

## Ecological Folklore "I Swarnangkara" and Pramoedya Ananta Toer's View in The Perspective of Realism-Socialist Literature

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### ABSTRACT

Ecological folklore is a part of literature that is widely developed by raising environmental themes through theme responses and moral messages conveyed as an effort to save the environment. One example of ecological literature in the form of Balinese folklore that also tends to convey character education values to save the forest is Balinese oral literature entitled "I Swarnangkara". The purpose of the study is to examine the existence of oral literature "I Swarnangkara" in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's view in the perspective of Socialist Realist Literature. The method used is descriptive qualitative to facilitate the delivery of the results of the analysis elaborated with the theory of Ecological Literature and Socialist Realist Literature. The object of the research is the oral literature "I Swarnangkara" which represents the message of saving the forest by a young man who grew up in Watukaru Village, precisely in Watukaru forest in Wongaya Gede Village, Tabanan Regency. The results show that the existence of oral literature "I Swarnangkara" contains social realist values that highlight efforts to save the forest environment as a strategy to balance the role of humans and nature for survival. The existence of ecological literature "I Swarnangkara" in the perspective of Social Realist Literature shows that oral literature can function as an educational medium to foster responsibility in protecting nature, especially forests which are the axis and source of oxygen for the world.

### KEYWORDS

Ecological, Folklore, I Swarnangkara, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Socialist Realist Literature



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## Indonesian Literature and Pramoedya's View on Realism-Socialist

The ecological literature that is now developing as part of the literary response to the global environmental crisis originated from Pramoedya Ananta Toer's views expressed in his literary works, although not literally associated with the term ecology. Pramoedya Ananta Toer's social realist literature examines social inequality that shows the relationship between humans and nature [1]

Pramoedya Ananta Toer, as the main proponent of socialist realist literature in Indonesia, depicts the situation in the colonial setting and early independence dominated by the exploitation of land, forests and natural resources as part of class oppression and colonialism through his literary works [2]. Through his works, he also portrayed that environmental destruction was not caused by technology or industrial progress, but rather by the power structure that dominated the economic cycle at that

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time. Resources obtained from nature often become the object of capitalism, which should be an economic source for the natives, but instead become the losers [1].

Pramoedya's socialist realism is not only a storytelling style that emphasises the social realities that occur in society, but also emphasises the struggle of minor groups to fight for their rights. In this view, it can be interpreted that humans cannot be separated from their environment, both the social environment and the ecological environment because all of these things are interrelated to realise the balance of nature [1].

One of his works that voiced justice for the Indonesian people in a capitalist situation was the novel *Bumi Manusia*, Pramoedya Ananta Toer saw that land exploitation, oppression of farmers, land monopoly became a symbol of the weakness of the people as the real owners who had to hand over management and results to the authorities [3]. This shows that the ecological thematic is a fundamental thing that should be fought for the sake of survival and to avoid a well-organised life order.

The moral values related to socialist realism proposed by Pramoedya have simply been implicated through moral messages in oral literature which is also widely developed in Indonesia. The development of oral literature that has an oral inheritance system across generations has become an educational medium that is very easy to access and timeless [4]. One form of oral literature that voices the same thing that is echoed in the theory of socialist realism by Pramoedya is a Balinese folktale entitled "I Swarnangkara".

I Swarnangkara represents how humans forget themselves of their duties and responsibilities in order to gain wealth and riches. Indifference to the forest that should be protected makes a fatal mistake and causes natural disasters that harm nature and humans who depend on nature for their lives [5].

The purpose of this study is to identify the ecological values in the story of I Swarnangkara, as well as to elaborate the relationship between these ecological values in Pramoedya's socialist realism view.

This research is expected to increase awareness of the existence of ecological oral literature that is full of educational values about saving nature, so that it can increase our shared responsibility in protecting nature for our common survival.

## Metode

The literature review used is related to the use of "I Swarnangkara" as a folklore functioned as a medium to maintain character education. The significance of character education becomes a story message that is also the strength of the story in "I Swarnangkara" so that the literature used in the study is considered to have a connection with the research domain.

Research related to the study of research that suggests the power of folklore through its impact on character education of the younger generation [6]. Literature studies that are also considered to have a relationship in the study of the meaning of the moral message of the film "I Swarnangkara" which is identical to character education consist of: Balinese nature's preservation and culture language preservation through digital fairy tale media for elementary schools [7], changes in Balinese oral literature into performing arts as part of the preservation of Kutuh's Nature [8], folklore and nature [9]. Meanwhile for stressing the discussion on realism socialist perspective there is also the research on Pramoedya point of view on the Novel entitled "Bumi dan Manusia" [5]

This research is qualitative in nature with a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because it allows to explore the meaning through the visual movement of the film "I Swarnangkara" to facilitate the audience in understanding the moral message conveyed through the storyline of "I Swarnangkara" folklore. Data collection was conducted by observing the text found in the book story of "I Swarnangkara" using note-taking techniques to facilitate the identification of each component and continued with the process of analysing the visual meaning of each component. This is done to make it easier to decipher the ecological values connected to realism socialist occurred as a moral message.

