

MAGICAL REALISM IN THE MYTH OF PULUNG GANTUNG IN GUNUNGKIDUL

Yohanes Angie Kristiawan¹; Yolanda Nadiandiru Susilo²

^{1,2} Universitas Respati Yogyakarta, Indonesia

¹angiekristiawan@respati.ac.id; ²yolanda.19.yn@gmail.com

Abstract

Myth is a folk prose story that tells a story set in the past, contains an interpretation of the universe and the existence of creatures in it, and is considered to have happened by the owner of the story or its adherents. Myths can refer to traditional stories. According to Lugli (2014), myth is a "traditional story that is thought of by a specific community to be of a fundamental importance...". As time goes by, myths are still present alongside contemporary literary works called magical realism literary works. Pulung Gantung in Gunungkidul is one of the mythical stories in the Gunungkidul area which is a literary work of magical realism. This study uses Wendy B. Faris' magical realism theory which consists of five elements, namely the irreducible element, the phenomenal world, merging realism, unsettling doubts and disruption of time, space and identity to determine the characteristics of magical realism in the story of the myth of Pulung Gantung in Gunungkidul. Those five elements were found after the interview with the relatives of the victim. The descriptive qualitative method was used to determine this study.

Keywords/Kata Kunci: *Magical Realism, Myth, Pulung Gantung*

INTRODUCTION

Myth in human life is inherent and inseparable. Even each region in every corner has a different myth according to the version of each region or area. According to Brzezinski (2015), "the term myth from the Greek word *mythos* which means "word" or "story" is usually associated with the unreal world". Besides, myth is also equated with the word mythology in English means a study of myths or myth content. Mythology or myth is a collection of traditional stories that are usually told from generation to generation. Indonesian family since long ago tells many myths related to their life and their ancestors. Myth in Indonesia mostly discusses heroism, bad curse, bad omen, or sacred things. For example, children are prohibited to play outside after sunset because a ghost is going to kidnap them. Another example is if there is a crow perches on someone's house, then a bad thing will happen to the house member.

The myth explains the essence of life and the world or expresses the existence of cultural moral values in human life. Myths pay attention to the forces that control human life and the relationship between these forces and human existence. Although myth often has religious value in its form and function, myth is considered to be an early form of history, science or philosophy (Audifax, 2005, p. 8).

On the island of Java, precisely in Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta, the people are very familiar with myth, folklore or legends. The people used to talk about the certain myth that related to their life. The story of Nyi Roro Kidul is one of the most famous among the people in Yogyakarta. The people still believe in Nyi Roro Kidul's power and magic. They believe that she is the guardian of the southern seas of Java Island, along with supernatural powers. Even though this story becomes implausible and hardly accepted by those who put logic in front. Bertens (1996) explains that the birth of philosophy makes myths shifted by human reason (ratio) and logic (myths), so myths are considered to be something irrational.

Along with the times, myths still go hand in hand with human life. One example is the myth of pulung gantung in Gunungkidul. Based on the story circulating in the Gunungkidul community, Pulung Gantung is in the form of a red

crimson light that flies and hits the roofs of residents' houses. It is believed that people whose houses the light fell on will soon end their lives by hanging themselves. Almost the same as Nyi Roro Kidul, Pulung Gantung is a mythical story that is assumed to be something imaginary and magical. It is unreal but exists. This magical phenomenon is still believed by the people and circulated among them. Therefore, analyzing the Pulung Gantung story with magical realism is considered appropriate in this study. The people believe that this phenomenon brings bad omen to them. The belief itself is living among the people as part of their custom and tradition. According to Rajabi et. Al (2020), "unrealistic events occur in the context of a story that seems real, but these events may only seem strange, unrealistic or abstain from the reader's point of view. For the author and the story characters, these events are not beyond the scope of probabilities". Pulung Gantung is one of the myths in Gunungkidul Regency which is still believed by some people with logical reasons to support this incident. According to Darmaningtyas (2002), she explained that Pulung Gantung is a kind of celestial body that looks like a ball with a long red tail – shaped like a *siwur* (traditional dipper made of coconut shells and has a handle made of bamboo or wood about 50 cm)– which travels in space from one point to another and then falls somewhere. The origin of its appearance in space, we never know exactly, suddenly people see the object walking and then falling. This object is believed to be a sign of hanging himself. Budiarto et.al (2020) emphasize it by saying that "Pulung Gantung is understood as a superstitious revelation that is believed to signal an individual to commit suicide". The place where the pulung was hung will become the location of the hanging, whether it's the next morning or the day after. Until now, this myth has become one of the reasons for the high number of cases of hanging in Gunungkidul Regency, in addition to the logical reasons that form the case-by-case basis in Gunungkidul Regency.

The theory used to analyze the object of research is Wendi B. Faris' magical realism theory. According to Faris (1995), magical realism is an understanding that brings back all images and understandings that are magical, mystical, or "irrational" originating from mythological works, fairy tales, and legends that live traditionally in modern literature. Wendy B. Faris (2004) explains that magical realism has five characteristics, namely irreducible elements (irreducible elements related to magical matters), phenomenal world (a phenomenal world that prevents magical things from entering the fantasy world), unsettling doubt (doubt unresolved problems that occur when co-opting text into irreducible elements), merging realms (real and magical mixed realms), and disruption of time, space, and identity. sacred to time, space, and routine identity).

METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive qualitative type of research, so the results obtained will be translated into a descriptive form. According to Craswell (2007), qualitative research in analyzing data is done descriptively by analyzing text and interpreting it. The text comes from the interview of the victim's relatives and some articles from the internet. In this study, the data source was obtained by doing the interview of the survivor/witness, named Mr. Mario. Mr. Mario' son committed suicide after the phenomenon appears. His story is supported by his neighbors who saw the red crimson light fell upon Mr. Mario house. The data collection technique in this study was note-taking, namely reading and listening to the speeches of the informants, then recording the data according to the research objectives. Furthermore, the collected data were analyzed according to the theoretical literature obtained, namely the characteristics of Faris' magical realism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Irreducible Element

Based on the interview, there was nothing unusual about the victim's daily life. The victim lived her life like any other person. The victim was also open enough to communicate with her neighbors. Therefore, neighbors, especially the victim's family, were very surprised by what happened to the victim (deciding to commit suicide).

"There is no reason that encourages the victim to end his life. At 3 pm the victim was still chatting with neighbors, after arriving home around 5 pm the victim was found hanged. This is because a few days ago someone saw a fireball above the victim's house."

Logically, this incident does not make sense. the victim's family also said that there were no serious problems experienced by the victim. therefore, the victim's decision to end his life after the appearance of the flying fire phenomenon strengthens the suspicion of the Pulung Gantung.

The utterances made by the informants describe that there is something beyond human reason. This utterance explains the impossibility of a story where just a fireball passing over his house causes the people in the house to decide to hang themselves. This relates to unseen things that are difficult for our reason to accept. The second nonsense is stated by the victim's neighbor:

"The ball flies quickly and emits fire that looks very red"

This second utterance also describes something that doesn't make sense. How can a ball float in the air for a long time and emit fire from it. This is ambiguous because as we know the ball cannot stay in the air for a long time, it will only last for a while and will come back down to the ground.

Merging Realism

Merging realism is a merger between two worlds, namely the real world and the fictional world by blurring the boundaries between the two (Faris, 2004, p. 21). The amalgamation of worlds in the myth of Pulung Gantung is between places and objects where real objects meet magical objects. The merging of real and magical objects will make the magical world seem to exist in the real world. As in the words of the following sources stated by the relatives:

"After that incident. Some residents are often frightened by the presence of ghosts directly."

In the words of the source, there are residents who saw the ghost directly, ghosts should be different in nature from humans, but in this story the ghosts are narrated as if they were living in the real world. The appearance of the ghost will merge the 2 worlds, namely the real world and the magical world. Some people witness the fireball flying low through the casava field. If that phenomenon is only stated by one person, then it could be a lie. However, this magical phenomenon was witnessed by several people for a long time ago.

Unsettling Doubt

"A week after the first victim's incident, a similar thing happened to the second victim whose house was not far from the first victim's house. It is said that this incident will happen more than once from the place where the pulung gantung arrived."

The statement above indicates hesitation among the people. Since the first encounter with Pulung Gantung, the people have started to create wild opinions that there will be another one. In the excerpt of the sentence, the awkwardness can be seen when the source said that the incident would occur more than once because the fireball was still in the same area. When reading it, there will be questions that arise in the reader's mind related to Pulung Gantung.

Disruption of Time, Space and Identity

According to Faris, the concept of time, space and identity in society will be violated in magical realism. This is marked by the presence of magical things in the real world that will destroy the concept of space and time itself. Meanwhile, according to (Mulia, 2016, p. 39) the chaos of space in works of magical realism can also create new, homogeneous spaces. This space is a daily or routine space and is not related to sacred places. In the context of

sacred spaces, spirits will appear in sacred places, as stated by Geertz (1989). In the myth of pulung Gantung, the unseen does not appear in sacred places, but appears in the sky. This is contained in the speech of the source, namely:

"Pulung gantung itself is believed to be a ball of red fire that appears and flies in the sky"

The appearance of a supernatural object in the sky is a spatial disturbance because ghosts are not supposed to be in the sky. Ghosts are supposed to be in a sacred place based on local people's beliefs. The appearance of ghosts from the sky will disturb the spatial balance in magical realism works. The people then came up with new assumptions related to the existence of spirits.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis there were found 4 elements of magical realism in the Pulung Gantung phenomena. It can be concluded that the myth of pulung Gantung introduces something magical and it was believed by the people. It is known that in this myth, Pulung Gantung has 4 characteristics of realism from Wendy B. Faris' magical theory. These 4 elements include irreducible elements, unsettling doubt, merging realism, and disruption of time, space, and identity. This article can be explored more the implication of Pulung Gantung for the believers. Therefore, this study can be collaborated by using magical realism and psychoanalysis theory.

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