

Indonesian Poetry by Ajip Rosidi: An Affirmation of a Sundanese Demon Myth

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Abstract—The main concern of the present research is whether the Sundanese demon myth in Ajip Rosidi's poetry has negated the myth within Mohamad Ambri or has stayed at the same affirmation position, or even lied on another category? To answer it, the present research used inter-textual approach by utilizing Genette trans textuality theory. The method employed was comparative analysis descriptive. The result showed that the poetry entitled "*Burak Siluman*" by Ajip Rosidi was the hypertext of hypo text *Burak Siluman* the novel by Mohamad Ambri. Looking at the relation, the novel was not the total imitation of Ambri's work, because, although those two had the same title, the translation from a Sundanese novel into Indonesian poetry indicated two phenomena, the language transformation (from Sundanese into Indonesian), and the genre transformation (from novel into poetry). Viewing the category, the "*Burak Siluman*" did not only provide nostalgia towards the Sundanese demon myth, since the demon in the novel was a new born baby, but in the poetry, the demon was delineated as a fine young man with horse feet. Thus, the poetry had firmed the myth of demon. Having a look at the message, either the novel or the poetry conveyed the same message that a Sundanese woman should not go alone to quiet and dark places for its risk and danger. This message also entirely perfects the myth function to secure the Sundanese local wisdom.

Keywords—affirmation, hypertext, hypotext, myth, transtextualit

I. INTRODUCTION

A myth is a symbolic narration, which frequently involved gods or heroes and provide explanations about facts or natural phenomena [1]. However, a myth can be apparently based on common phenomena and characters. Barthes in [2], assumes that a myth is such an utterance, statement, or speech based on second level of sign systems.

Myth literary works based on socio-cultural norms of human are able to be firmed, strengthen, and affirmed. Nonetheless, in the contrary, myth can be deviated, negated, or freed. Frye, Junus [3] mentions that modern literary works might maintain what have been existed, what is called as myth of concern or willing for something new by releasing from what have been existed, or myth of freedom. Teeuw in [4], adds one position between them, called restoration, similar to nostalgia because the position is presented to complete the longing of lost socio-cultural norms.

The understanding of a myth in the present article would assist to study Indonesian poetry written by Ajip Rosidi

entitled "*Burak Siluman*" in his book *Cari Muatan: Empat Kumpulan Sajak Rosidi* in [5]; the first edition was published in 1959. A demon is "that who frequently shows himself as human or animal" Tim Redaksi Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2017:1556. Therefore, as he is incomplete (to have human body and horse feet), then such creature is named *Burak Siluman*. In *Kamus Basa Sunda Danadibrata* in [6] the word *burak* means 'broken'. They are also known as *dedemit* in Sundanese legend. According to *Ensiklopedi Sastra Sunda Rusyana, et.al.* [7], they play role to reward human with punishment, for those who break the law or custom in particular places.

In Sundanese literature world, long ago before Rosidi's poetry was written, in [5], a Sundanese novel with the same title written by Mohamad Ambri [8] was published. In the Sundanese novel and Indonesian poetry, the demon had a duty to punish misbehaved figure until she gave birth to a broken demon creature and it is totally sure that Rosidi's work is affected by the story.

This research studies the Sundanese demon myth in Ajip Rosidi's poetry whether it has negated the myth within Mohamad Ambri or has stayed at the same affirmation position, or even lied on another category.

The rest of this paper is organized as follow: Section II describes the research about demons in Sundanese literature. Section III describes the proposed method. Section IV presents the obtained results and following by discussion. Finally Section V concludes this work.

II. RESEARCH ABOUT DEMONS IN SUNDANESE LITERATURE

Rusyana and Raksanagara [9] has conducted research to discuss demons in Sundanese legends. The research focused on Sundanese spoken tradition spreading around Bandung Regency. In another research, Rusyana in [10], also analyzed the novel *Burak Siluman* written by Ambri, but it was only one of the dozen novels he studied. Another relevant novel was composed by Kurnia [11] entitled "*Siluman dalam Sastra Sunda*". In the article, Kurnia did not only discuss *Burak Siluman* by Ambri, but also compared it with other Sundanese writers, who also highlighted demons, for example, Ki Umbara and Rais Purwacarita.

