

The Hydromythological Perspective in Literature on Tuk Bima Lukar: the Source of the Serayu River



Risa Feriyanti¹, Endang Nurhayati²

^{1,2}Java Language Education Study Program Graduate Program Faculty of Languages, Arts and Culture Yogyakarta State University Jl. Colombo Yogyakarta No. 1, Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia.

ABSTRACT: Water is not only used for basic life needs such as drinking, bathing, cooking, and washing but also for irrigation and other needs, as it is a source of life. In Javanese society, there are many myths related to water, one of which is the myth of Tuk Bima Lukar, the spring source of the Serayu River. This oral literature myth can be analyzed to gain a deeper interpretation of its contents. Therefore, a multidisciplinary literary approach is needed for a more in-depth discussion. This research employs a hydromythological literary approach. The research reveals that Tuk Bima Lukar is considered holy water, believed to bring eternal youth and blessings to those who use it. Beyond the belief that the water from Tuk Bima Lukar can keep one young, it is also believed to bring its own blessings. This aligns with the concept of hydromythology, which assumes that water is a source of life, implying that the water from Tuk Bima Lukar brings blessings because it provides a source of life to the creatures around it.

KEYWORDS: Hydromythological literature, Tuk Bima Lukar, Spring source

I. INTRODUCTION

In daily human life, it is impossible to separate literature from human existence. This is because humans can be both the subject and the object in literature. Society generally perceives literature as a collection of written texts (Kurmanbay, 2020). However, literature is not limited to writing on paper but has played a significant role in human life since ancient times. Through literature, people can express their aspirations to others, from the community to the government. Initially, literature was conveyed orally to society, whether in the form of ideas, views, or other expressions, all of which are the outpourings of human emotions. Such literature is referred to as oral literature.

Oral literature was initially born among the common people who were unfamiliar with writing. Hence, oral literature is also known as folk literature. Folk literature is part of folk culture that encompasses all aspects of a community's life (Endraswara, 2015: vii). Oral literature usually consists of stories passed down from mouth to mouth in a particular region. This oral literature can take the form of mantras, incantations, proverbs, folktales, or myths existing within the community.

In Javanese society, numerous myths circulate, often strongly believed despite their unclear origins. According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI, 2011: 749), a myth is a story from a nation's past about gods and heroes that holds profound meaning, expressed in a mystical way. Gazali Lembah and Nur (2015) describe a myth as a truth—a truth believed by the community that provides guidance and spiritual strength. Myths generally tell the story of the creation of the universe, the world, specific animal forms, or topographical features. In Indonesia, myths usually narrate the creation of the universe, the formation of the pantheon of gods, the first human beings, the divine world, and the origin of staple foods.

The study of myths is known as mythology. In English, the term "mythology" refers both to the study of myths or the content of myths and to particular parts of a myth, distinct from legends and folktales (Ghazali, 2011: 113). The term "mythology" is derived from the Latin word "mythologia." The word "mythologia" itself is a combination of two words: "mythos" and "logia." The word "mythos" or "myth" means "a story passed down orally from an unknown source," while "logia" or "logy" can be translated into terms like "theory," "science," "understanding," or "doctrine." According to Boyle (2019), mythology can be defined as the study of myths. Historical records show that the term "mythology" was first used in France in the early 15th century as "mythologie," before being adapted with the more common English suffix "logy," resulting in the term we know today, "mythology."

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In the Dieng region of Banjarnegara Regency, several myths have developed. One of the most well-known myths among the community is the myth of the Tuk Bima Lukar spring, which is the origin of the Serayu River. According to local stories, washing one's face or bathing at Tuk Bima Lukar can make one appear younger and bring blessings.

The Serayu River is located in Central Java, flowing through five regencies: Wonosobo, Banjarnegara, Purbalingga, Banyumas, and Cilacap, where it finally empties. The Serayu River Basin (DAS) covers an area of 2,685.77 km², with the main river stretching 180 km and including 11 tributaries (Dwityaningsih et al., 2018: 2). The Serayu River is a vital source of life for the communities it passes through, making the surrounding land fertile. Additionally, the Serayu River provides sand and stone along its course, attracting many sand miners.

Water is utilized not only for basic needs like drinking, bathing, cooking, and washing but also for irrigation and other purposes. Water is also used in ancestral rituals, such as the siraman ceremony in Javanese wedding traditions and as tirta perwitasari in the ritual cleansing of heirlooms or sacred objects. As a source of life, water carries philosophical meanings with local wisdom that can serve as a guide in navigating life. The philosophy of water can be a model for human life.

First, water always flows from higher to lower ground. Thus, like water, we should remain humble in life. A leader, for example, should serve and become a source of well-being for those they lead.

Second, water always fills empty spaces. In life, we should continually improve ourselves, filling the voids in our soul and heart with good and soothing things, like water. We should be like water, complementing others' lives and being beneficial to others.

Third, water always flows toward its destination. In life, we must have a purpose and consistently pursue it. No matter how long it takes, we will eventually reach our goal, which is to return to the Creator.

