

Folklore of *Taman Kasuranggan* and *Tirta Amerta*'s an Attempt to Preserve the Environment

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Abstract

Oral literature/folk literature is a culture that grows and kept by people for generations and spreads orally/through words of mouth. The diversity of folk literature in Toyomarto needs to be acknowledged and explored. One of which is a folklore about Taman Kasuranggan or "Garden of Heaven" (nimfa) that is believed to be Putri Singowati's and Resi Patmoaji's place to do the ritual of moksha. Tirta Amerta is a source of holy water that becomes a source of altercation within the Gods and the Giants. This water is believed to have a miracle on its own where whoever drinks it, will be spared from bad lucks or death. This folklore has potential to be an intangible cultural asset. Therefore, transformation of oral literature is needed, in this case, in a form of a comic book. Comic book is chosen because it is accessible and can be enjoyed by everyone from teenagers to adults. It is hoped by the transformation of oral literature to comic books can deliver the implicit meanings or messages in the story.

Keywords: *Kasuranggan; Tirta Amerta; Folklore*

A. Introduction

Desa Toyomarto is a village located in the district of Singosari, Malang regency. This village has several springs, some of which are called Sumberawan, Kedung Biru, and Watu Gede. These three springs are considered holy as it comes from a holy mountain. The Arjuno Mountain is believed as a holy place and used as a place of meditation for the Gods. This theory is in line with Cahyono's opinion (2017). The water that comes from the mountain is considered holy. Oral literature that

grows in the society comes from anonymous ancestors. It also describes the attitude and habit of the society. Therefore, there are implicit or explicit messages that are used as a social control and an education tool to develop good characters of young people in the society.

The diversity of oral literature that thrives in the society of Toyomarto needs to be utilised and explored as an effort to support the preservation of nature through oral literature. One of which is the story about Tirta Amerta and Taman

Kasuranggan. Those stories have the potential to teach people about the ecocentrism perspective that considers every life and living beings has a valuable meaning and purposes. As Saitmaidi said (2015), when human beings feel depending on nature, there will be means to create a sustainable environment.

In the previous research titled "*Makna Ruang sebagai Aspek Pelestarian Situs Sumberawan*" (Ramli, 2019) is mentioned regarding the difference of the perception of space in Sumberawan Site by the local community around, the merchants, non-spiritual and spiritual tourists. The goal of preservation of the site needs to include both preservation of the nature, and also the preservation of the Stupa of Sumberawan.

The existence of Sumberawan site is a support to document the oral literature of Tirta Amerta and Taman Kasuranggan. The transformation of oral literature to a comic book is documented as an attempt to improve the folklore. Comic is chosen as the media to develop the folklore on the grounds that children and teenagers

are often read comics. Aside from that, the literature development of Tirta Amerta and Taman Kasuranggan can increase awareness to preserve the environment based on local culture.

B. Research Method

This research used qualitative approach focused on oral literature that deals with the objects of Tirta Amerta and Taman Kasuranggan. The focus of this research is to restraint. Thus, the data obtained is relevant. This research is done in Desa Toyomarto, in the district of Singosari, Malang regency. The location is chosen based on the research focus which is suitable with the topic, oral literature study or oral tradition. Furthermore, in Desa Toyomarto, Singosari district, Malang regency, there is a Stupa of Sumberawan that has become a transformation tool which transforms an ordinary water to Tirta Amerta. To collect the data, the technique used is using unstructured oral interview face-to-face. To simplify the data collection, the interviews were recorded using a device. The data

sources that are used in this research are primary and secondary data resource. The data source used in this research is not emphasizing on quantity but more to the determination of choosing the informant (Sugiyono, 2016). The sample used is purposive sampling and primary resource whom is Mas Dika, The Sumberawan site's caretaker (2019 - present) and Mr. Nur, The Sumberawan site's caretaker (1980 - 2018). The secondary data is based on the written resource which was the result of earlier researches and books explained and described about the research with the occurring topic.

