
What Happened in *Talaga Biru*? A Study of Ecological Literature

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Abstract

This study aims to provide a detailed account of the moral teachings conveyed in the North Halmahera Talaga Biru Folklore. This method of this study employs qualitative research. The data collection technique employs interviews, audio recordings, and a comprehensive review of relevant literature. On the other hand, analyzing data involves multiple steps, including data reduction, display, verification, and conclusion. The research results reveal two overarching messages: positive and negative. The good messages encompassed in the text are as follows: 1) hope, 2) struggle, 3) sacrifice, 4) loyalty, 5) cooperation, 6) cultural values, 7) patience, 8) friendship, and 9) religious values. On the other hand, the contrasting message conveys a sense of sorrow. Sadness is a negative emotion due to the excessive and unreasonable sadness depicted in the Talaga Biru mythology. The depicted grief revolves around the character Majojaru, who experiences profound sorrow and sheds tears for a continuous duration of three days and three nights, ultimately resulting in their demise. In addition, it is anticipated that this will contribute to the development of theoretical knowledge about the moral themes found in folklore from North Halmahera. Moreover, it can serve as a valuable resource for managing culturally and literarily oriented tourism. Furthermore, the implication of this study is to make a valuable contribution to endeavours which aimed at enhancing public consciousness regarding the significance of conserving the adjacent natural environment as a habitat for all global ecosystems.

Keywords: ecological literature, folklore, messages, North Halmahera, Talaga Biru

1. INTRODUCTION

The story of Talaga Biru originates from North Halmahera, North Maluku Province. It is categorized as a legend. Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Pusat Bahasa Kemdikbud, 2016) defines legends as ancient folklore connected to historical events. Hooykaas (on Subuh et al., 2024) states that legends are magical elements or romantic symbolism tales. The previous viewpoint is consistent with

Bascom's perspective (Rauf & Raemon, 2024) that a legend is a narrative resembling a myth, believed to be true but not held as sacred. Hence, according to Rauf & Raemon (2024); and Sitter (2008), the Talaga Biru is considered part of the tale.

The legend of Talaga Biru conveys multiple messages throughout the narrative. The story may convey a moral message. Karimullah (2023) stated that fictional literature often includes moral lessons demonstrated through the behaviours and attitudes of the characters. The moral themes consistently focused on individuals' inherent nobility in advocating for human rights and dignity (Rasiah et al., 2024). The morals, based on Rusli (2023) derived from literature by readers are invariably positive; therefore, if a literary work portrays characters (Setyorini, 2016) with negative attitudes and behaviours, whether protagonists or antagonists, it does not imply that the author is endorsing such behaviour (Anwar, 2019; Rauf & Raemon, 2024; Van Lier, 2004). So, this paper formulates the problem on how the message of moral values depicted in Talaga Biru?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The data in this study consist of messages found in the text of the Talaga Biru Folklore. The data originates from folkloric writings obtained from books or other materials. The data collection methods used in this study were direct observation, interviews, and recording. An interview is a data collection method involving discussions between researchers and participants (Rauf, 2017) his method involves direct questioning based on the prepared data corpus, as Rauf (2018) outlined. The study utilized recording techniques to gather real data using tape recordings, which were then transcribed into written form. Methods for interpreting tale scripts were sourced from literature or online resources (Rauf, 2016).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The folklore of Talaga Biru conveys moral messages regarding human relationships with themselves, other humans, their social environment, nature, and the creator or God. The moral messages encompass hope, sadness, struggle, sacrifice, loyalty, cooperation, cultural values, patience, friendship, and religious ideals. The moral lesson can be observed in the subsequent description.

3.1 Moral lessons in self-reflection

The Talaga Biru conveys a moral lesson about human self-reflection. This relationship can evoke both optimism and sorrow.

