



## Folktale of Sewawar Karanganyar Waterfall in Literary Ecological Perspective

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### **Abstract**

Literary works that discuss the environment are often born from writers who have a high concern for the environment. Literature can also collaborate with ecology, so the science of literary ecology was born. In this study, literature is in the form of legends in folktale. Therefore, this study aims to examine folktale with literary ecological insights in Sewawar waterfall. Mainly in exploring the legends that exist in the waterfall with the study of ecological literature with environmental insight. This research uses Danandjana's folktale theory and Alexander Sonny Keraf's environmental ethical theory which is a derivative of Arne Naess's deep ecology theory. This research method uses descriptive qualitative with an ethnographic approach. Data collection used interviews and observations, and data analysis techniques in this study used interactive theory. The results show that the existence of folktale confirms the existence of folktale that is environmentally sound. As is the case with the folktale of Sewawar Waterfall, which in the belief of the community has many legends and myths behind it along with a three-way spring that is divided into different functions.

**Keywords:** *Literary Ecology; Environmental Ethics; Folktale; Sewawar Waterfall; Karanganyar: Legend*

### **Introduction**

Human survival depends on the good life of nature. The ecosystem of life covers primary human needs. (Farida, 2020: 48). However, various global problems related to the environment and environmental pollution of nature carried out by humans can often damage the human environmental ecosystem itself. This can imply that there is a relationship between the environment and the owner of an important role in human life in shaping the harmony and balance of life. (Arisa et al., 2021: 75).

Literary works that discuss the environment are often born from writers who have a high concern for the environment. (Sari, 2018: 21). The source of inspiration from writers can be explored more deeply through the ability of writers to mix environmental aspects that contain expressions of feelings, love for the environment, or criticism of nature contained in literary works. (Abror et al., 2022: 47). Literary works can take many forms, such as novels, short stories, poetry, and others (Aziz & Mulyawati, 2022). Besides that, there is a form of oral literature which is the distribution of literature in unwritten form such as fairy tales, legends, sages, and folktale which are part of literary studies (Junaini et al., 2017). (Junaini et al., 2017: 40).

Oral literature in the form of folktale does not depart from a cultural vacuum, but there are important actors in the form of literary works in supporting the environment as a determinant of the birth of folktale. (Simanjuntak, 2021: 138). If examined again, all kinds of cultural traditions and folktale circulating among the community are the result of acculturation between culture and environment. (Bahardur & Ediyono, 2017: 25. This can imply a statement stating that folktale is something that can be in direct contact with the environment. This is one of the efforts to preserve the local wisdom of the local community (Andriyani & Alber, 2019: 51).

Sewawar Waterfall is a tourist attraction that is often decorated with various folktale that is divided into myths, legends, or anything that is still related to oral literature in the community. The existence of the Sewawar Waterfall folktale reinforces that folktale can be connected to environmental literature, which is often called literary ecology. The environmental insight of the community in folktale can coexist directly with the surrounding nature including humans themselves.

The contribution of folktale can be an inspiration for the creation of tourist attractions (Isnaini et al., 2022). The folktale behind the existence of tourist attractions forms a symbiotic mutualism. Both have a balanced reciprocal relationship, although they are slightly different. Literature needs the environment as an ecosystem, while ecology has the reciprocity of living things with their environment. This definition refers to the relationship of literature to the environment (Larasati & Manut, 2022: 716).

Thus, this research will focus on exploring the folktale of Sewawar Waterfall located in Karanganyar Regency. The development of folktale prioritizes cultural originality from generation to generation. Over time, the existence of folktale in the community also undergoes changes and developments. Anyone folktale has a form like an anonym that anyone has the right to create and legalize its ownership rights. (Danandjaja, 1997: 51).

Ecology in folktale is important to study. Given the high degradation of public awareness in maintaining and preserving the environment (Niman, 2019: 93). The discussion of the environment that intersects with folktale is currently an important agenda. Environmental care is defined as attitudes and actions that always try to prevent damage to the surrounding natural environment and develop efforts to repair natural damage that occurs is the urgency of this research. Based on this urgency, this research aims to examine folktale with a literary ecological perspective in Sewawar waterfall. Primarily in exploring the legends that exist in the waterfall with the study of ecological literature with environmental insight.

## **Research Methods**

Qualitative research is research conducted in a natural way that emphasizes the aspect of understanding the object and the results of the research. (Walliman, 2021). In line with that, qualitative research is also research conducted to look at phenomena that occur in the subject holistically in a special natural context (Moleong, 2019). The research method that will be used in this research is the descriptive qualitative method. The qualitative descriptive method explains the phenomena or findings in the data sources related to the research (Sugiyono, 2016). (Sugiyono, 2016).