C. Results and Discussion

The Concept of Tirta Amerta and Kasuranggan

The Mahameru Mountain believed to be standing on the centre of the world by the Indians, with the North star shines on top of it. The mountain is used in the creation of the Java Island, which were moved from India to the Java Island. In the process of moving, flakes of Mahameru Mountain are scattered and created

Lawu, Wilis, Kelud, Kawi, Arjuno, Kemukus and Semeru mountain. Based on that belief, Mahameru Mountain is considered holy, goes the same with the other Mahameru flakes that got scattered (Setyani, 2007)

Water that comes from the chunks of the Mahameru Mountain will flow into a lower land. The source of spring that let out water first, is considered to inherit the holiness of Mahameru Mountain, so that the water can be used for meditation or prayers. Mount Arjuno has several springs that were visited by Prabu Hayam Wuruk, which are located at Polaman, Kedung Biru and Sumberawan or Kasuranggan.

Cited from Book of *Nagara Kertagama*, Sumberawan, which also called Kasuranggan that has the meaning of Paradise Garden or the Garden of Angels (*nimfa*). This place is believed to be the place where Angels descended to Earth. Sumberawan is a part of Mount Arjuna, which means that it inherits the holiness of Mount Arjuna. This belief is supported by the symbol of belief, which is a mountain, angels, Gods, and springs.

The Acquisition of Tirta Amerta

The Sumberawan Springs that has clear and overflowed water is located in the slope of Arjuno Mountain. A temple called Candi Budha is built in the middle of the springs in which according to Wurianto (2009), in Buddhism, the temple and springs in Sumberawan has a correlation as a “*pertirtaan*”. The stupa, in the form of a temple that resembles *genta* (bell), is a symbol of Buddhism which could be the index of the God’s realm or Meru Mountain. The stupa functioned as the medium of Sumberawan springs’ transformation.

At the present, Tirta Amerta is guarded by Putri Singowati, Ken Dedes’ younger sister, as the messenger of Singosari Kingdom. This event happened as Putri Singowati is a descendant of Brahmana. Her father was the religious leader. From the spiritual side, Putri Singowati would be appointed as a brahmani since she helped to carry out her role. Ever since Singosari Kingdom, Putro Singowati had led the army to do spiritual practice. The society

believes that Resi Patmoaji, Kolo Jonggo, and seven angels, are the guardians of Tirta Amerta.

Education Tool of Taman Kasuranggan and Tirta Amerta folklore Using Comic

Folklore has various kinds of moral messages in the stories. The character in the folklore also gives a real example and obvious to the readers. Environmental education can be delivered from the folklore that spreads in the society.

The folklore structure could be originated from oral stories which later on arranged to be a whole narration then developed into illustrated comic to add aesthetics and increase the readers’ interest in learning the message conveyed in the story.

The reason of using of comic for this article is very simple. Comic can be accessed by different ages from teenagers to adults. This reason is supported by Sukmawan (2020) that comic is a literation media that is easy to access or even upload to the social media.

The folklore of Taman Kasuranggan and Tirta Amerta is

hoped to be able to deliver the moral message contained which are mutual cooperation, tolerance, and togetherness, in addition to be implemented in daily life.

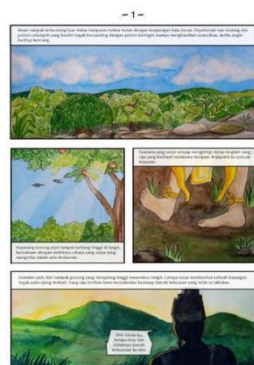


Fig. 1.1 Hayam Wuruk's Journey

Figure 1.1. is a visualisation of a folklore which is started from when Prabu Hayam Wuruk visited and was overlooking his territory. The atmosphere was pictured as quiet, and with nature that is still beautiful. In the picture, there is also a few drawings of legendary trees.

