



Animistic Narratology in the *Purung Ta Liang Marapu Ritual* in Central Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara Indonesia (Study: Narraethnography)

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ABSTRACT

Tradition and culture in Indonesia are deeply connected, particularly through rituals and belief systems. The *Purung Ta Liang Marapu* ritual in East Sumba, NTT, is a sacred ceremony conducted annually to worship deities, involving offerings of animals and betel leaves on sacred objects. This ritual embodies animism, the belief in spiritual forces behind natural phenomena, which are personified as spirits or gods. The aim of this study is to explore the animistic narratology within the *Purung Ta Liang Marapu* ritual using a narraethnographic approach, a method that combines narrative and ethnography to systematically explain cultural values and traditions. The research highlights that access to the ritual's spiritual power is reserved for specific individuals, such as kings or priests, who play a central role in maintaining these cultural practices. This study contributes to the understanding of how animism shapes and sustains traditional rituals in Central Sumba, providing a deeper insight into the preservation of indigenous belief systems.

INTRODUCTION

Animistic religious practices can be found in various parts of the world, and for this reason many experts, especially sociologists and anthropologists, are interested in discussing the ins and outs of the world of animism. In academic discourse, the figure Edward B. Tylor (1832-1917) is often used as a reference in discussions about animism because he is a figure who inspired the emergence of new ideas as an antithesis. Tylor himself speculated when he argued that animism was the oldest stage in religious evolution. He believes that spirits that cannot be captured by human senses, can do things that humans cannot do, inhabit the natural surroundings where humans live. They are considered so important that they become objects of respect and worship through various rituals, prayers, offerings, sacrifices and so on. According to him, the next level is belief in natural forces such as river flows, waterfalls, erupting mountains, earthquakes, various types of plants and so on. Everything is caused by natural forces which humans personify as creatures who have personality, will and reason. These creatures then "transformed" into gods. The next level of evolution developed along with the development of state structures in society where power in society was arranged hierarchically. Those who are considered gods are also arranged hierarchically (Koentjaraningrat, 1998: 196).

One form of animism and animism can be observed in the Purung Ta Liang Marapu Ritual. The Purung Ta Liang Marapu ritual has the meaning, namely; Purung (going down or descending, a group of priests from the clan/heirs and believers who have consulted on the instructions and blessing of the god to carry out worship by going down to the cave where the god is enthroned), Ta Liangu (in the cave where the god is also the place of Umbu Pabal was born and received a miracle), Marapu (a form of belief that is believed and symbolized by 'stone' or 'gold' which will bring wrath or blessing). Purung Ta Liang Marapu is a very interesting cultural rite with various artistic night events, which is held once a year by the Imam (queen), heirs and devotees to worship and provide food offerings and burnt offerings by going down to the cave where the God is enthroned. about 5 km from Deri-Kambajawa village.

This research is different from other research. This research focuses only on one ritual that is considered sacred by the people of Central Sumba, namely the Purung Ta Liang Marapu ritual. This research has the special feature of combining theories used to explain animistic narratives in an ethnographic context. The combination of these theories is Naraethnography which combines narrative theory or narratology with ethnographic theory to give birth to several new dimensions, namely narrative traditions or rituals and systems of traditions or rituals in certain cultures. Through these two new dimensions, researchers will explain the Purung Ta Liang Marapu ritual in detail and in depth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In view of local culture and Sumba tourism, prospects and challenges (Ramone P. R., 2015, p. 72) explains that there are aspects that can be classified

as Sumbanese culture. All aspects can be formulated in one sentence as follows: every activity or cultural behavior of the Sumba people aims to achieve "maringi" (shalom or living in harmony in all its aspects). From this formulation it can be seen and felt in every activity or cultural behavior of the Sumba people. The kinship pattern of customs underlies social relations among village residents in carrying out various community activities in the village environment. Community activities in the village environment include marriage matters, death matters, work on fields, moors and paddy fields, and house building and repair matters. The affairs in question are carried out jointly among village residents, without a strict division of tasks under the leadership of traditional stakeholders from the village founding group (Ina - Ama). Several other rituals of the social and cultural life of the Sumbanese people, which reflect traditional values, are as follows:

1. Li Dadi (Birth Custom)

Li Dadi is the birth procession of a human child which is divided into several stages, namely: Raga Uma is a way of fencing the house in the sense of warding off the power of darkness that disturbs the event of a human birth. Pogu Ai Patuni is a procession of respect for the fetus, namely being ready to welcome the baby's arrival by preparing firewood to be used to boil water for bathing for the mother and baby when the baby is born. The Pangarang procession (naming) means that after the baby is born, the baby is ready to be given a name which is marked by splitting a coconut (beranya nyau). Towards adulthood, for girls, there is a kikir (hair cutting) procession, namely the process of cutting Logi Lelut Taka Tikur (cutting the sides of the hair, but leaving the top of the head) followed by Katitu Wihi (tattooing the feet) as a sign of maturity.