The most relevant research was conducted by Sumiyadi in [12] entitled "Revitalisasi Novel *Burak Siluman* Karya

Mohammad Ambri ke dalam cerpen ‘*Burak Siluman*’ Karya Ajip Rosidi”. He concluded that the revitalization done by Rosidi was clarified into reconstruction and transfer pattern by applying externalization, namely by translating the Sundanese classic novel into the national language

The present article employed intertextual approach. According to Genette Allen in [12] Zaimar in [13], intertextuality is called transtextuality, which has a variety of relations: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architectuality and hypertextuality. Hypertextuality concerns on relevant text relations or hypertext, with the previous text or hypotext. The relation between hypertext and hypotext might indicate imitation or transformation and seen from its category, it declares affirmation, restoration, allusion, parody or negation.

III. PROPOSED METHODS

The present article applied two methods, analysis and comparative descriptive Ratna in [15]. To analyze the novel and poetry, the researcher employed Greimas semiotic narrative analysis. Although at first the analysis development is intended for folklore text, Perakyla Denzin & Lincoln in [16], asserts that it is practical to other kinds of text, especially poetry. Moreover, the poetry “*Burak Siluman*” by Ajip Rosidi is included into narrative ballad poetry. The aktan schema rests on six aktans; sender, subject, object, helper, challenger, and receiver as noted below (see Figure 1).

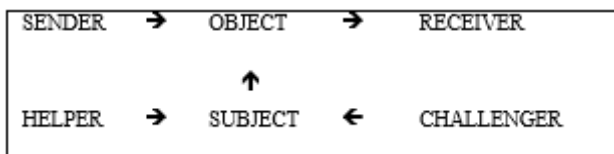


Fig. 1. The Schema of Aktan from Greimas

Chronologically the procedure of analysis are organized in these following ways: (1) quoting the poetry “*Burak Siluman*” by Ajip Rosidi; (2) applying Greimas theory to analyze the poetry and the novel to see the aktan schema and relations among the characters; (3) comparing the poetry and the novel by applying transtextuality theory from Genette; (4) finding and discussing relations and categories between the hypertext and hypotext; and (5) drawing a conclusion.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For a comprehensive discussion, the lines below present the whole poetry “*Burak Siluman*”:

BURAK SILUMAN

Seorang jejak alangkah tampan
 Hanya kakinya telapak kuda
 ‘Bunda, apa nasib menimpa ananda
 Kakiku bukan kaki manusia’

 ‘Anakku seorang hanya!
 Ayah bertahta di Kerajaan Siluman
 Anakku seorang hanya!
 Bundamu dikutuknya, bundamu terlunta’

 ‘Mengapa ayah tak pernah datang

Mengapa tak menjenguk anaknya seorang?’
 ‘Kita terusir dari halaman istana
 karena bunda ingkar pada janji
 Lewat tengah malam bunda belum pulang
 Ke Kerajaan ayahmu Negara Siluman
 Menggayuh subuh bunda terkenalang
 Kan pulang sebelum tengah malam

Lewat dinihari bunda pulang
 Tapi jalan kehilangan arah
 Kan kembali ke kampung orang
 Bunda lenyap di mata manusia

Dua belas bulan kau bunda kandung
 Lahirmu matahari tertutup mendung
 Tangismu diantar guruh mengguntur
 Malamnya pada bangkit mahluk kubur’

Seorang jaka alangkah tampan
 Tapi lahir beralaskan daun bakung
 “kauwarisi paras ayahanda, tampan
 Dan wasiatnya yang bunda dengar dalam mimpi:
 Adalah menjadi mangsamu perawan
 Yang tengah hari sendirian turun ke *pancuran*’

Seorang jaka alangkah gagah
 Tapi kakinya telapak kuda

Luxemburg, *et al.* in [17] argue that poetry text will be comprehended pleasantly once we answer three questions related to the content, who speaks, whom to speak, and what is spoken. There are two persons in “*Burak Siluman*”: the first is *Burak Siluman*, asking for his condition with his horse feet, found in the line: “Bunda, apa nasib menimpa ananda/Kakiku bukan kaki manusia?” *Burak Siluman* also questions about his father: “Mengapa ayah tak pernah datang/Mengapa tak menjenguk anaknya seorang?” the question is immediately answered by his mother as written above. Thus, the second question about whom to speak can be directly answered: his mother. The third question is also easily concluded, that what they talk about is *Burak Siluman* origin to have horse feet.

