

MADURA FOLKTALES: TOWARD THE UNIVERSALITIES

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Abstract. Madura Island has myriads of folktales as a result of its acculturation since the prosperous of Hinduism kingdom till the glorious of Islamic Mataram era. These notions are interested to examine. This paper probes the native of Madura folktales along with their uniqueness and link it with the universality of the folktales in the world. By investigating the motifs, Madura Folktales engage with other folktales across nation and it is really meaningful in the children literature perspective. The children literature mediates the wonder folktales such as Madura folktales into the ideal of children literature viewpoints.

Keywords: *Madura Folktales, wonder folk/fairy tales, children literature*

INTRODUCTION

Madura is the island with thousands of folktales as its historical and cultural heritage. The folktales including myth and legend are created the characteristics of Madura people. They are parts of long history which cannot be separated from the society, because folktales are the local genius, a kind of way of thought. Barthes (1973) argues that the very principle of myth, in this sense, is that 'it transforms history into nature' (p. 129). Madura with its all uniqueness transforms its values through the its local genius, like folktales from one generation to the next generation. Surely, inside of the folktales it can be found the moral and religious elements as its standard of philosophy for its people.

Otherwise, for Madura tales mostly nobility is the center of the theme and also the characters, although it can be found the traditional tales with the hard relation between the noble and an ordinary people such as *Ke'lesap* and *Arya Menak*. The primordial custom and tradition in whole Indonesia areas including Madura, makes the traditional folktales are dominated with the noble themes. *Joko Tole, Pottre Koneng,*

Bangsadcara and Ragapadmi, The Origin of Madura and Rato Ebu are the folktales that cannot separate with the history of Madura kingdom in the past time. Firstly, Madura is the Hindu kingdom, reigned by Arya Wiraraja in Sumenep but Madura was never becoming an independent kingdom, it was a part of Majapahit Empire then as a part of Islamic Mataram kingdom. But the demarcation line between royal family and an ordinary people is hold tightly and strictly. The royal family lived in their own circle and take away from the ordinary people life. The caste system as the heritage of Hinduism gives the strong effects to the relationship between the Nobel class and the ordinary people, thus the marriage between the royal family member and the ordinary people is suggested as taboo. Though, the tradition is changed from Hindu to Islam, but this is not easy to change the belief and the Hindu tradition that is come to Indonesia since the 3rd Century. Hinduism had become the tradition for 10th Centuries before Islam came to Indonesia in around 14th century. Consequently, it affects to the culture, tradition, and custom in Indonesia, like it

has been reflected in Madura folktales. The characters in Madura folktales are the prince, princess, queen, and the king, angel, and few of an ordinary people as the hero. While, the morality, religious, and toughness will be the center of themes in Madura folktales. The king, the queen, the prince and the princess are described as the holy people with their sincere attitude and behavior. Such as in *Rato Ebu*, the queen is the holy queen with her life devoting only to God and taking away from her life in the world.

RESEARCH METHOD

To examine and observe of the native folktales from one of the ethnics group its narrative approach is always dealing with the literary history, literary biography, and social history. The researcher as the key instrument carries out the participant – observation with the informal method of note-taking. The ethnography research is appropriately applied due to its way of the data collection that refers to the history and culture. In associated with the research, it remarked that doing ethnography as the collection of data that describe a culture (Bernard, 2004, p. 16). Then, the data collection uses the participant – observation method to record the data and to obtain the adequate information. On account of its comparison of the two different viewpoints between the learners cultural and Education contexts, the ethic perspective enables to observe the multi – cultural views from the different context. Because ethic perspective is associated with the comparison of differing cultures and populations enables researchers to develop broader cross cultural themes and concepts (Morris et als., 1999).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

For Madura tales, Mostly nobility is the center of the theme and also the characters, although it can be found the traditional tales with the hard relation

between the noble and an ordinary people such as *Ke'lesap* and *Arya Menak*. The primordial custom and tradition in whole Indonesia areas including Madura, makes the traditional folktales are dominated with the noble themes. *Joko Tole*, *Pottre Koneng*, *Bangsadcara* and *Ragapadmi*, *The Origin of Madura* and *Rato Ebu* are the folktales that cannot separate with the history of Madura kingdom in the past time. Firstly, Madura is the Hindu kingdom, reigned by Arya Wiraraja in Sumenep but Madura was never becoming an independent kingdom, it was a part of Majapahit Empire then as a part of Islamic Mataram kingdom. But the demarcation line between royal family and an ordinary people is hold tightly and strictly. The royal family lived in their own circle and take away from the ordinary people life. The caste system as the heritage of Hinduism gives the strong effects to the relationship between the Nobel class and the ordinary people, thus the marriage between the royal family member and the ordinary people is suggested as taboo. Though, the tradition is changed from Hindu to Islam, but this is not easy to change the belief and the Hindu tradition that is come to Indonesia since the 3rd Century. Hinduism had become the tradition for 10th Centuries before Islam came to Indonesia in around 14th century.