2. Li Lawi and Li Mangoma (Traditional Marriage and Marriage)

Belis (dowry or dowry) with large numbers of animals for the Sumba people is not referred to as the price of a woman. The belis is a tie between the woman's family and the man's. Giving a dowry also becomes a public declaration (announcement) that the man from A's family and the woman from B's family have married as an official husband and wife couple. Going through the stages up to the transfer of the woman from her parents' house to the man's family are stages that have very high local wisdom values. Through these stages, whether consciously or unconsciously, traditional practitioners want to convey the message that marriage is sacred, majestic and no joke. There is a strong message behind the belis activity, namely that the newly married couple can achieve maringi (blessing) in the form of eternity for the married couple (Ramone P. R., 2015, p. 72). a. Halatu Marada The boy's attempt to investigate the whereabouts of the girl. Trace the origins and family of the girl and introduce yourself to the girl's family. b. Ngidi Pamama is stage I, namely the proposal of a girl by bringing 2 (two) horses, namely 1 stallion and 1 small horse, 3 pieces of mamuli, Hawalang lolu amahu (a string of gold) and 1 zak of betel nut and tobacco. c. Pitak Pamama is stage II, namely the male family brings 15 animals as belis, namely, 4 buffaloes, 11 horses, mamuli, lolu amahu, machetes and spears and 1 cow (ahu papalu) d. Dadang nulung lunung tapu is

stage III, where the girl is moved or picked up from her parents' house, taken to the man's house. At this stage, the male family brings *belis* in the form of animals, namely *Hakati Pitu Habulu Walu* (8-tailed animal), *Nibu* (spear), *Lolu amahu* (17 gold strings), *Katopu* (machete) and *mamuli*. When arriving at the boy's house, after 3 days and 3 nights, the traditional *purung tana* ceremony is carried out by hitting the gong (*tau todu*, and *tardingan baru*), which means, after 3 days and 3 nights, the girl can be free to carry out activities in the house. e. *Auhu ta Kawihu*, *Wait a Kadoru Auhu ta Kawihu*, *Wait a Kadoru* (Rice in a small *sokal*, water in a branch of bamboo) This means that all the requirements for the marriage customs have been fulfilled. f. *Palijak* Procession of settling customs, that is, when you are newly married, the customs have not been finalized, but after several years they are completed. The number of *Belis*, namely the total number of animals from stage I to stage III, is 27 animals. This fulfillment of the number of animals is a sign of mutual respect for the honor and dignity of the Sumba people, even respect for culture.

3. *Death Rituals*

In research, a study from Bali (Bali Archaeological Center research team, 2018) stated that there were 133 stone graves in Pasunga Village. The death ceremony is one of the important processions in the lives of traditional village communities in Sumba, including Pasunga. The sign of death (if someone dies) is done by beating the gong as a sign that the family has died and as information for the family or neighbors. The rhythms of the death gong are *Tau Todu* (performed 8 times), *Tadingang* (performed 4 times), *Todu halakung* (performed 4 times) and *tube* (performed 3 times). If the deceased is male, they are brought a *paborung* cloth, if the deceased is female they are brought a *sarong*. After being washed, the body is dressed in cloth, then moved from the room to the front room accompanied by a gong (*tau todu*). Official notification of information regarding a death in the family to the uncle (family member or female relative) to the son-in-law. If someone in the family dies, the body is buried for 3 days and 3 nights and guarded by the family while ringing the gong (*Tabung*). After 3 days and 3 nights the burial will be carried out by slaughtering animals in the form of buffalo and pigs.