Various myths about Tuk Bima Lukar, particularly related to water, have developed within the community. One of these myths is that washing one's face or bathing there will make one appear younger and bring blessings. This is an intriguing subject for research. To study this myth, in addition to the mythological perspective, it is also necessary to employ a discipline that examines water, known as hydrology. In other words, to study the myth of Tuk Bima Lukar, we use two perspectives that combine multiple disciplines, namely hydrology and mythology, into hydromythology. Mythology has already been briefly explained; now, hydrology is the science that studies water. According to Triatmojo (2008), hydrology is the science concerned with water on Earth, including its occurrence, circulation, distribution, properties, and relationship with the environment, particularly with living organisms. All living beings on Earth require water for their survival.

From the explanation above, the problem to be studied can be formulated as: How is the myth of Tuk Bima Lukar viewed from a hydromythological perspective?

II. METHOD

This research employs a qualitative method. According to Bogdan and Taylor (as cited in Moleong, 2011: 4), the qualitative method is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. The focus of this research is to understand social phenomena, with data consisting of mythological stories about Tuk Bima Lukar that are prevalent among the communities around the Serayu River. This data was collected through interviews with several local residents. The data was then analyzed using various literature sources with a hydromythological perspective.

The results obtained were then interpreted, presented narratively, and concluded. The subsequent process involved verifying the validity of the findings. The validity of the data in this study was determined using the credibility criterion (degree of trustworthiness) to verify whether the findings align with the facts observed in the field. The data's validity was checked through the following methods:

1. Enhancing Diligence and Accuracy

The researcher increased diligence and accuracy by employing various techniques to ensure accurate and precise research results. This technique allows the researcher to deepen their understanding of everything related to the topic under study.

2. Data Triangulation.

Data triangulation was conducted to avoid critical errors during data collection. Triangulation can be performed using various sources, techniques, and times to ensure that the data collected is accurate. In this study, source triangulation was used (credibility testing by finding, understanding data sources, rechecking them, and then drawing conclusions).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. *The Essence of Literary Hydromythology*

Hydromythology is a combination of two words: "hydrology" and "mythology." Hydrology itself is the study of water. According to Triatmojo (2008), hydrology is the science related to water on Earth, including its occurrence, circulation, distribution, properties, and relationship with the environment, particularly with living organisms. Furthermore, hydrology can be defined as

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the science related to water on Earth, the process of its occurrence, circulation and distribution, its chemical and physical properties, and its reactions with the environment, including its relationship with living beings (International Glossary of Hydrology in Seyhan, 1995).

Hydrology is a branch of geography that studies the movement, distribution, and quality of water on Earth. The science of hydrology has been known since 1608 AD. Hydrology is the study of the presence and movement of water on Earth. The study of hydrology covers potamology (surface water flow), geohydrology (groundwater), hydrometeorology (water in the air in the form of gas), limnology (surface water that is relatively calm, such as lakes and reservoirs), and cryology (water in solid forms like ice and snow). A person who studies hydrology is called a hydrologist. According to Singh (1992), hydrology is the science that deals with the temporal and spatial characteristics of water quantity and quality on Earth, including hydrological processes, movement, distribution, circulation, storage, exploration, development, and management. Marta and Adidarma (1983) define hydrology as the study of the occurrence, movement, and distribution of water on Earth, both above and below the Earth's surface, as well as the chemical and physical properties of water, its reactions to the environment, and its relationship with life. Meanwhile, Ray K. Linsley, as cited by Yandi Hermawan (1986), defines hydrology as the science that discusses water on Earth, including its occurrence, circulation, distribution, physical and chemical properties, and reactions to the environment, including its relationship with life.

Water is not only utilized for life necessities such as drinking, bathing, cooking, and washing but also for irrigation and other needs. Water is also used by ancestors for ritual bathing in Javanese wedding ceremonies and as tirta perwitasari in the cleansing ritual of heirlooms or sacred objects. Water itself, as a source of life, holds philosophical meanings, and its local wisdom values can still serve as a guide in navigating life. The philosophy of water can be a model for human life; (1) First, water always flows from higher to lower ground. Thus, like water, we should be humble in life. A leader, for example, should serve and become a source of well-being for those they lead; (2) Second, water always fills empty spaces. In life, we should continually improve ourselves, filling the voids in our soul and heart with good and soothing things, like water. We should be like water, complementing others' lives and being beneficial to others; (3) Third, water always flows toward its destination. In life, we must have a purpose and consistently pursue it. No matter how long it takes, we will eventually reach our goal, which is to return to the Creator.

From this philosophy of water, water can also be a source of inspiration for writers. Over time, many literary works have explored hydrology as a theme. According to Sumardjo & Saini (1997: 3), literature is a human's personal expression in the form of experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, spirit, and beliefs in a concrete depiction that evokes charm through language. Additionally, literature is an oral or written work that possesses various qualities such as originality, artistry, and beauty in its content and expression (Sudjiman, 1990: 68).

