

THE DISCOURSE BEHIND THE STORY OF SENDANG TIRTOMOYO: A STUDY OF CARL THOMPSON AND ALBERT B. LORD

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the oral narratives surrounding Sendang Tirtomoyo, a spring in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, using Carl Thompson's Travel Literature theory and Albert B. Lord's Concept of Theme. It aims to examine how Thompson's framework helps analyze the narrator's journey and identify thematic patterns in oral storytelling. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the study is based on interviews with local residents, focusing on how the character "I" engages with the environment, stories, and people to shape a personal travel narrative. The findings show that the narrative reflects Thompson's three core aspects: Reporting the World, Revealing the Self, and Representing the Other. Furthermore, the study uncovers a recurring theme of magical realism, marked by mystical beliefs and remnants of colonial history preserved by the community. This research contributes to literary studies by integrating travel literature theory with folklore analysis, offering fresh insight into how oral traditions and travel narratives intersect in a localized Indonesian setting.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is the best medium for expressing or expressing all our thoughts, problems, ideas, or anxieties in written form, which can be said to eventually become a work of art. Literature is a product of human creation, a manifestation or objectification of the thoughts a person wishes to express, using writing as the basis for their creation. According to Eagleton (2008, p. 1), literature is 'imaginative' writing in the sense of fiction-writing, which is not true. This means that literature is a work made of several imaginative writings that cannot simply be digested like the use of common language that can be easily understood by readers, which requires readers to provide sufficient interpretation to interpret the uncommon language. In its development, literature develops and produces variations or new types along the way, including oral literature. When we talk about oral literature, we must not forget the existence of folklore. Folklore and oral literature are a single entity with combined elements. Folklore itself is a traditional culture owned by a particular group and passed down from generation to generation. This hereditary transmission demonstrates the existence of an oral culture inherited from our ancestors. (D. Sulistyorini, 2017, p. 1).

Oral literature, in short, is an analogy of spoken literature. It means a form of literature that is spoken orally, including its dissemination, which is also done orally. According to Hutomo (1991), Oral literature refers only to oral texts of literary value, while oral tradition is more easily accessible, encompassing traditional technology, customary law, folk dances, and folk food. Oral literature also has limitations that are only oriented towards literature, for example, folk language, folk expressions, folk tales, folk poetry, and folk songs. From the things mentioned above, it can be interpreted that the meaning of oral literature itself is oral as a

narrative which will later be written or can be poured into writing which will later become a written work that includes how expressions, stories, and so on, are continuously passed down orally from generation to generation to preserve a story or something that has existed since ancient times.

From the explanation above, we can conclude that every place will have a different story. Even if the location is the same, there will certainly be many stories considered version A, version B, version C, and so on. In this regard, the researchers wanted to examine how stories circulate within the community, particularly among residents around *Sendang Tirtomoyo*, based on stories learned from their parents or neighborhood elders who told them about the place. *Sendang Tirtomoyo* itself is located on Jalan Ngepas Kidul, Pedukuhan Ngepos Kidul, Donoharjo Village, Ngaglik District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. The story of the spring itself, according to Mulyadi, a source who is also a native resident of the area, said that the spring had actually existed before he was born, precisely since the Ancient Mataram era, but was only a small pool like a spring. During the era of Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX, a former King of Yogyakarta, the pool, which was originally small, was restored by the Dutch to be enlarged and used as a pool for residents and the Dutch at that time, so that it could be used for bathing, washing, making the pool a spring for the village, and so on. Around 2004 or 2005, the pool was rehabilitated by the Sleman Regency Government for repairs. However, many residents disagreed, but the residents could not do much because the decision was in the hands of the village head himself, which ultimately resulted in the location being rehabilitated. According to Mulyadi, there are many stories about the *Sendang Tirtomoyo* itself. Starting from its never-ending water since it was first discovered, many people from outside the village come to seek things related to spirituality on special nights such as Satu Suro night, mystical events that occur when a Banyan tree is cut down which causes the family of the tree cutter to fall ill and eventually die, and some believe that the water in the spring can be used for therapy and cure diseases.