Consequently, it affects to the culture, tradition, and custom in Indonesia, like it has been reflected in Madura folktales. The characters in Madura folktales are the prince, princess, queen, and the king, angel, and few of an ordinary people as the hero. While, the morality, religious, and toughness will be the center of themes in Madura folktales. The king, the queen, the prince and the princess are described as the holy people with their sincere attitude and behavior. Such as in *Rato Ebu*, the queen is the holy queen with her life devoting only to God and take away from her life in the world.

THE ADAPTATION OF THE GOLDEN HILL, ARYO MENAK (ATU 400) AND OTHER STORIES

The stories of ATU number 400 was The Man on a Quest for His Lost wife and it had myriads of variants all over the world. One of the most popular was the Swan Maiden. This folktale had many different titles but they have the similar motifs. The Swan Maiden in European version by Joseph Jacob (ed.) had the seven Swans and the hunter as the trickster. The hunter took the youngest and the smallest swan's robe and hid it while they bath on the lake. Six of the swans could change the form from the maidens into the swans but not for the youngest one. Then she married with the hunter and lived together till they had two children, one boy and one girl. Though she lived happily but she was longing for her home, then one day when she played hide and seek with her children, she unintentionally found her robe. She told her children if their father really loved her she must look for her in the land east o' the sun and the west o' the moon. He came home and surprised, then he went for his journey searching his wife.

This version of the story has three helpers, mainly the old man who was eventually the king of Beast. The other was the old man brothers, the king of birds and the king of fish. By helping from the dolphin, the hunter had finally known the place where his wife lived and it was in the castle on the top of the crystal mountain. In the middle of journey he met two people arguing and fighting for the magic cap and shoes as the legacy from their parents. The hunter cheated them and took it as his magical flight to carry him on the top of the crystal mountain. The use of two magic objects (the cap and the shoes) mostly emerged in this variant hereby this variants was combined with ATU number 313 about the magical flight. The use of magical objects also risen up in German tale the Three Swan and Czech tale by Nemcova,

the Golden Hill. At last, the hunter could accomplish on the top of the crystal mountain and asked to the king for his wife. The king gave the condition to the hunter, he would hand his daughter but he must recognize her only in one chance. Luckily, he could recognize her by noticing her mark of her right forefinger because of her little wound of the needle when she was sewing her children clothes in the past time. They returned to the hunter's house and lived happily.

The Three Swans retold by Ernst Meier had three swans as the maidens otherwise the trickster was also the hunter. The magic helper was also the old man but only one old man, but he solved every the hunter problem. The status of the maiden in this story was as the hunter second wife, because his first wife had been died. He was longing for his first wife and he fully deserved in his life to marry with the woman same as his first wife. The maiden here was the youngest maiden either. With the old man help, he could get the maiden as his wife and had several children and lived for fifteen years together before her wife was leaving him after she found her robe. Like another version, he also searched his wife and the old man gave him direction. Then, he got three tasks to fulfill if he wanted to redeem his wife. The three days tasks were fighting with the three dragons. He successfully passed the tasks and redeemed his wife. This version has different combination, because there was no magical object but it has other combination with ATU number 401A for the tasks and ATU number 302 due to his successful for the tasks and his wife redeeming.

