



An Eco-critical Study of the Lio Tribe's Oral Literature in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara

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Abstract: This study aims to identify, describe, and explain the pastoral literary narrative study model in the Lio oral literature of Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara; identify, describe, and explain the pastoral and apocalyptic literary narratives in the Lio oral literature of Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. Based on the results of research and data analysis on the Lio oral literature in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, several legends were discovered, including the Legend of Lake Lopi, the Legend of Lake Mbata, the Legend of Lake Sora, the Legend of Lake Kelimutu, the fairy tale of Queen Ji'e and Queen Re'e, and the myth of Bobi and Nombi (the goddess of rice). Based on the results of data identification using the Environmental Literature Study Model, the pastoral narrative study model and the apocalyptic narrative study model were found. The results of this analysis indicate that the pastoral narrative study model in the Lio folklore of Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, ecological representation contains elements of environmental wisdom as follows. First, pastoral literature in the oral literature of the Lio Tribe represents the livelihood of village communities in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, who are generally farmers. In addition, the idyll element shows ideal behavior that refers to village environmental wisdom, namely the harmonious relationship between humans and God, the relationship between humans and other humans, and the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. The connection between humans and God in relation to environmental wisdom in the Lio Tribe is shown through the principles of life, mindset, and perspective of the community that always includes God in every activity they do that is closely related to the environment. Second, the form of nostalgia represents past memories experienced by several characters in Lio tribal folklore related to the prosperity of a region or an event. Third, the georgic element that shows the process of working in harmony with nature as something comfortable represents comfortable farming work and enjoying agricultural products. Fifth, the form of retreat and return that depicts the escape of city people to the village due to natural disasters, avoiding natural disasters, seeking a better life and colonial motives that want to control areas rich in natural resources.

Keywords: Ecology, Pastoral Literature, Apocalyptic Literature, Oral Literature, Lio People

Introduction

While the impacts of global warming are increasingly being felt, even reaching European and American countries, environmental destruction in Indonesia is actually worsening. This is due to the exploitation of nature for mining and companies without considering ecological factors. Consequently, the resulting impacts are natural disasters, such as forest fires, landslides, flash floods, and the loss of flora and fauna, the crown jewel of nature.

Environmental issues require attention from all parties to maintain balance and environmental wisdom. In Indonesian literature, writers and poets have emerged who address ecological themes in their works. This aims to convey a message to audiences and stakeholders about ecological preservation. Furthermore, long before this, Indonesian ancestors had already paid attention to nature through the creation of oral literature.

Oral literature is a form of folklore told orally, encompassing a wide variety of forms, from myths and genealogical accounts, fairy tales, legends, to stories about heroes. Sedyawati (in Rafiek, 2012: 54) states that each region typically possesses a well-preserved oral literature that forms part of its culture, passed down through generations.

Within the literary heritage of the Lio people in Ende Regency, the oral literary tradition, both in poetry and prose, represents a unique characteristic developed through a long history of relationships. Lio oral literature is inextricably linked to its natural environment. This can be seen in several folktales, myths, and fables that address environmental and natural themes. Furthermore, Lio oral literature also features stories about heroism, struggle, and portrayals of past life, set against the backdrop of the surrounding natural environment. The representation of nature in the oral literature of the Lio tribe is the main theme in several folk tales, such as the folk tales of Ine Pare (the Goddess of Rice), the Dog and the Palikan Bird, Bobi no Nombi (Bobi and Nombi), as well as poems that describe the rural atmosphere and the activities of the people there.

The connection between nature and literary works has given rise to the concept of ecological issues in literature among literary critics. The term ecocriticism is used to describe the concept of literary criticism related to nature and the environment. Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Glottfelty, 1996:ix). The use of ecocriticism in the study of oral literature is considered appropriate, given that oral literature, which thrives within traditional oral civilizations, has great potential to express the values of wisdom regarding nature. Garrard (2004:4) states that ecocriticism can help define, explore, and even resolve ecological problems in a broader sense.

In this research, the author uses Gifford's ecocritical theory. Gifford (1999) divides ecocritical studies into two: pastoral narratives and apocalyptic narratives. Pastoral refers to any literary work that describes regional or rural life that differs from urban life (Gifford, 1999), while the apocalyptic narrative study model takes the form of a revelation about the end of history. The basic theme of apocalyptic is usually a struggle between good and evil. Apocalypticism is described as a genre born of crisis, designed to strengthen the resolve of marginalized communities by providing hope and a vision of freedom from their shackles.