From the explanation that has been explained in the previous description, there is an interesting problem to be studied and researched further, namely, about how the explanation of the Travel Literature theory from Carl Thompson and the theory about the concept of theme from Albert B. Lord in the story that has developed and has been told from generation to generation about *Sendang Tirtomoyo*. The purpose of this study itself is to find out whether the theory initiated by Thompson is able or can be used to analyze the travel literature written by the character "I" in the story behind *Sendang Tirtomoyo* and to find out how the theme can influence a story that has been passed down from generation to generation and how the effect of the theme on the story.

To better understand the issues outlined in the introduction, it is important to examine relevant previous research. The following literature review is designed to provide an overview of the theories, previous findings, and approaches used by previous researchers. This review will identify research gaps that have not been widely discussed or received adequate attention, thereby strengthening the urgency and contribution of this research. The first research comes from Putri Zulikha's thesis in the year 2020, entitled *Agenda dan Ideologi dalam Novel Pelukis Gurun Pasir* by Fuad Abdurahman. This thesis examines the depiction of the world, which tends toward the subjective, as the author frequently incorporates self-expression, even though the depiction is factual. It also explores the author's political agenda, revealing four ideologies: Islamism, humanism, feminism, and nationalism. These ideologies not only influence the author's agenda but also motivate him to undertake his journey. Second's research comes from Fajar Diana Safitri in (2018) entitled *Wacana Hegemoni Global Andrea Hirata dalam Novel Edensor: Kajian Sastra Perjalanan Kontemporer Debbie Lisle*. This thesis discusses Andrea Hirata's colonial and cosmopolitan visions contained in the novel *Edensor* and the discourse of new global hegemony shown by Andrea Hirata through the novel *Edensor*. In this analysis, it can be seen that the hegemony that influences Andrea Hirata in

describing his journey. Therefore, in the next chapter, discursive discourse analysis is used to find out the discourse of global hegemony that Andrea Hirata conveys through the novel *Edensor*. From this study, it can be concluded that Andrea Hirata tends to use a colonial vision in representing objects related to his identity (the East). Conversely, Andrea Hirata uses a cosmopolitan vision in representing objects related to the differences he encounters (the West). Next research entitled *Dunia dan Agenda Perjalanan dalam Hikayat Indraputra: Kajian Sastra Perjalanan Carl Thompson* by Rizky Tia Rifianty in (2019), which contains the depiction patterns and the relationship between the depiction patterns of the world and the agenda in the *Hikayat Indraputra*. The last research entitled *Representasi Sastra Perjalanan dalam Kumpulan Cerpen Surat dari Praha dan Antologi Puisi Kepada Kamu yang Ditunggu Salju* by Yusri Fajar from Imam Shofi'i (2019) explains that the background of the self/foreigner as an alienated person traveling by force turns out to influence the pattern of literary travel, namely in the depiction of the world, self-disclosure, and other representations. From the pattern of literary travel, it can be seen that the self has a layered world, namely between Indonesia and Europe, where the existence of this layered world also shows the problems experienced by the self/foreigner, namely the problem of inferiority before Europeans and the desire of the self or foreigner for their homeland. From several journals and theses that have been displayed and explained above, the researcher only found several writings that use the Travel Literature theory of Carl Thompson and Debbie Lisle, and the researcher has not found research on *Sendang Tirtomoyo*, which is located in the Ngaglik area, Sleman.

In this research, the theory that will be used is the theory of travel writing, or Travel Literature, from Carl Thompson. According to Thompson (2011, p. 14), Travel Literature is a narrative that reflects the author's experiences while traveling, whether visiting places, objects, or meeting new people. Literary works that actualize travel notes offer a narrative of events that occurred during the author's journey (Nasution, 2015, p. 22). From Nasution's explanation, it can be concluded that during the journey undertaken by the author, the author will write down everything about time, place, atmosphere, and everything related to the journey and events that occur to form a work of Travel Literature without having to limit what the author or writer must write later. According to Thompson (2011, p. 9), simply put, it is a negotiation between self and others in a spatial transition. This means that travel writing itself can be interpreted as a form of recorded notes from the experiences of self and others, as well as communication negotiations in terms of the differences and similarities that encompass them. In this theory, Thompson put forward three ideas: Reporting the World is a necessity in Travel Literature to provide information about the state of places, people, and even the world (Thompson, 2011, p. 62), Revealing the Self namely that it is seen in the writings of the Enlightenment era to Romanticism era, characterized by subjective writing and reality as a form of writing style character (Thompson, 2011, p. 62), and Representing the Other is a form of identification of cultural differences between (self) and other people (other) (Thompson, 2011, p. 132).