After the data was collected, the transformation was analysed, with the following steps: a) Content analysis by analysing the story telling found in "I Swarnangkara" folklore using the narrative theory proposed by Keen [12] and then continue to the interpretation of story telling to observe the moral message in the story of "I Swarnangkara" using Pierce's semiotic theory [13].

The results produced in the analysis process will be presented in the form of tables and descriptions which are also complemented by visual data on the mise en scene components used as primary data in the research, to obtain accurate conclusions.

## Pembahasan

The discussion related to the folktale "I Swarnangkara" is focused on the aspect of social reality which is the basis for choosing the theme and moral message in the story which contains ecological values. The ecological values in question are not only about character education but also related to moral satire related to the ego and individual humans today who are willing to extract the earth's products to enrich themselves without caring about the survival of many people [6].

## 1st Analysis

### Data 1: Summary of pages 1-2

A long time ago there was a young man named I Swarnangkara who lived on the edge of the Watukaru forest. I Swarnangkara survived as a pitu orphan by selling firewood that he collected from the forest and then sold to the local people. I Swarnangkara collected firewood from the forest by relying on logs and branches that fell from trees, I Swarnangkara never cut down trees for firewood. Instead, when I Swarnangkara finds a dead tree, he will plant it with a new tree because he does not want the forest to become barren and dry. He also forbids people to hunt the wildlife that lives in the forest, so that the wildlife that lives in the Watukaru forest lives in peace under I Swarnangkara's guard.

The socialist realism perspective found in data 1 shows that I Swarnangkara's background of living alone without a family inevitably provides an opportunity for him to utilise the natural resources of the place where he lives to be used as a source of livelihood. In the initial depiction, I Swarnangkara is still portrayed as an individual who with full awareness still has a wise nature to utilise natural resources as needed without having to damage nature.

The ecological values contained in the story are represented by the main character in the story, I Swarnangkara. The attitude shown by I Swarnangkara shows his awareness to always protect nature. He never exploits the natural resources in the forest either from trees or wildlife that live in the forest.

## 2nd Analysis

### Data 2: Summary pages of 3-4

One day I Swarnangkara, who had managed to collect two large bundles of firewood from the forest, had a problem with his log that suddenly broke. He was in a quandary as he had to make wood for his carrier but as he had lost his axe, he could not cut the bamboo to make the carrier. In the middle of the forest he found a small hut inhabited by a grandmother, and asked her to lend him the axe. At first the grandmother objected to lending the axe to I Swarnangkara because she felt that I Swarnangkara had borrowed his axe and never returned it. I Swarnangkara managed to convince the grandmother that he never borrowed the axe and promised to return the only axe owned by the grandmother. Unfortunately, misfortune befell I Swarnangkara again. The axe he was using fell into the lake. In his confusion, I Swarnangkara decided to throw himself into the lake because he was ashamed that he could not keep his promise to his grandmother to return the axe. Miraculously, I Swarnangkara, who felt himself being pulled by the whirlpool of the lake, regained consciousness at the edge of the lake with the axe by his side. He immediately returned the axe to the grandmother and for that I Swarnangkara was given a gift by the grandmother. For I Swarnangkara's honesty, the grandmother gave him a bundle to put on his bed, and after the bundle was given, the grandmother mysteriously disappeared.

The social reality we find in data 2 shows the causal relationship between humans and nature and humans and humans. The causal relationship between humans and nature depicted is the relationship between I Swarnangkara and the lake where he dropped his grandmother's axe. I Swarnangkara, who deliberately threw himself into the lake because he felt ashamed that he had lost his grandmother, miraculously returned to land even with the axe he thought he had lost. Nature was treating I Swarnangkara fairly because I Swarnangkara had also taken good care of the forest.

The relationship between man and man is represented through I Swarnangkara's social relationship with the grandmother who owns the axe. The grandmother, who felt that I Swarnangkara was an honest person and had fulfilled his promise to return the axe, gave a gift that would later change the course of I Swarnangkara's life forever.

### 3rd Analysis

#### Data 2: Summary of pages 5-6

After his encounter with the mysterious grandmother, I Swarnangkara returned home and did as she asked, placing the bundle on his bed. At night, I Swarnangkara dreamt of living in a large and beautiful palace, accompanied by beautiful angels and in a beautiful place, but the tranquillity lasted very quickly, and was disturbed by the arrival of a ferocious giant who damaged his palace. I Swarnangkara was terrified and tried to forget his dream. When he woke up, I Swarnangkara felt his hand touch a cold object, and it turned out to be two gold coins. I Swarnangkara was overjoyed and immediately went to the market to pay off his debts and buy other necessities. This went on every day, making I Swarnangkara very rich. The other villagers became suspicious of I Swarnangkara's sudden wealth, and assumed that the source of I Swarnangkara's wealth came from the forest. As I Swarnangkara became wealthy, he forgot his duty to protect the forest and everything in it.