This research uses an ethnographic approach. The ethnographic approach is an empirical approach that provides an in-depth analysis and description of culture. (Insani & Irwandi, 2022). This is because the data to be analyzed is in the realm of folktale studies. Some ethnographic researchers view culture as having a major function in symbolic meaning, including cultural practices that reflect the past and continue to develop and be preserved today (Vanderstoep & John, 2022). (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009).

Data collection procedures used interviews, observation, and document analysis. This research uses theory and source triangulation. This is because researchers want valid data about this research study through interviews with various informants who have different knowledge and perspectives. It can also serve as a comparison of information from several selected informants. This research will use interactive data analysis techniques. This is in line with what is expressed by the Miles and Huberman model which states that qualitative data analysis activities are carried out interactively until the resulting data is completely saturated (Creswell, 2014). (Creswell, 2014).

## ***Result and Discussion***

The existence of ecological literature in folktale is a form of green campaign and environmental education towards ecological objects that can be researched through literary works. This is one way to take an attitude towards the environment through the existence of literature. (Hayati, 2016: 124). Meanwhile, literary ecology is a theory that seeks to discuss the relationship between literature and the environment. In addition, literature has an inseparable relationship with the environment (Andriyani & Alber, 2016: 124). (Andriyani & Alber, 2019: 52)..

Folktale is embodied in the local identity contained in the lives of traditional rural communities. This factor can arise from the support of a sense of belonging to a tradition that has roots and history (Danandjaja, 1997). (Danandjaja, 1997). Folktale is not just another form of anthropology or literary study, but rather a study of folktale that touches every dimension of human experience and artistic expression. It grows out of literary studies, is rooted in anthropology, and contains elements of psychology and sociology. This causes people's knowledge to coalesce out of a sense of commonality and shared responsibility in a local identity that was born first.

According to Bascom, folktale can be divided into three major parts, namely myths (myths), legends, and fairy tales. (Komariah, 2018: 104). However, every folktale created within the scope of community life has the same pattern of structure and discussion. Folktale is focused on cultural patterns in a community group so that its sustainability can always be maintained. Of course, with traditions that are still preserved by rural communities, especially today. While folktale teaches how to learn about people, think about how we communicate and make meaning (Sims & Stephens, 2005: 3).

Folktale included in regional legends is a story related to the origin of a place, place names, and topographic forms, namely the surface shape of an area that is hilly, ravine, and so on. Karanganyar folktale such as the Sewawar waterfall can also be categorized as local legends.

The results showed that Sewawar Waterfall indicated that it had not attracted the attention of the surrounding community. It turns out that there are still many people who do not know the existence of Sewawar Waterfall which is located in Karanganyar Regency. Therefore, the existence of this waterfall tour is based on the legends and myths that surround it. It is said that the people of Tringguli Village have a belief that a long time ago in Tringguli Village there were still many forestry bushes. Then there was a dog that wandered in the middle of the community settlement, then secretly the dog stole a very large sheep belonging to a local community member. People who knew about the incident continued to chase the dog until the dog could not be found. The community believed that the dog was a demon. The community was also surprised by the appearance of Sewawar waterfall in the place where the dog disappeared. Until now, people there still believe that some requests or prayers can be granted through the waterfall as an intermediary.

Sewawar Waterfall stands strong and flows beautifully with three branches of flow that split downward. Sewawar is unique in its shape. When viewed horizontally, the waterfall flows downwards and empties into three different water points. The shape of the waterfall itself spreads in three directions, namely on the left, right and center sides. According to local beliefs, each end of the three waterfalls has

different functions and properties. This depends on the intention of the visitor to Sewawar waterfall when coming there. The waterfall on the left is intended for someone who wants to gain magic or greatness as a human being. Simply put, visitors only need to swim or bathe to the left side of the waterfall to get the magic that is said to be guarded by a powerful genie named Surodipoyo in the form of Reog Ponorogo.

In addition, the position of the waterfall in the middle of Sewawar is believed to be an acceleration in asking for anything through that intermediary, so that only by soaking in the middle, it is believed that any wishes will quickly come true. This has been proven and is the belief of the local community when farmers want a good harvest, school children want good exam results, and so on. All of them swim in the spring point in the center, with the desired results.

Furthermore, for the right side of the waterfall, public belief refers to water that is efficacious as a cure for various diseases suffered. People who want to cure diseases through the intermediary of Sewawar waterfall can directly soak at the waterfall point on the right, even visitors or the public can directly drink the water on condition that it must be done with the permission or sowan to the kuncen of Sewawar waterfall.