3.1.1 Hope

Hope is one of the messages in the story of the Talaga Biru. Cultivation here is a form of ideals, hopes, and desires that the characters in the story will realize (Zhang et al., 2020). These expectations sometimes come true, and sometimes they do not. The hope contained in the story is a hope that is not fulfilled. Unfulfilled expectations are contained in the following quote:

It has been a year since I left Magodihuuru abroad, and I am still waiting to return. Majojaru's heart started to feel agitated. While strolling to the port, Majojaru spotted a ship moored. He enthusiastically approached the ship, anticipating seeing his lover among the passengers. He observed each disembarking passenger meticulously. Every passenger had disembarked from the ship, yet the one he sought was not in sight. Eventually, he had the confidence to inquire. Hope plays a significant role in the story of the Talaga Biru. The characters in the narrative will embody the ideals, hopes, and wishes via their development. These expectations are sometimes met and sometimes not. The story's hope still needs to be met. The quote expresses unfulfilled expectations. One of the team members is looking for his girlfriend's location. (Rahimsyah, 2007)

The phrase suggests that the tale artwork conveys a moral message of hope. The female character, specifically Majojaru, feels the hope. Majojaru's aspiration is for his beloved, Magodihuuru, to return from abroad. It had been a year since the Magodihuuru figure left. The female character, Majojaru, experiences a profound sense of longing. The optimism in the story is depicted as aspirations that were not fulfilled or realized. The protagonist, Magodihuuru, lost hope of the lover's return from overseas as they did not disembark from the ship. The expectations placed on female characters still require emphasis. Furthermore, there are snippets from the following stories.

The ship's crew informed me that Magodihuuru perished abroad a month ago as a result of a work-related mishap. Majojaru was shocked to hear the dreadful news as if struck by lightning in broad daylight. He was incredulous about the fate that had befallen his girlfriend. All hope is lost. The commitment to live and die that they once pledged has vanished. (Rahimsyah, 2007)

The quote exemplifies the theme of hope in the novel. The moral lesson is conveyed through the emotion of hope felt by the female character Majojaru. The woman eagerly anticipates the return of her lover, who is wandering in a specific place. When the protagonist of Magodihuuru came from overseas with his earnings to marry his girlfriend, their vows and pledges would never materialize. Magodihuuru did not intend for this hope to happen, but it was due to a fate he accepted. He experienced a calamity in the form of an accident, which led to his death. Meanwhile, the female character Majojaru has been waiting for a year, clinging to a hope that will never come to fruition. This hope was shattered because their commitment was merely verbal.

3.1.2 Sadness

The Talaga Biru folklore conveys a message of sorrow. Sadness is an inherent aspect of human existence that cannot be detached. It is a trait inherent to humanity. In a folk tale, the characters also feel melancholy. The narrative depicts this melancholy in the following quote.

"Majojaru was momentarily stunned." He was mute with a vacant expression. He imagined being abandoned by his beloved, causing his mind to wander. She felt profound sadness about it. Upon reflection, he acknowledged the validity of his lover's statement regarding the necessity for their improved future."(Rahimsyah, 2007).

The female character, Majojaru, conveys a moral message in the story passage. Majojaru fears that his beloved, Magodihuuru, will leave him to go to Aintree. The temporary separation can alleviate Majojaru's anguish, as Magodihuuru will return from overseas with sufficient income to propose to her. Furthermore, another statement is provided in the subsequent piece.

Majojaru returned to his residence with a heavy heart and a frail physique, moving unsteadily. Prior to settling, he sought sanctuary to soothe his emotions. He sat on a boulder beneath a banyan tree, grieving over the misfortune that had struck his beloved. He wept incessantly for three days and three nights. Her tears flowed incessantly, resembling a breached levee. Her tears slowly filled and submerged the rocks beneath her, eventually causing her to drown and perish. Shortly later, a tiny lake was created with water that was crystal pure and blue in hue (Rahimsyah, 2007)