Then, to analyze the findings about themes and the reasons behind the existence of themes in a story that has existed and been passed down from generation to generation, this study will use the concept of Albert B. Lord. A theme is an event that is repeated in a story to build on a patterned idea. In building a theme, the speaker also has a way of combining a theme into a single or uniform unit by breaking down the big theme and making it into smaller parts. In its verbal nature, themes are not fixed words, but rather a grouping of ideas that are always improvised from generation to generation (Lord, 1971, p. 69).

2. METHOD

In this study, the data collection approach will utilize the listening method, which involves paying attention to the informant as a data source, and a qualitative method, which involves presenting research data in the form of written sentences. This research can take the form of photos, images, and transcribed voice recordings. The researcher will initially meet with the informant to interview them to collect the necessary data, then record the interviewer's voice as a data collection tool. Next, the data in the form of voice recordings will be transcribed into writing, formed or created narratively based on the content of the interview and additions or developments from the researcher's narrative.

In the research data, more emphasis is placed on the phenomena, and in this research, based on the interaction between several variables, to be able to understand the events to be studied. The research object data that will be used will come from the results of interviews with informants from residents around *Sendang Tirtomoyo* about the conditions, origins, and so on of *Sendang Tirtomoyo* itself. The data source obtained will usually be an object, thing, person, or place that is used as a reference for researchers to collect the desired data according to the problem and focus of the research itself. The data source that will be used in this study was taken or collected by conducting interviews with one of the residents around *Sendang Tirtomoyo* as a resource to obtain data authenticity, then journals and theses related to the theory of Travel Literature from Carl Thompson and also the concept of themes from Albert B. Lord to get a comparison to know where the differences lie in this research with others. The data obtained from the previous interviews will be transcribed into a narrative, which will then serve as the researcher's reference for data analysis. The data analysis technique used will involve collecting and selecting, or filtering data, according to the researcher's needs. The data will be summarized to align with the research objectives. These analysis methods will be elaborated using Carl Thompson's Travel Literature theory and Albert B. Lord's Concept of Theme to maximize the results of this research.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Author's Travel Story Behind the Story of *Sendang Tirtomoyo* Against Carl Thompson's Theory of Travel Literature

The stories formed or stored in the minds of the villagers around the spring, especially the informants who assisted the researcher, are stories that can be said to be derived from colonial nuances that are characterized by a hierarchical order within them and a slightly magical nature. All the stories contained in the stories told by the informants involve a deviation or betrayal committed by the natives who worked for the Dutch during the restoration of the *Sendang Tirtomoyo* site. However, the stories told by the informants were created because of the researcher as a traveler, resulting in an interaction between the researcher as (self) and the informants as (other). The story of *Sendang Tirtomoyo* finally emerged because the author, as the narrator, retells it with his version. In undertaking a journey, of course, there is a specific purpose, whether in terms of research, curiosity, or others, that will eventually produce a report that he obtains from what he does during the journey, including the people he meets, places, and objects that they consider foreign to themselves (Thompson, 2011, p. 9). In the theory proposed by Thompson, there are three aspects of Travel Literature, namely: Reporting the World, Revealing the Self, dan Representing the Other. The author's journey to find out the story behind the *Sendang Tirtomoyo* will also be analyzed using Thompson's theory.

a. Reporting the World

The main requirement for being able to research literature using Travel Literature is the existence of the concept of Reporting the World. This concept is a concept whose involvement becomes a necessity in Travel Literature to provide information about the state of places, people, and even the world (Thompson, 2011, p. 62). In this case, the author will use a method to provide information related to the things he encountered regarding world issues, places, and people he met by recounting the story of his journey in writing and providing knowledge related to foreign cultures from his perspective (self). In undertaking a journey, there will inevitably be encounters between the self and others (others), which will then give rise to a response, action, and distance used by the self when observing the object. This is used by the author when retelling the story of his journey in written form (Ekasiswanto, 2017). The author's travel story when traveling to *Sendang Tirtomoyo* also contains elements of travel because it is told with memories of what has been experienced in the past.

