STUDY OF LEVI-STRAUSS STRUCTURALISM IN THE BULUSAN TRADITION AS A PEOPLE'S STORY IN KUDUS, CENTRAL JAVA

Diki Wahyudi^{1*}, Sahid Teguh Widodo², Firman Aziz³, Wilma Silvia Y.⁴

^{1,2,4}Universitas Sebelas Maret ³Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

*<u>dikiwahyudi@student.uns.ac.id</u>, <u>sahidteguhwidodo@yahoo.com</u>, <u>Firman.aziz@upi.edu</u>, <u>wilmasy03@student.uns.ac.id</u>

ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the existence of the annual tradition of Bulusan celebration as folklore in Kudus which is considered to have a structure. This study aims to describe the structures behind the *Bulusan* folklore in the Kudus community, Central Java. The formulation of the research problem is as follows: 1) Does the *Bulusan* folklore have a structure? 2) How is the transformation of the structure of the Bulusan folklore? This study uses a literature review method regarding various existing sources. The results of this study are as follows. 1) *Bulusan* story has a structure consisting of external structure, internal structure, and oppositional relations. 2) the transformation of the story is divided into six points, one of which is the Bulus transformation as a form of fertility and prosperity. Thus, this folklore about Bulus is relevant to be reviewed based on Levi Strauss structuralism analysis.

Keywords: Folklore, Levi Strauss Structuralism, Bulus, Bulusan.

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a multicultural society consisting of various cultures. Various cultures of the Indonesian people, ranging from race, ethnicity, language, religion/belief, and other cultures. Among the many tribes in Indonesia, the most dominating tribe is the Javanese. Sunanang & Luthfi (2015: 2)6 explain that the Javanese and Sundanese are two of the many tribes in Indonesia. The Javanese still believe in the existence of myths and believe in things that are supernatural/mystical and mythical. Myth is not an ordinary or arbitrary conversation, but a communication system that carries messages so that it becomes part of the general public's belief in the system (Barthes, 2010: 295)7. In connection with myth, it is also in line with Endraswara (2004: 198)3 which reveals that myth is part of belief in sacred stories which usually have the character of a god or certain figure who is considered to have a major influence on life. These figures are usually always respected, glorified, or idolized for certain reasons, such as reasons for the safety of life. Then, Danandjaja (2002: 50)1 reveals that myths include stories that are considered true and are considered sacred by those who have stories.

The Javanese tribe in question is further specified into regional zones, one of which is the Kudus Regency, Central Java Province. Kudus Regency is known as a santri area and is also known as a center for the development of Islam which has emerged since the Middle Ages. This is evidenced by the presence of three *Wali/Sunan* tombs, namely Sunan Kudus, Sunan Muria, and Sunan Kedu. Then, a myriad of folk tales or myths was stored and developed in the community. One of the famous myths is *Bulus/Bulusan* which people often known as *Bulusan* folklore. The Bulusan tradition is a cultural heritage that is still maintained today. It is also celebrated almost every year. The community believes

that the Bulusan folklore is a tradition that is considered sacred because it contains taboos that must be adhered to so that the folklore and taboos continue to be implemented by the community.

Danandjaja (1997:2) explains that folklore is part of a collective culture that is conveyed and passed down from generation to generation, also traditional in different versions, both in oral form and examples accompanied by gestures or mnemonic devices. Then, Danandjaja (1997:3-5) reveals the characteristics of folklore, namely having an oral nature, being traditional, existing in different versions, tending to be formulaic, anonymous, having a collective function, paralogical, common property, and plain. or spontaneous. This is in line with Daulay (2014:149) explaining that folklore is a culture that has been attached to community groups. Based on these opinions, one of the folk tales found in Kudus is the *Bulusan* folklore. *Bulusan* folklore is a folk tale that is disseminated orally and from generation to generation and is trusted by the community if it happens. The *Bulusan* folklore is included in a local legend that is believed by the community to occur because it is related to the name of the Sumber village. Following Danandjaja (1997:75-83) which states that local legends are legends or folklore related to a place, the name of the place, and the typographical form of a place.

This research will dissect the structures behind the *Bulusan* folklore using the Levi-Strauss structuralism analysis knife so that the relationships between elements can be found. Then, it can also be revealed the meaning implied in the *Bulusan* folklore. By revealing the hidden structure and meaning of the folklore. There is also a formulation in this research is as follows. 1) Does *Bulusan* folklore have structure? 2) How is the transformation of the structure of the *Bulusan* folklore?