Semawar Waterfall is also inseparable from the legend of Dewi Nawang Wulan, an angel from heaven who could not return to the sky because her shawl was taken by a man named Jaka Tarub. Jaka Tarub was fascinated by the beauty of Dewi Nawang Wulan, so he was determined to take Nawang Wulan's shawl until finally Jaka Tarub married her. It is said that people believe that Semawar waterfall is one of the bathing places for angels in heaven.

The principles of environmental ethics rest on two key elements of the theories of biocentrism and ecocentrism. First, the moral community is not limited to the social community but includes the entire ecological community. Second, human nature is not only a social being but also an ecological being. These two main elements color all the principles of environmental ethics that are presented.

The legend in the folktale of Sewawar waterfall has relevance to the ethical principles of environmental preservation initiated by Arna Naess by including respect for nature, the principle of responsibility, the principle of cosmic solidarity, the principle of compassion for nature, the principle of no harm, the principle of living simply and in harmony with nature, the principle of justice to the environment, the principle of environmental democracy, and the principle of moral integration. (Keraf, 2010). However, among the nine principles above, all of the ethical principles of environmental care that are most relevant to the folktale of Sewawar Waterfall are as follows.

### **1. Principle of Respect for Nature**

Respect for nature is one of the literary ecological values contained in the folktale of Sewawar Waterfall. The principle of respect for nature in the environment refers to the idea that humans must respect and protect nature and the ecosystem around it (Ansori et al., 2021:715) This principle underlies the philosophy of environmental conservation and sustainability, and involves awareness of our dependence on nature and the responsibility to keep the ecosystem balanced and well preserved. This is in accordance with the following folktale quote:

As a result, from ancient times until now, the waterfall has been a revered and sacred place, and is considered a place that brings miracles and good luck. This was also based on Wawaran's generosity in admitting his mistake and promising not to repeat it (ATSW/1/ES/HTA).

*(Alhasil dari zaman dahulu hingga sekarang, air terjun tersebut menjadi tempat yang dihormati dan disucikan, serta dianggap sebagai tempat yang membawa keajaiban dan*

*keberuntungan. Hal itu juga didasari karena kemurahan hati Wawaran untuk mengakui kesalahannya dan berjanji untuk tidak mengulangi kesalahannya)*

Wawaran, who is the main character in the Sewawar Waterfall folktale, shows his generosity by admitting the mistakes he made to the community. Then the melting of Wawaran in the waterfall brought the community's paradigm to believe that Sewawar waterfall was not an ordinary waterfall. Therefore, because of its sacredness, people respect the existence of this waterfall to this day. Thus, this is proof of the principle of respect for nature depicted by the village community.

## 2. Principle of Responsibility

The principle of responsibility for nature is an ethical view that emphasizes human obligations and responsibilities to maintain and protect the natural environment. This principle reflects the recognition that humans have an important role in managing and preserving nature for the sustainability of ecosystems, the earth and the welfare of all living creatures in this world, as stated in the quote below:

People are increasingly asking questions and tend to suspect each other

other. Like it or not, Mr. Demang has to intervene directly to resolve this problem (ATSW/2/ES/PTJ).

*(Masyarakat kian bertanya-tanya dan cenderung saling mencurigai satu sama*

*lain. Mau tidak mau Pak Demang harus turun tangan langsung untuk menyelesaikan permasalahan ini)*

The principle of environmental responsibility targets all individuals and groups of living creatures who care about their environment. In the context of the quote above, this was caused by Wawaran's actions, which ate the residents' livestock. This causes anxiety for residents who are victims. Therefore, Pak Demang must step in to resolve this problem fairly and completely. This is a form of responsibility that he carries out in providing natural sustainability. This principle of responsibility requires humans to initiate real action towards the environment.

## 3. The Principle of Cosmic Solidarity

The Principle of Cosmic Solidarity in literary ecology relates to concepts that reflect a deeper understanding of the relationship between the universe and other living things. This concept refers to the understanding that all living things, the universe, and its contents as a whole are connected and interconnected holistically, as in the folktale quote below:

Even though Mr. Demang has provided information, the public is not yet completely satisfied. In the evening, a group of youths carried out mobile patrols using only torches in the dark of night (ATSW/3/ES/SK).