"The village is not very big, but judging from the residents who live around it, it is a village that is still beautiful and cool to enjoy, where I felt again how it felt or remembered when I was little and lived to go home to my grandmother and grandfather's house for vacation, it was the same."

The quote above describes the conditions of a place between Sleman and the author's hometown when he was a child. "I" tells us that he has traveled, and thus understands how the feeling of a new place he has never visited resembles his childhood memories. This demonstrates that someone who travels to a new place will gain unexpected knowledge and perspective.

In the story told by the source about the spring, there were colonial practices in it.

"Mulyadi said that previously, this place was a small pond that had existed since Ancient Mataram, and during the time of Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX, the pond was renovated by the Dutch with an idea that came from a native who was a Dutch agent at that time, named Tuan Ndaru, in 1938."

In the quote above, it is shown that in the story narrated by Mulyadi, there was a little interference from the colonialists through his subordinate who was a native named Mr. Ndaru, who had the idea to restore the pool which was originally just a small pool to be repaired into a pool that could later be used by Dutch soldiers or people from the Netherlands and residents to carry out activities that required water.

b. Representing the Other

This term is one of the theoretical concepts put forward by Thompson (2011, p. 132), which, according to him, serves to identify cultural differences between oneself and others. This means that the concept is a cultural expression that is owned by oneself and the culture of others, which is then retold in written form. However, it is explained that the author or writer not only presents a picture of the differences between one culture and another, but also the inferiority of a particular culture (Hidayah, 2022, p. 56)

"Another belief concerns how people from outside the village, on special nights like the first of Suro, flock to bathe and meditate, seeking spiritual connections believed to help or cleanse themselves. Visitors also always bring offerings (Sesembahan) and incense (Dupa) as a requirement for performing rituals, which residents find very disruptive."

Mulyadi's statement above could indicate or represent a cultural difference in their area. Beliefs can become a culture if those who practice them become accustomed to and practiced by many people. The culture displayed by those from outside the village differs from that of the villagers themselves, who do not sacred or purify the spring. The villagers also objected and found it very disturbing when one of the visitors brought offerings (*Sesembahan*) or incense (*Dupa*) to the *Sendang Tirtomoyo*. Mulyadi also stated that the surrounding villagers did not want to disturb them and seemed to allow them to carry out these activities without any indication of rejecting those who did so. There are cultural differences between the villagers around the spring and those from outside the area where *Sendang Tirtomoyo* is located.

c. Third Sub-Discussion

Revealing the Self is the final concept proposed by Thompson. This concept is a form of self-assessment of what has been done during the journey. This concept takes the form of discovering new places or new areas to learn facts related to the new destination. According to Hidayah (2022, p. 60), Travel Literature emphasizes facts or evidence about the discovery of new places or regions. From the late 18th century to the present, many Travel Literature researchers have applied this characteristic as a reference for identifying themselves as travel researchers (Thompson, 2011, p. 119). The "I" character in the travel story has certainly traveled to new places to gain new insights and knowledge. This is evident in the following quote:

"It was Saturday, September 24, 2022, and I visited the place I had chosen this time, Sendang Tirtomoyo.

"I entered the village gate and was immediately greeted by the presence of Sendang Tirtomoyo itself, marked with the inscription of the place's name. Naturally, I immediately looked around and tried to see what the spring was like."

In this quote, the character "I" has already fully traveled to the destination he desires. The destination is a spring or bathing place believed to have a history behind its formation, with a strong royal feel, as well as the presence of statues, further strengthening this idea.

"When I asked him about my request to tell the story of Sendang Tirtomoyo, he was willing to help me. His name was Mulyadi."