For it is narrative poetry, there is a distinct possibility for us to utilize Greimas semiotic narrative analysis model, by involving the poetry characters into the Aktan schema as depicted in Figure 2.

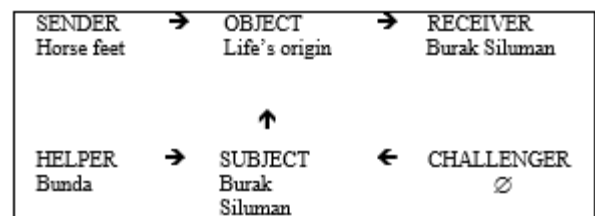


Fig. 2. The Aktan Schema of Poetry “*Burak Siluman*”

The one who functions as the subject is *Burak Siluman*. He is eager to get an explanation of his life origin: who he is, who and where his father is, as framed in the following lines:

‘Bunda, apa nasib menimpa ananda
 Kakiku bukan kaki manusia’

"Mengapa ayah tak pernah dating Mengapa tak menjenguk anaknya seorang?"

Reasons and intentions motivating him to find it is his unusual condition to have horse feet. His mother aids him to reveal his origin.

In the above schema, it is convincingly clear that he does not find any obstacles to know his origin.

As highlighted earlier above, the poetry of Ajip Rosidi has a relation with Mohamad Ambri's novel with the same title. The novel was first published in 1932, while the poetry was firstly released in 1959 in the anthology "Cari Muatan: Empat Kumpulan Sajak". If we connect it to Genette transtextuality theory, the relation between the novel and the poetry meets the demand of hypertextuality type. The poetry is the hypertext and the novel are the hypotext. What are the hypertext relation and category in the poetry if we compare it to the novel? To find the answer, the first thing to check is the story presented in the novel.

The novel *Burak Siluman* can be categorized into a framed story. The frame talks about Mang Ijan who deliberately came to Ma Ijem's house asking for some stalks of bamboo. Coincidentally Ma Ijem and her family were gathering and having a conversation about Nyi Ewi, a bride to be, who suddenly fell sick. Then Mang Ijan related the sick Nyi Ewi with *Burak Siluman* story that he once heard from Bapak Saripah. Nyi Ewi's family then purposely asked Mang Ijan to tell them about the demon. Mang Ijan showed his availability, moreover Mak Ewi offered him food, and he expected to have the bamboo. He told them the story and finished once the day reached the noon.

Mang Ijan told the family that once upon a time in Pangalengan, there was a beautiful girl named Nyi Asmanah. Since she was little, she frequently joined the parents to watch wayang show held by his neighbors, especially the have ones, for celebrating wedding parties. No wonder she was completely crazy about the wayang character played by the *dalang*. She admired Arjuna very much. Her craziness brought her to always think and dream about Arjuna, so when some young men came to propose her, she rejected them. Being asked by the parents, she answered that she would not marry anybody but Arjuna, that she thought to always come to her when she was alone or bathed in *pancuran* (rice field traditional shower). One day she felt like hearing sound of gong (a Javanese traditional music instrument) played as the sign of wayang show beginning, and as if she heard somebody called her. She was very convinced that he was Arjuna, so she packed up her belongings and then left her parents when they slept. Finally, she arrived in the demon country and got marry to the king, that in her eyes was Arjuna. Once she got pregnant, she was coincidentally eating citrus fruit in which the tree grew at her backyard, she suddenly remembered her parents. Her husband permitted her to go seeing her parents with one condition that she should go home punctually. But due to a longing for her parents, she forgot the time and went home late. As the consequence, she got lost at the place between the real world and the demon country. This affected her baby inside her womb, so she forcefully

delivered the baby. As her husband's mandate, the baby was named Burak. Burak was a boy that once he grew, he would be a fine young man but had horse feet, and he would tease girls who came to bath in *pancuran* on the day.