The realist and socialist context depicted through data 3 is the occurrence of self-control that leads to the increasing arrogance and individuality of I Swarnangkara. I Swarnangkara began to be ego-driven by the wealth he had easily acquired. He began to forget his duty and responsibility to protect the forest that had been used as a source of livelihood. The relationship between nature and I Swarnangkara began to detach little by little because I Swarnangkara no longer needed firewood to sell to the people, because he easily got gold coins that made him rich easily.

These two contexts eventually triggered the loss of I Swarnangkara's responsibility and loyalty to care for and protect the forest, so that without realising it slowly something would happen that would make him regret it in the future.

#### 4th Analysis

##### Data 2: Summary of pages 7-8

Residents who were suspicious of I Swarnangkara's sudden wealth assumed that I Swarnangkara got his wealth from the forest. They then flocked to the Watukaru forest and searched all corners of the forest. They thought that there was treasure hidden in the forest that only I Swarnangkara knew about. They entered the forest with crowbars, axes, saws, hoes and other tools. They decided to dismantle the forest, digging up the cliffs, cutting down large logs, and destroying the forest with abandon. The gold and gems they had hoped to find were nowhere to be found. As an outlet for their frustration, the big logs they had cut down were taken to the city and sold at a low price. The tranquillity of the wildlife living in the forest was also disturbed, and one by one the animals became objects of hunting to be sold and even killed. In an instant the Watukaru forest became bare and barren. Never again were the soothing sounds of wildlife heard. The fragrance of flowers was also never smelled.

The description of data 4 illustrates the exploitation of nature for the greed and shallow mindset of people who want to get rich easily. The villagers do not have a clear reason to exploit everything in the forest, just because they want to get rich like I Swarnangkara.

The short-sightedness of the villagers led them to make the decision to destroy the forest, which they did not realise would have a negative impact on their lives. They never care whether after they destroy the forest they will become rich like I Swarnangkara, or they will remain ordinary people, but the nature around them has been destroyed because of their greed.

In the view of socialist realism, it shows that the momentary emotions possessed by humans do not only affect the behaviour of those who tend to do something, without thinking about the future impact that will affect their lives. However, their emotions and ego also have a negative impact on the things around them.

#### 5th Analysis

##### Data 2: Summary of page 9

Meanwhile, I Swarnangkara, who lived a wealthy life, no longer cared about forest life and no longer fulfilled his duty to protect the forest. One day, something terrible happened. It rained so hard that a major natural disaster occurred. The remaining trees were uprooted, and the soil and rocks were washed away by the devastating flood. The sound of the flood thundered and drowned the villages at the foot of Mount Watukaru. I Swarnangkara's house was also not spared from the fury of the flood and washed away all his wealth. I Swarnangkara only managed to save himself and returned to a life of poverty. After the disaster subsided, I Swarnangkara decided to go into the forest to collect wood, but he was shocked to find that the Watukaru forest was ravaged, bare and devastated. I Swarnangkara collapsed and his tears slowly fell. The regret felt by I Swarnangkara became so great that he shouted like a madman to release his anger and sadness. He

regretted that he had neglected to protect and care for the forest just because he felt that he did not need the forest as a source of life, after he had obtained wealth easily. Suddenly, a white-bearded old man appeared and calmed I Swarnangkara down and invited him to do penance and learn about life to become a better human being.

The ending described in data 5 illustrates that nature also has the power beyond human reason to provide life lessons. Nature that is violently destroyed and exploited can give retaliation that humans never even thought of.

The villagers who destroyed the forest, captured and killed the wildlife living in the forest, received the same retribution. Their villages were washed away by floods and they too felt the loss of what they had done to nature before.

Similarly, I Swarnangkara, who had neglected and forgotten his duty and responsibility to protect the forest, lost his home and the wealth he was proud of. His arrogance and pride were instantly shattered by the rain that fell overnight. Nature became angry and punished the people who had disturbed the balance of nature.

But nature still gives I Swarnangkara a chance to become better through his meeting with a wise old man who teaches him the values of life. This taught I Swarnangkara how to remain steadfast in his duty and respect the existence of nature as the balance of life.

## Conclusion

In Pramoedya's view of literature and socialist realism, the main character in the story, I Swarnangkara, has a self-ego that is initially characterised by loyalty to protect and care for the forest and its surroundings with full responsibility.

This responsibility fades along with the over-exploitation of nature that should be preserved and destroyed for the sake of ego fulfilment and personal pride in power derived from ill-gotten wealth.

The social reality depicted in I Swarnangkara's story shows the fragility of social beings who do everything they can to get something. The lesson we can learn from this research is that the true reality between nature and humans is a causal relationship that gives something in line with what we do. If we take good care of nature, then nature will give us the best, and vice versa.

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