B. METHOD

This study uses Levi Strauss' theory of structuralism with the reason that the author wants to know the structure that builds the myth of the *Bulusan* Folklore. Prakoso (2006:16) explains that none of the elements in a structural system can change without producing changes in all other elements. Thus, the most important thing in structuralism is the intertwining of elements with other elements in forming a meaning. Ahimsa Putra (2006:60-61) reveals that structure is a relation of relations or a system of relations. Then, there are two kinds of structures, namely the outer structure (surface structure) and the deep structure (inner structure). The outer structure is related to the relations between elements based on empirical characteristics, while the inner structure is composed of an external structure that has been created but does not always appear on the empirical side. The internal structure, the term transformation is different from the general meaning, namely, change. In this context, Ahimsa Putra (2006: 61) reveals that transformation is defined as "transformation" or "malih" in Javanese, meaning that in the transformation a change will take place at the surface level while at a higher level the change does not occur. For example, the transformation of symbolism appears in language.

Levi Strauss adopts a structural analysis model from linguistics that was first born in analyzing myths, also placing myths into certain parts in a linear manner, and even cuts in several episodes that contain descriptions of certain ideas or topics. Then, identification (characters, events, and places) is carried out carefully to find out the similarities and further differences, so that they can be arranged syntagmatically (horizontally) and paradigmatically (vertical), the mitem or story units can be searched first so that the message can be caught easily. Ceriteme is the same as myth and like linguistic analysis, the meaning of an element depends on its syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations with other elements.

Miteme according to Levi-Strauss (in Brata, 2013:205) is an element of mythical discourse construction which is also a kosokbali unit (oppositional) while ceriteme is an extension of a myth if the message has not been given. The myth or story is contained in a series of sentences, fragments of a paragraph, or a paragraph that has a certain meaning. From this, it can be found the relationship between the characters which shows the similarities and differences. These relations can then be transformed or transferred in the form of positional relations that show the network of relationships between characters, events, domains, and characters in a model. Thus, the model is a simplification of the analysis of a (or even more) myth in which the core message of the whole myth can be mapped (Brata, 2013: 205).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Does Bulusan folklore have a structure?

1. Bulusan Folklore Narration

The narratives of *Bulusan* folklore/myths are obtained from various literatures that have been mixed into a narrative story. Broadly speaking, the narrative of *Bulusan* folklore is as follows.

The *Bulus* story or often known as the Bulusan tradition is one of the folk tales and has become a community tradition in Sumber Hamlet, Hadipolo Village, Jekulo District, Kudus, Central Java. Bulusan is a tradition that is always commemorated every month of Shawwal (8th day of Eid al-Fitr). This tradition has existed since ancient times and still survives today.

It is told about a cleric who spread Islam named Mbah Kiai Dudo. He has students named Umara and Umari. He also has a big dream/mission to establish a pesantren so that Islam can spread and develop quickly.

The long journey begins...

Mbah Kiai Dudo is a cleric who traveled a very long way until he was able to find an area that met the criteria for a pesantren area to be built. As a sign of finding a suitable area, he marked the place with a maja tree which indicated the area was under Majapahit rule. After marking with a tree, Mbah Kiai rested.

Start the next mission, which is to make changes to forest areas that are still overgrown with shrubs, wilderness, and swamps. Initially, no one dared to cut down and even touch the forest which had always been considered haunted. It is said that there are still many supernatural creatures and wild animals so that in the past it was often known as jalmo moro jalmo mati (who comes will die). Mbah Kiai Dudov dismissed the issue by daring to take risks for the sake of establishing a resting place and for the spread of Islam.

Mbah Kiai Dudo planted the area with duku seeds which he brought from the Mataram kingdom. It is hoped that in the future the new hamlet area will be famous for duku fruit which is said to taste the best in all of Indonesia. However, the myth about the duku fruit has not been proven true because of the scarcity of duku trees that grow around the hamlet of Sumber.

Sunan Muria planned to have a meeting with Mbah Kiai Dudo. It was the 17th of the month of Ramadan which also coincided with the night of Nuzulul Quran. Sunan wanted to read the holy verses of the Quran with Kiai Dudo to celebrate the night of Nuzurul Quran. While on his way, to be precise in the rice fields, he saw the two students of Mbah Kiai Dudo being ndaut or pulling

the grass around the rice at night. He paused for a moment and said to them both, "Oh, why don't you read the Quran? Not just *ndaut* (pulling rice seeds from the nursery) in the fields like a *Bulus*!"

As a result of Sunan's words, the two students of Mbah Kiai Dudo immediately transformed into *Bulus* (freshwater turtles). The words that Sunan Muria uttered were probably said by accident.