The complete one of ATU number combination from this tale is the Golden Hill, Czech fairy tales rewritten by Bozena Nemcova. The Main motif (ATU number 400) is the same as the other stories with the basic adaptation of the Swan Maiden. Otherwise Nemcova combines it with some

of the variants and motifs to make it much more interesting. The trickster is also different with the majority of European Fairy tales because here the trickster name is Libor, the gardener who lived with his old widow mother. Like the Swan Maiden and the three swans Libor was pulled out one of the swan veil when three of them were swum in the pond. The most beautiful maiden was the youngest or the last either, named Cekanka. As the other stories, Cekanka found her veil only in one day thereby they did not marry yet but they fell in love each other. She returned to her castle and leaved Libor after she persuaded Libor old mother showing her veil. The motif of the magical helper looks a like the Swan Maiden, three brothers, here they were the gamekeeper who belongs the competence calling the crows asking the information. The characteristics of Nemcova tales were shown in this part there was the level of difficulties or the steps of conflict such as the first gamekeeper called a hundred crows, the second one called two hundred and the last one called three hundred crows. Libor was achieved the solution in the last gamekeeper with the lymph crow (ATU 222 about war between birds or insects with quadruped).

The Golden Hill has the dominant magical flight in some parts of the story (ATU 313). The first magical object is the corn using to grow up the oak tree from the ocean when the crow carrying Libor to the Golden Hill. This giant oak tree is used to rest for three times. Secondly, the magical object is the saddle that is used to reach the golden hill. Libor got it by cheating two fighting giants. This fairy tale combines with ATU 465A when Libor has come to the castle and ask for Cekanka. Later on, Cekanka's mother, the wicked witch gives him the impossible tasks (ATU 465A: The man persecuted because of his beautiful wife). The first task he must collect a hundred fathoms of wood using his

wooden axe only in one night, the second is he must collect all water in the pond and put it on the top of the hill with two pails only in one night, and the last task is he must pasture three hundred hares in the meadow and if he misses one of them then the witch will kill him.

Libor was success to fulfill his impossible tasks with Cekanka helps otherwise the witch hardly try preventing Libor to bring her daughter (ATU 310: The Maiden in the Tower). Cekanka hereby deceive her mother by covering her head and Libor's with her veil. Further, they flee from the castle (ATU 313). The witch pursues them and for three times they deceive her. First Cekanka transform herself as the chapel and Libor as the pulpit on it. The next, Cekanka changes into the flower and Libor into the bush. By the end, Cekanka transforms into the swan and Libor into the pond. The witch knows them then she changes herself into the cow and drinks all of the water in the pond. The water is too much drinking the water thus she is blasting. The water returns back into the pond. The witch dies and the remained thing is only the cow carcass. Both lovers become the human again and they go home to marry and they live happily (ATU 401a: The Soldier in the Enchanted Castle).

On the other hand, Madura folktale, Aryo Menak is one of Indonesia tale with ATU 400, the similar title is Jaka Tarub from Java island. This story is combined with ATU number 413, the Stolen Clothing and also ATU number 313, The Magic Flight. Aryo Menak was the young farmer who want married but he could not find any girl who he loved. Till some day in his journey he heard the splashed water and closed it to have a look. He found seven angels bathed in the lake. He took the youngest one shawl and hid it. The six of angels could return back to the paradise but the youngest one. He pretended helping her, brought her to his house, and married her. This couple had

son and lived for long time till one day Aryo Menak broke his wife rule. She reminded him not to stalking when she was cooking in the kitchen. Because using her magic power, she could cook one seed of rice became one pan of rice. Otherwise Aryo Menak was curious and stalking. His wife lost her magical power and she took the rice from the barn till she found her shawl in there. She took her shawl and returned back her husband and son on the earth.

These Story motifs are less completed comparing with Nemcova story. The combination with ATU number 413 is tightly connected but not really strongly connected with ATU 313 but at the beginning part when the seven angels came to the world and bathed in the lake. Another different motif is the ending of this story. The ending is definitely different with others in ATU number 400. Mostly the similar stories have the combination with ATU number 302, 310, 402a when the main character successfully accomplishes the tasks and married with the princess or the angel. Or, it is probably with ATU 313 when the main character uses the magical flight to flee his princess from the wicked witch. The ending in Aryo Menak is sad ending when the angel is left him and his son on the earth and returned to the paradise.