The narrative mentioned above conveys a moral lesson on the melancholy felt by the character Majojaru. Majojaru felt profound regret upon learning that his beloved Magodihuuru, whom he had been eagerly awaiting for a year after returning from overseas, had passed away due to a work-related mishap. As a result, Majojaru felt overwhelming and profound despair. The story depicts Majojaru's profound anguish through the account of Majojaru crying continuously for three days and three nights. Majojaru's wails caused her tears to pool and form a miniature lake. Majojaru was pained by the melancholy he felt. Majojaru drowned and died from his excessive tears, resulting in the formation of a lake. The story of the Talaga Biru conveys an unattainable melancholy that cannot be pursued due to its boundaries. Majojaru's character died due to this anguish. Sadness is inherent in existence and human nature. Humans should maintain inner tranquillity when encountering tests, obstacles, and trials. Sadness will dissipate with tranquillity. Al-Qarni (2001) believes humans should not be sorrowful, as expressed in "La Tahzan."

3.2 The Ethical Implications of Human Interactions within Society

Talaga Biru folklore conveys a lesson regarding human interactions inside their social circle. These relationships involve struggle, sacrifice, devotion, cooperation, and cultural values.

3.2.1 Struggle

Struggle encompasses the ethical aspect of our interactions with others. Talaga Biru narrative also depicts the challenge in human interactions. The battle theme is evident in the phrase from the tale artwork.

Upon recognizing his situation, Magohiduru decided to travel overseas. Once he succeeds, he will then reapply for Majojaru. He communicated his plan to his parents and obtained their approval. Following that, he promptly encountered his lover.(Rahimsyah, 2007)

The remark conveys a moral message through the primary character, Magodihuuru, depicting a message of hardship. The protagonist has realized that he lacks employment, income, and resources, prompting him to face challenges in venturing outside his local surroundings. He roamed in pursuit of his love for a woman named Majojaru. After relocating and making money, the Magodihuuru character would once more ask for the hand of his girlfriend, Majojaru, in marriage. The primary character, Magodihuuru, conveys a message of hardship that serves as a praiseworthy example and can be a role model for today's kids. He is a resilient young man who is undeterred by his situation. He endeavours to seek alternatives and different methods to defend his love.

3.2.2 Sacrifice

Talaga Biru conveys the concept of sacrifice, an inherent aspect of human existence (Hughes, 2013). Sacrifices have been practiced in the North Halmahera region, particularly in Galela, since ancient times. The following narrative extract depicts this image of sacrifice.

Magodihuuru bid farewell to Majojaru the following day. Although they have distanced themselves, Majojaru is reluctant to part with his beloved, just as Magohiduru hesitates to leave him. Regardless of the circumstances, Magodihuuru decided to travel and departed for another country by boarding a sailing ship. (Rahimsyah, 2007)

The phrase indicates that the tale artwork conveys a moral message. The moral message is conveyed through the act of sacrifice. There are two types of sacrifice here: physical and psychological. The bodily sacrifice is postponed for an unspecified period between two lovers who are in love. They will not meet in person since the main character, Magodihuuru, will travel to another country, making it uncertain when they will meet again, whether it be days, months, or even years.

Meanwhile, the second sacrifice involves the psychic bond between two pairs of lovers, specifically the characters Magodihuuru and Majojaru. The two loves will feel a sense of sacrifice that can only be

resolved through meeting. The two loves comprehend each other's perspectives and are prepared to relinquish their emotions, love, and affection to secure future happiness.

3.2.3 Faithfulness

The moral conveyed in the narrative "Talaga Biru" is loyalty. Loyalty is a crucial aspect of human existence and a common theme in folk stories. The following quote exemplifies loyalty to this story.