Mbah Kiai Dudo was sad to hear the news that his students had turned into Bulus. On the other hand, one Bulus with a sad tone said "Maybe we have sinned doing night work, especially now that the holy month of Ramadan coincides with the night of Nuzurul Quran."

"Who really forbids working at night?" the other Bulus complained.

"It could be that Dewi Padi (the goddess of rice) doesn't want us to be here at night." Another Bulus said.

At that time, their knowledge of Islam was still mixed with the culture of their ancestors. They still believe in the existence of the Goddess of Rice. In addition, Mbah Kiai Dudo also did not eliminate ancestral traditions because at that time he was still mixing old culture with Islamic culture (cultural acculturation).

Mbah Kiai Dudo made an effort in a friendly manner to Sunan Muria and apologized for the coverage made by his students. However, Mbah Kiai Dudo's efforts were in vain because Sunan Muria could not do much about the curse of the two students. They couldn't possibly turn back into humans.

Sunan Muria couldn't do much, but he used his stick to stick it into the ground. By the grace of Allah SWT. a spring or water source comes out (which is now the name of the Dukuh Sumber area) and the stick turns into a tree which is named the tombo ati tree.

Sunan Muria decided to leave Bulus. After some time, Sunan Muria came back to see Bulus. Suddenly Sunan was stalked by Bulus to the south. Sunan was surprised after looking back because Bulus followed him. Even though he was surprised, Sunan Muria responded with a warm smile. The location of the incident until now is called the Praseman rice field which is \pm 100 meters from the Bulus place.

According to a circulating myth, every Friday night Wage often hears the sounds of gongs and gamelan around the area. Even though no one played gongs or gamelan there.

Sunan Muria decided to rush south towards a mound of earth. He sat around the mound area while waiting for his arrival. Sunan had time to think, maybe Bulus is still following or not. Therefore, the mound area is called the Togok area. This was motivated by the fact that Sunan had *mbegogok* waiting for the Bulus. When he met Bulus, Sunan said, "*Wes kowe- kowe ayo melu aku mengko tak dokok neng tengahe desa, kowe-kowe mengko ben dikirimi anak putunem*". More or less, it means he is asking the Bulus to stay in the middle of the rice fields and an artificial tomb will be built in that place.

Although the origin of Bulus is male, in fact, the Bulus can breed anyway. In addition, everything is inseparable from the power of Allah SWT. *Wallahu alam*.

2. Bulusan Story Structure

The structure of *Bulusan* folklore/*Bulusan* myth is used to analyze using Levi Strauss' structuralism approach. The myth needs to be made into several episodes. The division of episodes is intended to make it easier for us to group each event and see the relationships between characters in the myth. Once grouped, it will be easier to understand and find the myths contained in the myths. This is very useful in carrying out structural analysis to get deep structures. There are six important episodes in this myth, namely the background episode of Mbah Dudo establishing a pesantren, the background episode of planting a duku tree, the episode of Sunan Muria visiting Mbah Kiai Dudo's death, the episode where Umara and Umari were cursed as Bulus, the episode of Mbah Kiai Dudo's guilt towards Umara and Umari, and the episode Sunan Muria came back to the rice fields to visit Bulus. More details will be presented as follows.

1st Episode: the background of Mbah Dudo building an Islamic boarding house, This episode begins with the presence of Mbak Kiai Dudo accompanied by his students named Umara and Umari (it is not clear how many students joined and it is not explained the figures who helped Mbah Kiai Dudo, apart from the two students). This is related to the mission of spreading Islam in a certain place. With the intention that Islamic civilization can develop in various regions. What Mbak Kiai Dudo did was very appropriate because he was willing to conjure up or change the bush forest area that was originally uninhabited, which initially had many wild animals, and is known as a haunted area. Now the area is a boarding school area. His persistence and courage resulted in a boarding school are located at the foot of Mount Muria.

2nd **Episode: the background behind the planting of Duku tree.** This episode signifies the need for an icon or sign as a characteristic of the area or region that marks the opening of a new hamlet area by Mbah Kiai Dudo. Duku seeds were chosen because they marked the area as a hallmark of the Mataram kingdom. Sunan hopes that in the future the marked area can be known as the duku fruit area that tastes the best. However, until now it has not been proven the truth of the existence of duku trees because of the rarity of duku trees that grow around the Sumber Hamlet area.