The quote above also strengthens the evidence of other travels from "me" that he not only found a new place, but he also met with Mulyadi, who is a native resident around the spring, and also became "my" source to get the story behind the existence of *Sendang Tirtomoyo*.

d. Themes in the Story of *Sendang Tirtomoyo*

A theme is the conclusion of a story that is repeated over and over again with the same pattern, which will eventually produce a structured idea that can be used in a narrative. In his narrative, the source of *Sendang Tirtomoyo* tells a story that he has received from his parents in his neighborhood. The theme contained in *Sendang Tirtomoyo* itself is a theme with the concept of magical realism. Magical realism is a term coined by Franz Roh, a German art critic, who said that magical realism primarily relies on all problems that are not imaginary, a realistic attitude in narrative when presenting magical events. Therefore, magical realism is always associated with or stated as a version of realist literature (Bowers, 2004, p. 2).

"As the story developed, passed down through generations, and circulated within the community, many beliefs arose from the many assumptions circulating within the community. The first concerns the existence of a large banyan tree in ancient times and the never-fading spring water in the pond. This stems from the belief that the pond or spring was a blessing bestowed upon the surrounding village by someone."

In the story that the source got when he was young, he was told that the spring never ran out of water as long as the spring was there, this was probably because the water continued to flow and was a path from a spring that happened to pass by, and the source said that there was indeed an underground channel that flowed from a source from the mountain near their village.

"Another belief concerns people from outside the village. On special nights, such as the first of Suro, many come to bathe and meditate, seeking spiritual connections believed to help or cleanse themselves. Visitors also always bring offerings (Sesembahan) and incense (Dupa) as a requirement for performing rituals, and this is considered very disturbing by residents."

This may be a belief that was deliberately created to build the image of *Sendang Tirtomoyo* so that it would be better known to many people through stories told by the first narrator, who had been to *Sendang Tirtomoyo* and gave an exaggerated impression, so that it could be accepted by the wider community.

"Another story, which is not widely believed by the local villagers, is that a mystical event occurred when a banyan tree was cut down for a celebration. The incident shocked the villagers. After the person felled the tree, the family of the person fell ill, which ultimately led to the death of a family member. There have also been cases of death when someone used the spring for therapy or to cure an illness."

According to sources, several incidents at the spring (*Sendang*) have resulted in fatalities. This may have been due to technical difficulties during activities that inadvertently resulted in fatalities. Naturally, stories have been created to reinforce the belief that the stories surrounding the spring are true, and to attempt to discipline the community with these mystical tales to maintain the cleanliness of *Sendang Tirtomoyo*.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion is generated from the formulation of the problem written at the beginning. The results of the analysis and discussion of this study conclude that the use of Carl Thompson's theory to analyze the travel story written by the character "I" is considered possible to use because it includes the concept that was initiated by Thompson. In this study, the character "I" knows other people, new places, and new environments during the trip from his perspective. The next conclusion is that the story about *Sendang Tirtomoyo* was created and reached the listener because of a journey undertaken by the author, and it is also explained that the story told by Mulyadi about the spring (*Sendang*) was retold by the author with his version, and there is the influence of the storyline from "I" which opens insight into how he traveled before arriving at the destination, namely *Sendang Tirtomoyo* itself. Also, from the aspect put forward by Thompson, the story of *Sendang Tirtomoyo* does not only include a story about colonialism and magical nuances, with the presence of the character "I" who goes on a journey, it can be said that the story of *Sendang Tirtomoyo* presents a new nuance, namely

Travel Literature, which also shows how the perspective of the character "I" on Travel Literature has a layered world that can be viewed from the perspective of "I" towards foreign or newly encountered people, places, and events.

In terms of the existing theme of the story of *Sendang Tirtomoyo* itself, it is possible that it was created intentionally to maintain the cleanliness and uniqueness of the spring (*Sendang*) itself and also one story and another are connected and produce a theme, where *Sendang Tirtomoyo* is indeed known for its mystical aura and gives the impression that the place is an interesting place to visit as a good place to calm down. The theme that can be concluded from the story that researchers consider the main story here is the theme of magical realism.

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