*(Meskipun Pak Demang sudah memberikan keterangan, namun masyarakat belum sepenuhnya terpuaskan. Malam harinya, sekelompok pemuda melaksanakan patroli keliling dengan hanya menggunakan obor di tengah kegelapan malam)*

The principle of cosmic solidarity refers to the understanding that humans are an integral part of nature. In fact, this principle can inspire a spirit of solidarity. Not only that, this principle also expresses a feeling of shared destiny and responsibility between living things and nature. The quotation from the folktale above depicts the condition of the community which still has not received peace and satisfaction due to the initiation of action initiated by Pak Demang. However, with the strong principle of solidarity, a

group of people led by young people continued to carry out patrols solely to assist the task of Pak Demang, which was the name for the village head in ancient times.

#### 4. Principles of Love and Concern for Nature

The principle of compassion and care for nature refers to an ethical view that emphasizes the importance of having positive feelings, sympathy and empathy for nature, the environment and other living creatures. This is an understanding that states that caring for and protecting nature with love is an obligation for every living creature. This is in line with the following folktale quote:

Mbah Kelantung is a village shaman who is kind, wise and full of affection for animals. Not only does he have kindness, Mbah Kelantung is considered to have the ability to communicate with animals. No wonder he is respected by the villagers (ATSW/4/ES/KS).

*(Mbah Kelantung adalah seorang dukun desa yang memiliki sifat baik hati, bijaksana dan penuh kasih sayang pada hewan-hewan. Tidak hanya memiliki kebaikan, Mbah Kelantung dianggap memiliki kemampuan untuk berkomunikasi dengan hewan. Tak ayal Ia dihormati oleh warga desa)*

This quote is a fragment of ATSW folktale which depicts a form of affection and concern for nature. The empathy felt by Mbah Kelantung towards Wawaran illustrates her sense of compassion and care for the survival of living creatures. Because basically every living creature must not feel discrimination and has the right to have the same rights to live and develop well.

#### 5. No Harm Principle

The No Harm principle can be defined as the principle that one cannot carry out activities that are detrimental or threaten the existence of nature and other living creatures. This principle can also be interpreted as the principle of ethical action which emphasizes the importance of avoiding or minimizing damage and negative impacts on individuals, groups or the environment in the environmental context.

That's it, we will hold another patrol in all corners of the village for this week. If necessary, we involve more time. But I advise, don't harm nature, because we will catch the perpetrators, not kill them. Especially in ways that damage the ecosystem and natural balance in this village (ATSW/5/ES/NH).

*(Begini saja, kita adakan patroli lagi ke semua penjuru desa selama seminggu ini. Kalau perlu, kita libatkan masa yang lebih banyak. Tapi saya berpesan, jangan ada yang merusak alam, karena kita akan menangkap pelakunya, bukan membunuhnya. Apalagi dengan cara-cara yang merusak ekosistem dan keseimbangan alam di desa ini)*

In the aftermath of the many protests from residents, Pak Demang finally provided a policy related to resolving problems directly related to Wawaran. In this fragment of folktale, Mr. Demang orders several villagers to take part in a patrol to catch Wawaran, who has been troubling the residents. However, in the midst of this order, Pak Demang gave a mandate not to destroy nature and damage the ecosystem in his village.

#### 6. Principles of Living Simple and in Harmony with Nature

Living simply is often seen as a way to improve the quality of life by focusing more on things that really matter and support personal well-being and the well-being of society, especially those related to the environment. In the folktale fragment above, natural harmony is marked by the flow of water from the Sewawar waterfall which flows into three different paths. Meanwhile, there is a depiction that

suggests that the waterfall was formed because of the harmony between the universe and the miracle that occurred. More than that, simplicity and harmony are also included in the folktale fragment below.

Many people try treatment but are not cured. But by drinking a sip of the Sewawar waterfall and bathing there, you will immediately be healed as before (ATSW/6/ES/HS).

*(Banyak orang-orang yang mencoba berobat namun tidak sembuh. Tetapi dengan meminum seteguk air terjun Sewawar dan mandi di sana, akan langsung diberikan kesembuhan seperti sedia kala)*

This belief motivates local people to harmonize their lives with nature. This role model is based on the Sewawar waterfall which has many magical properties. Moreover, these benefits can be obtained in a very simple way, and do not deviate from natural provisions.

### 7. Principles of Justice

This principle of justice towards the environment speaks more to a system of human behavior which must have rules so that it can have a positive impact on environmental sustainability. This principle also speaks of equal and fair access for anyone who is directly involved in environmental maintenance. As in the folktale quote below.

That night, around 30 villagers got ready to search for and hunt down Wawaran. They carried torches and spears as weapons to face the big dog. The search began. The search team was divided into two groups to narrow the search area (ATSW/7/ES/K).