"Okay, Brother!" If you truly desire to travel overseas, then go for it! Your sister awaits your arrival. You are the sole source of hope in your life. "Brother, love life and death sister," remarked Majojaru. (Rahimsyah, 2007)

The quote conveys a moral lesson centred around loyalty. The story conveys the moral of loyalty through the character Majojaru. Majojaru's persona exemplifies a woman or girl who is willing to release her beloved and remains loyal while waiting. Majojaru's portrayal of love serves as a representation through art and narrative within Galela's society during that era. We observe an unmarried woman who is a lover and has displayed loyalty to her beliefs in love. Female loyalty serves as a moral message and a model for contemporary women. In this narrative, women regard loyalty as a significant aspect of value and dignity. The moral lesson of loyalty is a positive model for women in contemporary society. Furthermore, the male character, Magodihuuru, likewise agreed to loyalty and pledges, as depicted in the following narrative extract.

"Indeed, my dear!" I promised to return promptly because you are exclusively mine. Magohiduuru wished for God Almighty to fulfil our commitment to live and die. (Rahimsyah, 2007)."

The passage from the story, as spoken by Magidohuuru, is an example of a man's loyalty as he vows to keep his promise to his lover. The loyalty of these two lovers cannot be divided except by the will of Almighty God. The picture conveys a moral lesson about loyalty between the main male character, Magidohuuru, and the major female character, Majojaru, to the audience. The loyalty between the two lovers represents a commitment to their life decisions. The will of Almighty God solely determines this loyalty. The moral lesson in the narrative of the Talaga Biru serves as a model for behaviour in our daily lives.

3.2.4 Mutual Cooperation

Collaboration is a key theme in the Talaga Biru. It is a traditional knowledge that has existed in North Halmahera since ancient times. The remark depicts cooperation in community life through an image.

"Eventually, the traditional elders and certain residents returned to the village." The traditional elders promptly struck the dolodolo (kentongan) to assemble everyone. Shortly after that, the residents assembled in their yard. Upon hearing the summons, the village elders promptly organized the necessary items for the customary rite to summon the ancestral spirits and worship Jou Giki Moi or Jou Madhutu (God Almighty). (Rahimsyah, 2007)

The quote above illustrates the moral lesson of cooperation in the story. The community leaders in the story discuss the essence of collaboration. The painting depicts the village elders promptly arranging all the necessary items for the customary ceremony to summon the ancestral spirits, demonstrating cooperation. The inhabitants of North Halmahera have demonstrated indigenous knowledge and collaboration from ancient times. The current generation can learn from the concept of cooperation. The community in North Halmahera exhibits a cooperative mentality, reflecting a characteristic trait of its inhabitants.

3.2.5 Cultural Values

Cultural values convey a moral lesson in the Talaga Biru myth. The story portrays cultural values that are important to the inhabitants of North Halmahera as they go about their lives. The tale paintings represent these cultural ideals, as shown in the following quotations.

"Oh, all my people! You are aware! A peculiar event has recently taken place in our village. A little lake emerged abruptly at the village's periphery. The traditional leader emphasized the necessity of conducting a traditional ceremony to uncover the mystery of the lake's existence. (Rahimsyah, 2007)

The story excerpt conveys that the residents in Galela Halmahera Utara tackle problems by adhering to traditional methods. Culture plays a significant part in human life. The account demonstrates that upon the occurrence of an incident, the traditional elders promptly comprehended their role by summoning village residents to collaborate in organizing a traditional ceremony to unveil the mystery of the talaga Biru's existence. Koentjaraningrat (2009) believes that a key component of culture is the social system and social organization. Here, you can observe the social system and organization, where the traditional

elders are already familiar with the procedures and actions required to address the community's issues. Besides the story quote, other quotes linked to cultural values are presented below.

Upon receiving this response, the elders concluded the traditional rite and promptly sounded the dolodolo (clam). The residents quickly assembled to hear the traditional elders' findings. (Rahimsyah, 2007)

The above narrative conveys a cultural message about the importance of sounding dolodolo. Dolodolo is a cultural practice performed by traditional elders in Galela village to assemble people in ancient times. The dolodolo is sounded to alert other residents about the transmission of information by the traditional elders. The residents instantly gathered and exited their homes upon hearing the sound from the dolodolo. The gathering in front of the house indicates that the locals will receive information from the traditional elders.