THE UNIQUENESS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MADURA TALES

Unlike in Czech and other Slavic tales that are dominated by the fairy tales, the folktales in Madura are dominated by the myth and legend. The myth is much recounted and explained the origin of the world and the phenomena of the nature while the legend is based on either real or supposedly real individual and their marvelous deeds (Lynch and Tomlison, p.99). According to the observation, there is only one fairy tales in Madura, Aryo

Menak and the rest of them are the myth and legend. The examples of myth in Madura are *The Origin of Madura* and *The Origin of Tajungan* whereas for the legend are *Rato Ebu*, *Bangsadcara* and *Ragapadme* and *Joko Tole*. During the form of folktales are myth and legend and coincidentally they are the reflection of the society custom and tradition, Madura folktales are much more referred to the cultural values such as moral and religious values. Thus, the image of the hero and heroine are always suggested as the holy people together with all their kindnesses, sincere attitude and behavior, and their great deeds for their society. Some of the folktales are the legacy from Hindu period and others are the legacy from the Islamic period, otherwise all of them emphasizing on the religion and moral teaching.

It is almost impossible to find the hero and the heroine in Madura folktales cheating to anybody else and tricking to reach their aims. Or other characters (trickster) used their wit to cheat other characters. For an instance is the legend of *Rato Ebu* or *Syarifah Ambami*. She is depicted as the woman who devoting her life to pray and serving for God. She loves her husband, family, and people around her very much, so that she sacrifices her life for all of people. The other examples is *Joko Tole*, The Prince of Madura and the knight of Majapahit Empire, he is depicted as the man who has the great loyalty, patience, and toughness. He believes the kindness will be the winner. He has proved, while the king tries to prove his loyalty. He accepts the marriage, he also takes care his blind wife well and patiently. With his patience and toughness he tries to cure his wife. Finally, he gets the miracle, when on the way of his trip, he finds the fresh water in the lake, and he asks his wife to wash her face. The miracle is given by the gods because he has been passed from the test from the Gods. It is his pride to his blind wife. He is tough man and husband, while

he accepts the marriage and never thought his wife weakness.

The only one different folktale in Madura is Aryo Menak due to the only one fairy tales in Madura and has the similarities with Java fairy tales entitled *Jaka Tarub*. The character, Aryo Menak, is the farmer, he is an ordinary people who married with an angel from the paradise. He also undergoes the trick and cheated by stealing the angel's shawl while she was taken a bath in the lake. Due to her missing of shawl, she cannot return to the paradise together with other angels, and married with Aryo Menak. Like other fairy tales in the world, the angel is also described to have the magical power. Otherwise, the stages of accomplishment are not told clearly because the ending of story is not totally happy ending due to the returning of the angel to the paradise. At last, Aryo Menak lived with his son on the earth, and his society was bathing with the wealth from the angel or his wife from the paradise. This story has the sad ending then the moral is retained stronger than the aspect of the entertaining and amusing to the readers.

Further in Madura tradition, culture, and society, the woman becomes the central figure in the stories. This notion is dealing with the Islamized of the folktales in some Madura stories. The woman trusted as the most important person who brings up the children at home. Everybody should give the highest respect to the mother. Every attitude against the mother will be punished by God. The woman particularly mother must be appreciated. Some of the folktales in Madura use the mother/woman as their main character/heroine. It is the symbol of Madura culture and society if the woman is holy creature. Every of her prayer to God will come true. It is the strong belief in Madura society. In Madura folktales there are two main stories in line with the role of the woman, the first is Rato Ebu and the

second is Bendoro Gung in the story of The Origin of Madura. Grenby (2008) argues that some critics have argued that moral tales often present a feminist programme (p.68). It indicates that a lot of folktales telling the theme about woman struggle or at least, woman characters are as the heroine/ the main character in the story. The women usually are depicted as an "angel" who has a kind heart, good attitude and behavior, and self – sacrifice for other people interest. As the heroine, the woman will oppose "the evil" and overcome the problem as the central of the story. Sometimes, they will be described as the tough women who can face the difficulties in their life. The following two folktales try to give the general understanding related with the woman characteristics in Madura. Because the Madura folktales mostly are recently documented, there have to adapt in the literary folktales and it is not easy to look for its ATU index, its connection with other folktales in the world. Some of them such as Aryo Menak and Joko Tole have been dealing with some stories across nation (it has been discussed above), but the rest of the folktales need the profound analysis and further research.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Madura has myriads of folktales otherwise mostly they are the wonder folktales. Due to its status as the wonder folktales, it is really need to link with the other folktales in the world both wonder and literary folktales to get the new perspectives in the children literature sphere. ATU index as the media to link among the folktales in the world leads Madura folktales conveying its uniqueness. The starting point is to rewrite the Madura folktales using the new perspective and principle of children literature such as by modifying the sad or tragic ending, minimizing the violence, and designing the illustration.

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