Episode 3: Sunan Muria visits the home of Mbah Kiai Dudo. This episode begins with the friendship between Sunan Muria and Mbah Kiai Dudo. From this relationship emerged the dean's desire to be with each other. as friends, it is necessary to maintain brotherly relations or in Islam it is often known as *ukhuwah Islamiyah*. It coincided with the month of Ramadan. Right on the seventeenth night or often known as the night of Nuzulul Qur'an, Sunan Muria traveled to visit the residence of Mbak Kiai Dudo. Sunan Muria uses the rice field route. While on his way, Sunan Muria found something suspicious in the rice field area. Sunan Muria paused and said to them. Sunan did not know that there was a victim behind his words. Until finally, he realized that there was a Bulus figure following his movements when he was about to continue his journey.

Episode 4: the Cursing of Umara and Umari into a Bulus. This episode is the impact of the words that Sunan Muria made to the figure who was *ndaut* (pulling grass in the fields). Yet behind it, there is the figure of Umara and Umari who became a victim of Sunan Muria's words. Umara and Umari turned into a *Bulus* because at that time they were *ndaut* at night in the fields. This news was only confirmed

after the two Bulus followed Sunan Muria until finally Sunan Muria realized that the Bulus who followed him was Mbak Kiai Dudo's second student. After some time, this news was known by Mbah Kiai Dudo as the teacher of the two Bulus incarnations of Umara and Umari.

Episode 5: The Guilt of Mbah Kiai Dudo towards Umara and Umari. This episode tells of the guilt and confusion that befell Mbah Kiai Dudo for letting Umara and Umari *ndaut* on the night of Nuzulul Qur'an. To make up for the guilt, Mbak Kiai Dudo apologized to Sunan Muria and asked that the two students be free from the curse. However, this was in vain because Sunan Muria could not grant Mbah Kiai Dudo's request. There is a stick that Sunan Muria plugged in the rice field area.

Episode 6: Sunan Muria came back to the rice field to visit the *Bulus***.** This episode tells of the return of Sunan Muria to *Bulus*' place. The feathers followed the steps of Sunan Muria. He was surprised because of these *Bulus*. Sunan was surprised, but he faced it with a warm smile. The Praseman rice field is ±100 meters from the Bulus area. In addition, the area near a *gumuk* (dune) which used to be the residence of Bulus, is now known as the *Togok* area.

3. Structural Analysis of Bulusan Story

To make it easier to analyze, it is necessary to first read the contents of the story as a whole because every episode that is made contains every myth. It is also necessary to pay attention to the position and relation of the episode itself in the whole story. The meaning of each of these episodes will be seen later, depending on the relations.

Structural analysis of episode 1, about the introduction of figures and the process of establishing the pesantren area. In this episode, we can see the relation of opposition. Mbah Kiai Dudo as teacher and Umara and Umari as students/students (teacher≠student). Then, the structure in this episode is the character Mbah Kiai Dudo who has a strong desire to establish an Islamic boarding school. This can be proven by his courage to turn a bush area which is famous for many wild and haunted animals, into a bustling and inhabited area. Other oppositional relations can also be found from the existence of the figure of the Kiai as a human being who is considered to have knowledge or intermediary to pray to God, the figure of the forest as one of God's creations, and God as the figure of omnipotence (human≠nature≠God).To make it easier to analyze, it is necessary to first read the contents of the story as a whole because every episode that is made contains every myth. It is also necessary to pay attention to the position and relation of the episode itself in the whole story. The meaning of each of these episodes will be seen later, depending on the relations.

The interpretation of episode 1, a Kiai can lead a mission to establish an Islamic boarding school in an area known to be wild and haunted. It could be, Mbah Kiai Dudo has high knowledge or maybe has a pet spirit like a genie. This is possible because of several other stories in Indonesia, for example, the story of *Sangkuriang* who uses the help of a genie to build a boat. It could be that Mbah Kiai Dudo has very high knowledge and is very well-maintained in his piety so that his relationship with God is very close. This is not necessarily successful if there is no God's power. God is the key to someone's success in doing something.

Structural analysis of episode 2, regarding the planting of duku trees. Mbah Kiai Dudo's character as a human takes an approach to nature which is marked by planting duku tree seeds (human≠nature).

The interpretation of episode 2, Mbah Kiai Dudo, as one of the people who lived and came from the Mataram kingdom, did not rule out the possibility that there was a suggestion from the royal

side that required each of his envoys to mark a stopover with something. The goal is that whatever happens can be easily traced. Just like today, the sophistication of Google Maps or GPS can mark an area.

Structural analysis of episode 3, This episode explained about the friendly relationship between Sunan Muria as a Wali Allah and Mbah Kiai Dudo as a Kiai. This creates a relationship between a Wali and a Kiai. Where scientifically and in degree, Wali is higher than Kiai.