Comparing the novel to the poetry, there is a close relation with Mang Ijan's story. The aktan schema of Mang Ijan story is presented below (see Figure 3).

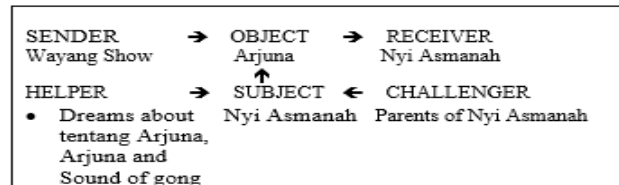


Fig. 3. The Aktan Schema of Mang Ijan Story In The Novel *Burak Siluman*

The subject changes enable the story fact changes, such as the plot and setting. Therefore, we can assume that the poetry as the hypertext and the novel as the hypotext, have transformed, specifically the story fact changes. Before carrying on a comparison, it is firmed that a transformation has taken place once seeing the hypertext (the genre is poetry, written in Indonesian), since the hypogram is in form of novel and written in Sundanese. Admits if a hypogram changes (form, performance, attitude and behavior), it exactly suggests a transformation. The transformation occurred to Ajip Rosidi's work tends to be free adaptation by translating a Sundanese novel, directly adapting it into an Indonesian poetry.

After determining the relation, the next question to answer is the category of hypertextuality within the poetry. To find the answer, the process of demon myth of the literary works should be taken into account.

TABLE I. THE PROCESS OF DEMON MYTH IN THE NOVEL AND POETRY

	<i>Burak Siluman</i>	
	Poetry	Novel
Denotation	An imperfect demon (adult) for his feet is like horse feet	An imperfect demon (baby) for his feet is like horse feet
Connotation	A demon with horse feet preying a virgin who does a long bath in <i>pancuran</i>	A demon with horse feet and when it grows to be an adult, it will prey a bride who does a long bath in <i>pancuran</i> and a virgin who goes outside when nights almost come
Myth	A demon with horse feet preying a virgin who does a long bath in a <i>pancuran</i> traditional shower Message: a virgin should not go alone to a quiet place	A demon with horse feet and when it grows to be an adult, it will prey a bride who does a long bath in <i>pancuran</i> and a virgin who goes outside when nights almost come Message: a bride and a virgin should not go alone to a quiet place or when nights almost come

Based on the Table I above, relation type of hypertext and hypotext, *Burak Siluman* poetry has transformed, there is a

focus change from Nyi Asmanah to *Burak Siluman*. If we carefully look at the aktan schema, Nyi Asmanah figure experiences transposition, initially as the subject then changes to be the helper, and *Burak Siluman* takes the subject position. In the novel, it does not emerge since it is a newborn baby.

V. CONCLUSION

The comparison between the poetry and the novel based on Genette transtextuality theory indicates that "*Burak Siluman*" by Ajip Rosidi is the hypertext of hypotext of *Burak Siluman* the novel by Mohamad Ambri. From the relation, the poetry is not regarded a mimesis or pure imitation of the novel, because, although the two have the similar title, the translation from a Sundanese novel into Indonesian poetry has suggested two phenomena, a language transformation (from Sundanese into Indonesian) and a genre transformation (from novel to poetry).

From the category, the poetry gives more than nostalgia towards the demon myth in Sundanese legend, for the poetry describes *Burak Siluman* as a very fine young man but has horse-feet, while in the novel he is still a newborn baby. Thus, the poetry has performed the affirmation of the myth.

From the message, both the poetry and the novel deliver the same message that a Sundanese woman should not go alone to a quiet dark place for it is risky and dangerous. This all at once advises that *Burak Siluman* as a Sundanese myth has fulfilled its duty to secure Sundanese local wisdom.

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