Based on the background description above, there are two main problems studied in this research, 1. how is the pastoral narrative in Lio oral literature in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara?, 2. how is the apocalyptic narrative in Lio oral literature in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara?. In general, it has two objectives, including; identifying, describing, and explaining pastoral literary narratives in Lio oral literature in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara; 2. identifying, describing, and explaining apocalyptic literature in Lio oral literature in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara.

Literature Review

1. Oral Literature

Endraswara (Rafiek, 2012) states that oral literature is a literary work whose method or process is conveyed by word of mouth and passed down from generation to generation by a trusted source. Characteristics of oral literature include: (1) the person is born of a simple person and has a traditional nature; (2) the form of cultural depiction is shared, with an unclear originator; (3) it emphasizes imaginary objects, contains humor, and contains educational messages; (4) it often tells the traditions of a shared group. Furthermore, other characteristics include being understood only by a group of descendants and using the local language.

According to Hutumo (Utomo, 1991: 14), oral literature refers only to oral texts of literary value, while oral traditions are more general in scope, encompassing traditional technology, customary law, folk dances, and folk food. Oral literature is limited to literary-oriented works, such as folk language, folk expressions, folk poetry, and folk songs.

The Lio people's oral literature, with all its unique aesthetics, values, social background, culture, and nature, can be explored further to uncover the environmental wisdom it contains. In this research, three forms of Lio people's oral literature were selected as the objects of study: legends, myths, and fairy tales.

2. Literary Criticism

The term ecocriticism comes from English and is a combination of the words "ecology" and "logos." Ecology is a combination of the words "oikos" and "logos." In Greek, "oikos" means "house" – a dwelling place: the abode of all women and men, animals, plants, water, soil, air, and sun. Ecology studies the relationship between humans and the environment, linking the humanities and natural sciences, and is interdisciplinary.

Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) proposed the idea of ecocriticism, which aims to apply ecological concepts to literature. Their approach utilizes the earth (nature) as the center of their study. Ecocriticism is defined as the study of the relationship between literature and the environment (Glotfelty, 1996). In examining oral literature, Gifford (1999) divides ecocritical studies into two models: pastoral narratives and apocalyptic narratives. Pastoral refers to any literary work that describes regional or village life, distinct from urban life (Gifford, 1999), while the apocalyptic narrative study model takes the form of a revelation about the end of history.

Methodology

The focus of this study is the forms of village environmental wisdom found in the folklore of the Lio tribe in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. Therefore, the research method used is a descriptive qualitative method. According to Bogdan and Taylor (in Kaelan, 2005), qualitative research methods are defined as research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of words (can be oral for social, cultural, and philosophical research), notes related to meaning, values, and understanding. The data in this study consist of words, phrases, phrases, and sentences that convey environmental wisdom in the Lio folklore, as examined from the perspective of pastoral narrative studies and apocalyptic narrative studies.

Research design is defined as the strategy employed by researchers to systematically connect each research element, thus making analysis and determining the research focus more effective and efficient. In this study, the author presents and analyzes in detail the elements of pastoral and apocalyptic narratives in Lio oral literature using a literary ecology approach.

The research data consists of textual excerpts and sentences sourced from Lio oral literature books published by the Ende Regency government and the East Nusa Tenggara provincial government. The collected data were then validated through triangulation of sources and researchers, and then interpreted using the Milles and Huberman data analysis model, encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

Based on the data source, this study utilizes bibliographic or written data. Written data is data available in print media. Written data is obtained from documentation. Therefore, the source of this written data is documentation. This documentation contains Lio oral literature. This type of data was obtained from several Lio oral literature books published by the Ende Regency Education Office and by observers of Lio oral literature.

The data sources for this research are written texts in the form of folktales, legends, myths, and fairy tales, which have been published in books or written by observers of the oral literature of the Lio people in Ende Regency. These oral literary texts are widely distributed in Ende Regency, both written in Indonesian and Lio. In this study, the author focuses on two books of Lio oral literature: "Cerita Rakyat Lio Flores," published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture in 1992, and "Book of Folk Tales of East Nusa Tenggara," published by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1982.

Some of the Lio oral literature that will be studied in this research include the legends of Lake Sora, Lake Mbata, Lake Lopi, Lake Kelimutu, the myth of Bobi and Nombi, and the fairy tale of Queen Ji'e and Queen Re'e. These five folktales were chosen because they align with the characteristics of literary ecocriticism theory, which focuses on aspects of environmental wisdom in folktales.