The interpretation of episode 3, there may be a close relationship between the Wali and the Kiai. When viewed from the current life, the relationship between Kiai and Wali is not overt. The reason is, there is no so-called Wali in modern times like this. It only allows the relationship to be done supernaturally or invisible. There is even a story that Kiai, the expert in wisdom, was able to meet the Khidzir Prophet (*wallahu 'alam*).

Structural analysis of episode 4, the episode about the curse of the two students of Mbah Kiai Dudo into Bulus. This gives rise to oppositional relations. Mbah Kiai Dudo as the ruler and his two students as the ruled (giving order≠getting ordered).

The interpretation of episode 4, it could be that someone is so righteous, that he can change a person's form with just his mouth. This can also be seen from several stories that developed in Indonesia, for example, the story of Malin Kundang. The character of the mother who is told as a person who is treated badly by her child makes the mother utter spontaneous words that result in the curse of a child. This is possible if it is associated with Islamic religiosity. In Islam, the prayers that are answered are the prayers of the pious, the prayers of those who are hurt, and so on.

Structural analysis of episode 5, about the episode of guilt of a teacher towards his students. This has an opposition relationship, namely Mbah Kiai Dudo who ordered Umara and Umari to go to the fields to function as teachers, perpetrators, as well as those who ruled while Umara and Umari were students, victims, as well as those who were ordered to. Can be written (perpetrator \neq victim). Then there is binary opposition in the apology from the Kiai figure to Sunan. There is a tendency for the Kiai figure to be in a good position (apologizing) and the Sunan character to be in a bad position (not to forgive) (good \neq not good).

The interpretation of episode 5, about the episode that tells the guilt of Mbah Kiai Dudo. A Kiai can't order bad things for his students. Maybe there is an error or accident because no human being is perfect except God. In addition, the figure of Sunan Muria in this story is not told whether there was an attempt to return Umara and Umari to their original form or not. Sunan Muria refused. A good figure should always try his best and even be willing to sacrifice his body and soul for the sake of others.

Structural analysis of episode 6, regarding the return of Sunan Muria to *Bulus*. This gives rise to oppositional relations. Sunan Muria is responsible as the person who has cursed Umara and Umari to become Bulus and serves as the perpetrator in this incident. Umara and Umari as figures who became victims of Sunan Muria's actions. If it is symbolized between Sunan Muria and Umara Umari, they become (the perpetrator≠victim). Then there are other oppositional relations, namely Sunan Muria as a human and Umara Umari as an animal (human≠animal).

Interpretation of episode 6, the form of a sense of responsibility should be done. Sunan Muria as a community figure has set an example that humans cannot escape responsibility for other creatures, including animals.

How is the transformation of the structure of the Bulusan folklore?

Transformation of episode 1: this episode transforms, initially when you want to clear the forest without using a machine, now if you want to clear the forest, you can use a machine, making it easier for people to do things, including making settlements.

Transformation of episode 2: this episode transforms from the presence of a *duku* tree seed as a sign, now it turns into a shady *duku* tree. Then, tagging can also develop at this time with the presence of Google Maps, Waze, or GPS so that it can make it easier for other people to find an area.

Transformation of episode 3: this episode transforms between the close relationship between teacher and student, superior and subordinate, and so on. This characterizes the Indonesian people who have good relations with fellow human beings.

Transformation episode 4: This episode tells of Bulus, who transforms as a symbol of family or unity (because of the *Bulus* shell), humility (because *Bulus* walks on all fours), or according to his goals slowly but surely (because of *Bulus* walking slowly, but surely).

Transformation episode 5: tells the story of Sunan Muria's stick that resembles a tree trunk. This is a transformation of the form of fertility in the area where Bulus lives.

Transformation episode 6: Sunan Muria's *patilasan* (tomb) is transformed into a fertile and bustling area. Although there is a myth about the sound of traditional music there. In addition, the mound of the earth also symbolizes the uniqueness of the region

D. CONCLUSION

The *Bulusan* folklore tells of the character of Mbah Kiai Dudo who neglects to give assignments to his students, resulting in the curse of Umara and Umari. *Bulusan* is an annual tradition that is preserved by the people of Kudus, Central Java. This is evident from the frequent commemoration of Bulusan every month of Shawwal by displaying various artistic creations and various special foods of the local community.

Levi Strauss' structuralism analysis can reveal the episodes in the Bulusan story so that many interesting things can be used as reflections. Hopefully, the results of this analysis can add benefits to readers, especially readers who are deepening structural analysis.

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