*(Malam itu, sekitar 30 warga desa bersiap-siap mencari dan memburu Wawaran. Mereka membawa obor dan tombak sebagai senjata untuk menghadapi anjing besar itu. Pencarian pun dimulai. Tim pencarian terbagi menjadi dua kelompok untuk mempersempit wilayah pencarian)*

The quote above is a fragment of ATSW folktale which implies the principle of environmental justice. The principle of justice is not explicitly emphasized. However, from this, elements of justice can be identified in the context of this story. The division of the search team into two groups was an action that could be interpreted as an attempt to ensure that the search was fair and efficient.

### 8. Principles of Democracy

The principle of democracy towards the environment has relevance in the environmental sector, especially in direct policy making by anyone who has authority with the aim of preserving the environment through the good and bad of a policy. In ATSW folktale there are fragments of folktale which imply the principles of democracy, including the following.

"How is this, sir?! Every night our livestock die in an unusual way. We have to catch the culprit." Complained a resident.

"Yes. I will gather representatives of residents, including victims whose livestock died. Just wait for the results. If necessary, we create a command post, and we trap the perpetrator (ATSW/8/ES/D).

*(“Bagaimana ini, Pak?! Setiap malam ternak kita harus mati secara tak lazim. Kita harus tangkap pelakunya”. Keluh seorang warga. “Iya. Saya akan mengumpulkan perwakilan warga, termasuk para korban yang ternaknya mati. Tunggu saja hasilnya. Bila perlu kita buat posko, dan kita jebak pelakunya)*

The folktale quote above manifests the existence of democratic principles towards the environment. Pak Demang, who is a leader in the village, is required to resolve the problems faced by local residents as soon as possible, especially in the case of the disappearance of residents' livestock. Therefore, Pak Demang took the initiative to gather representatives of residents, including all victims whose livestock died. This aims to find the best solution in decision making which will determine the direction of the policies taken.

### 9. Principles of Moral Integration

The principle of moral integration that occurs in ATSW folktale is more focused on the policy pattern carried out by a leader to maintain moral attitudes and behavior for the positive public interest. As in the folktale quote below.

BRAAAK!

The sound of the table crashing was loud. The sound of the table crashing made everyone present fall silent instantly. The atmosphere is quiet. Not a single sound could be heard.

Because the cleanliness of this village is just as important as solving this problem." Mr. Demang said firmly.

"How can it be approved?"

"You can! The residents agreed in unison."

Pak Demang has calmly made a decision. It was Mr Carik's turn to give directions to the residents who would be involved in looking for Wawaran (ATSW/9/ES/IM)

(BRAAAK!

*Suara gebrakan meja terdengar keras. Suara gebrakan meja itu membuat semua massa yang hadir terdiam seketika. Suasana hening. Tidak ada satu suara pun yang terdengar.*

*Karena kebersihan desa ini juga sama pentingnya dengan penyelesaian masalah ini". Tegas Pak Demang.*

*"Bagaimana bisa disetujui?"*

*"Bisaaa! Warga serentak menyetujuinya."*

*Pak Demang dengan tenang telah mengambil keputusan. Giliran Pak Carik yang memberikan arahan kepada warga yang akan dilibatkan untuk mencari Wawaran)*

In the ATSW folktale fragment above, the conflict that occurred during the deliberation activities carried out by Pak Demang with local residents apparently provoked Pak Demang's anger. However, the principle of good moral integrity is reflected in the folktale fragment above. When there was confusion among the villagers about how to look for Wawaran, Pak Demang took a bold step by issuing a firm statement.

### Conclusions

The folktale about the origin of Sewawar Waterfall strengthens the position of the existence of a cluster of literary ecological sciences which contains a form of green campaign and environmental



education regarding ecological objects that can be researched through literary works. Thus, the folktale about the origin of Sewawar Waterfall contains all relevant environmental ethics, including the principle of respect for nature, the principle of responsibility, the principle of cosmic solidarity, the principle of love and care for nature, the principle of no harm, the principle of simple living and harmony with nature, the principles of democracy, the principles of justice, and the principles of moral integration.

The principles of environmental ethics can better understand and recognize the importance of environmental ethics in the context of nature conservation and maintaining ecosystem balance in folktale. This also confirms that there is approach to awareness of environmental issues in folktale, while encouraging efforts to face environmental challenges in an ethical and sustainable way. The existence of legends and myths in it adds to the impression of interest in the existence of folktale. Like the folktale of Sewawar Waterfall which has direct contact with humans and the environment. Thus, this research provides a comprehensive and relevant view in understanding and facing environmental ethical challenges in the context of today's society.

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