From the discussion of hydrology and literature, it can be concluded that literary hydrology is a perspective on studying literature related to water. In other words, literary hydrology is literature about water. The literary hydrology perspective not only involves understanding water but also imagining water. The literary hydrology perspective can reveal the relationship between humans and water. Literary hydrology can serve as a research topic that explores the meaning of water literature. The depiction of water can become a desired subject by humans. Discussions of literary hydrology can include multidisciplinary studies, teachings on life for humans, expressions of love, life philosophy, children's literature, and more.

Meanwhile, mythology is the study of myths. In English, the term "mythology" refers both to the study of myths or the content of myths and to particular parts of a myth, distinct from legends and folktales (Ghazali, 2011: 113).

From the above explanation, it can be interpreted that literary hydromythology explains how the science of water is connected with the science of mythology in literature. This multidisciplinary study of literary hydromythology explores the life of humans closely related to water.

B. The Literary Hydromythology of Tuk Bima Lukar, the Source of the Serayu River



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In the Dieng Plateau, there are several sacred springs. One of them is Tuk Bima Lekar. It is not too difficult to find this spring. If you come from Wonosobo, you will find this spring on the right side of the welcome gate to Dieng, with a tall, strikingly prominent building.

Tuk Bima Lekar is one of the springs that is the source of the Serayu River. This spring is associated with Bima, one of the Pandawa brothers. Tuk Bima Lekar is a fountain that emerges from an ancient rock. According to jatengprov.go.id, the name Bima Lekar means Bima, a Pandawa character from the wayang story, who is in a state of Lekar, meaning shedding all of his clothing.

The story goes that Tuk Bima Lekar was formed when the Pandawa and Kurawa clans competed to create a river. Bima received a divine message before starting to dig the river, instructing him to dig in a state of Lekar (naked) and use his genitals to create a water hole, then irrigate the hole with his own urine. Bima followed these instructions and won the competition. After creating the river, Bima saw a beautiful girl bathing in the newly created river. Because the girl was so beautiful, Bima was mesmerized and said "Sira Ayu" (you are beautiful). This phrase then became the name of the river whose water comes from this spring.

Historical traces are still visible at two jaladwara, which are water spouts made from Lingga stone and water spills in the form of Yoni. The combination of Lingga and Yoni is a characteristic of Hindu culture. Seeing these historical remains, Tuk Bima Lekar can be considered a spring of civilization. Here, tourists feel refreshed after washing their faces due to the clear and cold water.

In addition to its historical value, Tuk Bima Lekar is also considered a sacred spring by the Dieng community. It is believed that the water from Tuk Bima Lekar can make people youthful if they wash their faces or bathe there. The building at the spring consists of three levels. The top level is the sacred part, which has a place for offerings. The second level is a sacred pool, from which people are not allowed to take water.

The bottom level contains two jaladwara, where people can bathe, wash their faces, or purify themselves to receive blessings. From the mythological story, it can be interpreted that the water in Tuk Bima Lekar is considered magical and can bring youth and blessings. The spring, which is vital for life, must be preserved. According to local beliefs, there are places where water should not be taken from the pool sourced from the spring. This is interpreted hydromythologically, as water is seen as a source of life. This aligns with Saputro's (2011) view that water and springs play an essential role in life. In Javanese cosmology, patirtan or springs have significant meaning. Patirtan can be springs, wells, rivers, lakes, seas, and others. Water and springs are sources of life, used for daily needs and various rituals by ancestors, such as for purification or sacred water in heirloom ceremonies. Recognizing the value and importance of water sources.

From this description, it can be interpreted that the water in Tuk Bima Lekar is sacred and considered to bring youth and blessings to those who use it. Besides the belief that water at Tuk Bima Lekar can make people youthful, the water from this spring is believed to bring its own blessings. This is evident from the widespread belief that areas around the Serayu River are fertile and prosperous because the river's water comes from Tuk Bima Lekar. This fits the hydromythological concept that water is a source of life, so it can be interpreted that the water from Tuk Bima Lekar brings blessings as it provides a life source for surrounding beings.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study of the myth at Tuk Bima Lekar was conducted using a literary hydromythological perspective. Not only does Tuk Bima Lekar hold historical value, but it is also a sacred spring for the Dieng people. It is believed that the water from Tuk Bima Lekar can make people youthful if they wash their faces or bathe there. The building at the spring consists of three levels. The top level is sacred, with a place for offerings. The second level is a sacred pool, and the community is not allowed to take water from this pool.

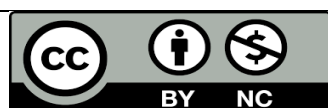
The bottom level has two jaladwara, where people can bathe, wash their faces, or purify themselves to receive blessings. This aligns with Javanese cosmology about patirtan or springs having important meanings, with water as a source of life. From the description, it can be interpreted that the water in Tuk Bima Lekar is sacred, believed to bring youth and blessings to its users. In addition to the belief that water at Tuk Bima Lekar can make people youthful, the water from this spring is believed to bring its own blessings. This is reflected in the belief that areas around the Serayu River are fertile and prosperous due to the water from Tuk Bima Lekar. This is consistent with the hydromythological concept that water is a source of life, thus interpreting that the water from Tuk Bima Lekar brings blessings by providing a life source to surrounding beings.

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