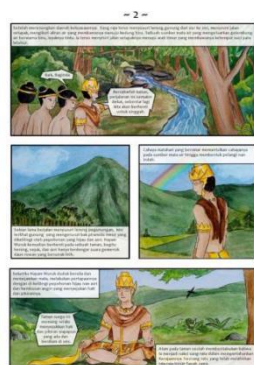


Fig. 1.2. Prabu Hayam Wuruk's visit

Figure 1.2 is a visualisation of Hayam Wuruk's journey which he wasn't alone and was accompanied by his knights and Mpu Prapanca, whom was a poet that documented Hayam Wuruk's journey.



Fig 1.3 Flashback of Ken Dedes' Story

Figure 1.3 is a flashback of Prabu Hayam Wuruk's meditation, where he was given the vision of the past. It was a place where a beautiful Brahmanan girl was abducted by Tunggu Ametung which made Mpu Purwa cussed.

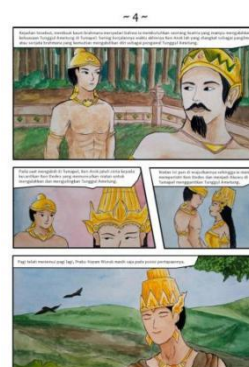


Fig 1.4 Flashback of the abduction of Ken Dedes by Tunggul Ametung

Figure 1.4 is a picture of when Ken Arok first had feelings towards Ken Dedes. At that time, Ken Arok was used as a weapon by the Bramnanans, that caused him to transform into *akuwu* and replaces Tunggul Ametung.

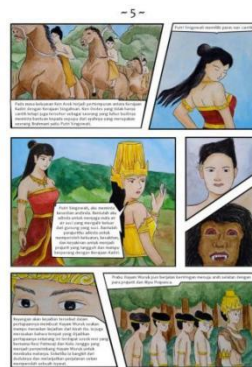


Fig. 1.5 Ken Dedes pleads for help towards Putri Singowati

Figure 1.5 was an illustration of Ken Dedes' request to her cousin, Putri Singowati to help her soldiers in spiritual manner to face war with the Kediri Kingdom. Aside from Putri Singowati, Resi Patmoji and Kolo Jonggo were also present.

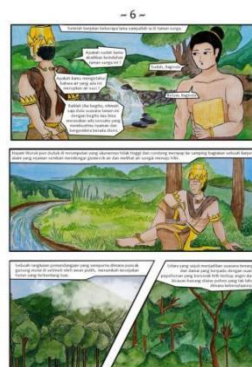


Fig 1.6 Prabu Hayam Wuruk's stop at Taman Kasuranggan

Figure 1.6 describes the place that Hayam Wuruk stopped at Taman Kasuranggan. He admired the place as the atmosphere made him feels comfortable and calm.



Fig 1.7 Prabu Hayam Wuruk visited Siwa-Buddha Priest

Figure 1.7 is a picture of Prabu Hayam Wuruk who continues his journey to look for a priest to be given a land so they can build a temple and making it a praying place.



Fig 1.8 The Process of Building a Temple

On the last picture, Prabu Hayam Wuruk asked for the temple to have three parts, which are *bhurloka*, *bhuahloka*, and *shuahloka*. The temple is made according to Hayam Wuruk's request. Aside from a praying place, the temple is also a place for the transformation of ordinary water into *tirta amerta* or water of life.

The pride of having folklores can be an effort to maintain environmental sustainability. The change of human's actions is due to of their attitude of being proud owning something.

D. Conclusion

Desa Toyomarto has many folklores which one of them is Sumberawan. The visual development of this folklore to a comic is an attempt to preserve the environment in Sumberawan's site. The symbol of culture in documenting the holiness of Tirta Amerta can support the development. Therefore, the imagination of Sumberawan's environment would be exactly as how it is drawn in the comic. This imagination will motivate the readers

to keep on preserving the environment. Other than that, this comic is expected to be a media for the young generation in learning the history of local culture in Desa Toyomarto.

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