In this study, the researcher serves as the key instrument. During the data collection process, the researcher interviewed the informants and recorded both oral and written data. During the interviews, the informants developed a list of questions related to the research problem, the themes of the types of Lio oral literature, and a list of oral literature known to the informants. During the interviews, the researcher used writing materials such as notebooks or paper, pens, pencils, type-ex, and other materials.

In this study, the researcher employed a literature review technique to obtain relevant materials, which were then used as references to facilitate the research. The data collection for this study comprised the provisions of a literature review on ecocriticism in the oral literature of the Lio Tribe in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The literature review was carried out using the following steps: 1. The researcher carefully, critically, and thoroughly read the oral data sources (Lio oral literature in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara). The researcher read the data sources repeatedly to understand and appreciate all data sources critically, holistically, and comprehensively. This study aims to accurately examine pastoral narratives and apocalyptic narratives in the oral literature of the Lio people. 2. The researcher read, highlighted, and recorded the sections of Lio oral literature that were used as data. This step was guided by the research problem formulation and objectives, namely pastoral narratives and apocalyptic narratives in Lio oral literature. 3. Drawing conclusions in the form of a report.

The data analysis technique in this study was descriptive, referring to the theory of literary ecocriticism oriented toward local wisdom. The goal of data analysis was to simplify the data to make it easier to read and interpret. Miles and Huberman (2014:12-14) identified three components of analysis that occur simultaneously: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

Research and Discussion

Lio oral literature encompasses two primary narrative models—pastoral and apocalyptic—each reflecting the community's cultural values and environmental relationships.

Pastoral narratives integrate bucolic, arcadian, and georgic elements. Bucolic themes depict agricultural and fishing livelihoods, as in the Danau Sora legend, where Sora cultivates rice, corn, and taro while fishing in local rivers rich in aquatic life. In Lake Mbata, pastoral imagery extends to livestock herding in fertile Paupanda, supported by abundant grazing lands. Arcadian ideals emphasize harmony among humans, nature, and God, evident in communal feasts, the Gawi dance, and reciprocal support systems. Nostalgia emerges through expressions such as "once upon a time," evoking collective memory of leaders like Mbata Bani. Georgic elements highlight cooperative labor with nature, portraying farming as both a livelihood and a source of well-being. Retreat-and-return motifs arise in responses to ecological disaster or colonial intrusion, with migrations toward safer or more prosperous territories.

Apocalyptic narratives focus on heroic figures, apocalyptic environments, and prophetic visions. Heroes such as Mbata Bani defend ancestral lands against colonial forces, invoking divine and ancestral blessings. Lopi represents the patrilineal heir responsible for family welfare, while Ata Bupu embodies compassion and protective power against malevolent spirits (ata polo). Apocalyptic environments appear in tales where social transgressions, such as excessive revelry, lead to floods and landslides. Ceremonial practices serve both to express gratitude and to avert disaster, underscoring the belief in nature's reciprocal relationship with humanity. Prophetic visions warn of impending threats, as elders in Lake Sora ritually demarcate safe spaces to shield innocents from disaster. In Lake

Mbata, Mbata Bani foresees colonizers seizing resources, linking material threats to spiritual and cultural survival.

Together, these narrative models encapsulate Lio cultural heritage, illustrating the interplay between subsistence practices, moral values, ecological stewardship, and resistance to external domination. The pastoral mode affirms communal life grounded in nature, while the apocalyptic mode dramatizes existential threats and the resilience of cultural identity.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of pastoral narrative data from Lio folklore in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, ecological representations contain elements of environmental wisdom, as follows. First, pastoral literature in Lio oral literature represents the livelihoods of village communities in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, who are generally subsistence farmers. Furthermore, elements of idylls demonstrate ideal behavior that refers to village environmental wisdom, namely a harmonious relationship between humans and God, humans with other humans, and humans with nature. The connection between humans and God, as it relates to environmental wisdom in the Lio tribe, is demonstrated through the community's life principles, mindset, and perspective, which consistently include God in every activity they undertake that is closely related to the environment. The two forms of nostalgia represent past memories experienced by several characters in Lio folklore related to the prosperity of a region or event. The three elements of georgic, which depict the process of working harmoniously with nature as something comfortable, represent the comfort of farming and enjoying the fruits of agriculture. The five forms of retreat and return depict the escape of urban communities to the countryside due to natural disasters, to avoid natural disasters, to seek a better life, and to colonial motives seeking control over areas rich in natural resources.

The apocalyptic ideas in the oral literature of the Lio people in Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, generally describe persuasive actions to escape dangers arising from neglecting farming rituals, arrogance, or failure to follow ancestral guidance or advice. Furthermore, the Lio people also use certain symbols to predict future events.

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