3.3 The Ethical Implications of Human Interaction with the Environment

The Talaga Biru conveys two moral lessons on human interaction with nature: 1) the importance of patience and 2) the value of friendship.

3.1.1 Patience

One of the messages portrayed in the Talaga Biru is the moral lesson of human interactions with nature. The moral lesson is about patience. Patience is illustrated in the narrative of the interaction between humans and the environment and in the literary piece the Talaga Biru. The quote contains a lesson about patience.

Residents must travel considerable distances to obtain clean water for drinking, cooking, and bathing. (Rahimsyah, 2007)

The remark above conveys the theme of patience in the story. Patience is a vital survival aspect for individuals residing in severely deprived regions, particularly those lacking fundamental necessities such as clean water. The people in the novel, the locals, always maintain faith; they go considerable distances to obtain pure water. They lived that life for an extended period. The citizens persist, do not feel deprived, and refrain from complaining. Exhibiting patience is a valuable lesson that might serve as an illustration in the narrative. Patience is a traditional knowledge that has been present since ancient times and is innate in the residents of North Halmahera, particularly in the Galela region.

3.3.2 Friendship

Friendship is a moral teaching in the Talaga Biru myth, and the subsequent quote encapsulates this message.

Majojaru returned to his residence with a heavy heart and a frail body, staggering. Prior to settling, he sought sanctuary to soothe his emotions. He sat beneath a banyan tree on a rock, grieving over the misfortune that had befallen his beloved.(Rahimsyah, 2007)

The narrative mentioned above conveys a moral lesson about human interactions with nature. Humans have a friendly relationship with nature, likened to a friendship between humans and trees. Majojaru, the female character, may soothe her emotions by relaxing beneath a banyan tree. Majojaru has a spot where he can reflect on and mourn the destiny of his girlfriend, who is far away. It indicates that human interactions with nature are amicable. While plants absorb the carbon dioxide that people exhale and release oxygen for humans to breathe, humans benefit from the shade trees provide. Hence, the interaction between humans and trees displays symbiotic mutualism.

3.4 The Moral Implications of Human Interaction with God

The concept of the human relationship with God is depicted in the Talaga Biru. The relationship is expressed through a religious message. The story contains a religious message as one of its cultural features, specifically related to the belief system or religion. The Galela people of North Halmahera express their religious ideals through the folklore of the Talaga Biru, as depicted in the following passages. The village elders promptly organized a traditional ceremony upon hearing the sound to invite the ancestral spirits and worship Jou Giki Moi or Jou Maduhutu (God Almighty or God the Creator). Eventually, the customary ritual occurred, and a faint murmur emanated from their forebears' souls, resembling the following words.

"Arises from a broken heart that is crushed, shedding tears, flowing continuously into a spring."
(Rahimsyah, 2007)

The Talaga Biru conveys a religious message, as depicted in the story. The religious message originated during a traditional rite where elders summoned ancestral spirits and worshipped Jou Giki Moi or Jou Maduhutu. The illustration shows that the people of Galela during ancient times were aware of the creator's existence, specifically God Almighty. The narrative demonstrates that uncovering a riddle requires more than ordinary human fortitude. Assistance is required from the ancestral spirits and God

Almighty. The people of Galela Halmahera Utara have long been aware of the existence of God as a source of help and support alongside other humans. Koentjaraningrat (2009) stated that the religious system is one element of culture. The narrative Talaga Biru conveys a moral message rooted in religious beliefs in God Almighty.

4. CONCLUSION

The Talaga Biru folklore research reveals two distinct ages with themes that convey both good and negative aspects. The positive messages include hope, struggle, sacrifice, loyalty, cooperation, cultural values, patience, friendship, and religious ideals. The negative message conveys sadness simultaneously. Sadness is undesirable due to the excessive sorrow depicted in the Talaga Biru mythology. The character Majojaru cries regretfully for three days and three nights till he eventually dies. Hence, the melancholy in this narrative is not easily comprehended.

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