential so that they can be displayed in artistic and technological media such as novels, films, animations, etc., which continues with the management of recognition of the intellectual works of the Indonesian nation.

Cultural and religious heritage in the form of folklore and anthropology has great potential for the design of Indonesian animated film characters by transforming: (1) the diversity of characters in the characters, (2) the complexity of the plot and narrative of the story, (3) the religious elements, themes and messages of stories, (4) representation of local culture, and (5) inspiration for the nation’s children to be more creative. This

effort clearly has positive implications for: (1) empowering the nation's cultural heritage, (2) a medium for introducing the younger generation to the traditions and culture of their religious ancestors, (3) contributing to the promotion of tourism and local culture, (4) creating interesting characters. religious within the cultural frame of origin of the story.

First: creating animated characters by adapting folk tales that are rich in therianthropic characters with religious elements can empower and promote local cultural heritage on the international stage. This effort also provides the younger generation with the opportunity to stay connected to their nation's cultural roots and traditional values. *Second:* with an attractive and fun design, animated characters are designed to convey moral and spiritual messages that are relevant to local cultural values. This character can be an effective means of introducing the younger generation to the culture and traditions of their religious ancestors;

Third: folklore-based animation can contribute to the promotion of tourism and local culture. Animated characters inspired by folklore can become mascots or representations of certain tourism destinations, increasing tourists' interest in exploring Indonesia's cultural heritage. *Fourth:* the development of animated characters based on folk tales with religious themes provides an opportunity for artists to create strong and meaningful characters in a religious narrative package, which is in accordance with the religious and cultural values of the origin of the folk tale.

"If myths in the past were passed orally from one generation to another, then myths in the present time are formally being expressed through the media" [65][66]. Designing animated characters from therianthropic figures and religious elements in folklore is also an effort to explore national cultural heritage for the long-term development of people's interest in art. "*Deep excavation of national cultural connotation is the root of the long-term development of animation art and the inheritance of folk art spirit*"[59][8]. From the creation of art work done by updating folklore, this can produce a unique and interesting story [67].

Religious elements (beliefs) are always needed in designing animated characters because the characters must show a clear identity. "*The identity of an animated character means who he really is. How does the character see himself and how do others see him? It includes shape, color, race, beliefs, and choices in life (religion)*" [68]. "*Character design can also convey the values of national culture by expressing the beliefs, moral concepts, emotions and behavior modes of the characters*" [63]. Thus, designing animated characters for therianthropic figures in folk religious stories is an effort to transform cultural heritage into various forms and media, the implication of which is to elevate animated films from local products to have global competitiveness.

I. CONCLUSION

Every folklore in the archipelago informs its culture and characteristics. Each story also has a traditional character, both in the presentation of the plot and the personality of the characters. Characters with an therianthropic form are a special attraction for every story, because people often attach to them the religious values and beliefs that underlie and shape the story. The following is the conclusion regarding the research results regarding the potential for designing animation for therianthropic characters and the underlying religious elements in the folklore of *Lembu Sura*, *Cindaku*, *Arue* and *Talokot*, and *Siluman Ular*.

These four folk tales have three things in common: (1) they are all based on religious stories, which are representations of religious elements and people's beliefs in the power of God or their worship; (2) has a therianthropic spirit: half human and half animal physical, even demonic, has super strength and the ability to change form (incarnate) or remain in its original form (permanent); (3) has the potential to be developed into a character or animated film.

In the four folktales above, religious elements and moral values are integrated in the narrative and characters, and are reflected in the conflict and resolution of the story. The religious element in it is closely related to the religious teachings adhered to by the people who own the traditions of the folklore. The religious themes both tell the story of metamorphosis and spiritual transformation related to how people understand, practice, identify with religious beliefs, participate in traditional religious practices and rituals, and give rise to new forms of spirituality in a modern context. Therianthropic stories with religious nuances are important to study as a response to social change and technological developments which have had a significant impact on the way humans understand and practice their religion.

Therianthropic characters and religious elements in folklore have great potential to be developed as animated characters because: (1) being messages from the past that were previously passed down orally from generation to generation, which are now symbols and lessons conveyed through various forms and media; (2) designing animated characters from therianthropic figures and religious elements in folklore is an effort to explore national cultural heritage to develop people's interest in art in the long term; (3) religious elements are always needed in the design of animated characters to show the character's identity (faith, belief, tradition, mindset, perspective, behavior, appearance, skin color, race, mission and life goals). These characters can be designed to promote national culture through various forms and media, the implication of which is to elevate local animated films to be globally competitive.

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