4. *Central Sumba Traditional Rituals*

- a) *Purung Ta Kadonga Ratu* comes from the *Anakalang* language which consists of the words; *Purung* means down, *Ta* means to, *Kadonga* means valley, *Ratu* means Imam. So *Purung Ta Kadonga Ratu* literally means going down to the priest's valley. This ritual is a ceremony to give sacrificial offerings to the ancestors of the *Anakalang* people, namely *Umbu Sebu* and *Rambu Kareri* in the *Kadonga Ratu* cave. This ritual is carried out in accordance with the *Anakalang* calendar time calculation which is called "*wulla Tua*" which falls at the end of May and 19 to the beginning of June in every odd-numbered year. This activity was carried out with the aim of asking for the blessing of 'rain' from their ancestors so that their rice plants would not dry out and they would not suffer

from hunger. The place where Purung Ta Kadonga Ratu is held is in a valley located to the east of Laitarung village. In this celebration, there are 2 spears used, namely Mehang Karaga (male symbol) and Loda Pari (female symbol).

- b) Purung Ta Liang Marapu, has the meaning namely; Purung (going down or descending, a group of priests from the clan/heirs and believers who have consulted on the instructions and blessing of the god to carry out worship by going down to the cave where the god is enthroned), Ta Liangu (in the cave where the god is also the place of Umbu Pabal was born and received a miracle), Marapu (a form of belief that is believed and symbolized by 'stone' or 'gold' which will bring wrath or blessing). Purung Ta Liang Marapu is a very interesting cultural rite with various artistic night events, which is held once a year by the Imam (queen), heirs and devotees to worship and provide food offerings and burnt offerings by going down to the cave where the God is enthroned. about 5 km from Deri-Kambajawa village.
- c) The Tauna Usu Manua Ritual, is an annual marapu feeding ceremony, which aims to cleanse 20 sins; cleanse disease outbreaks and evil spirits from the village and pray for a successful harvest. This ceremony must be performed first by the Wawarongu village, then followed by other villages. On the day of implementation, the materials that must be prepared for this ceremony are: 1 (one) medium buffalo, which is prepared by one of the village residents in turn every year, 1 (one) red rooster prepared by each house in the village, Sririh areca nut is prepared during the activity to entertain guests. This traditional ritual event lasts for 7 (seven) nights and 8 (eight) days.
- d) Waura Watu. The people of Central Sumba recognize the waura watu (stone pulling) ceremony as part of the tradition of honoring ancestors in Central Sumba. The megalithic object that was drawn is a stone slab which is the eternal resting place for the bodies of ancestors. Stone material is obtained by excavating in certain places which are rich in various types of rock. After finding the right rock source, several workers will arrange and carve the rock in its original place according to the desired shape. Carving a stone can take months to form a beautiful grave. The process of pulling grave stones from their original place to a new location is a very interesting phenomenon. Hundreds or even thousands of people work together to pull rocks that can weigh tens of tons. They work without monetary compensation, but the ceremony organizers are obliged to provide food during the ceremony and provide meat gifts for the stone pullers. Preparation for pulling the stone requires careful preparation because the object being pulled is a grave stone which is large and very heavy. Paaung watu is the leader and one of the successful pioneers in the stone pulling ceremony, therefore he must have the ability to organize and encourage the thousands of stone pulling masses (Neonbasu, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative type of research. This research has data and data sources. The data source is the Purung Ta Liang Marapu ritual which is still adhered to and carried out by the people of Central Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia until now. The data in this research are words, sentences, paragraphs that show the ritual narrative and ritual system contained in the Purung Ta Liang Marapu ritual. The data will be interpreted in the context of cultural discourse. The data collection techniques used in this research are interview techniques, documentation techniques, and observation techniques. The data analysis technique used is hermeneutics. The data validity technique used is an external auditor who is none other than a lecturer.



Figure 1. Marapu Procession

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research will divide the exposure into several aspects, namely:

1) Marapu Concept

The Marapu religion is a "native religion" that is still alive and adhered to by the Sumba people on Sumba Island, East Nusa Tenggara. What is meant by Marapu Belief is a belief system based on the worship of ancestral spirits. The basic premise of any cult is the belief in the existence of a soul, something supernatural, and supernatural powers. This means that worship in religion has a mechanism that is related to daily life and other natural forces. The Marapu belief is a belief that originates from the megalithic suit. The core belief that developed in megalithic communities is that the spirits of ancestors after death will not leave forever, but will only move from real life to the afterlife, which is why according to them, the burial ceremony of ancestors is the beginning of the rebirth of their ancestors in another world. The concept of worshipping the spirits of ancestors and ancestors is based on high respect for the spirits of ancestors.

This cannot be separated from the knowledge and skills they have acquired from their ancestors and the legacies they have passed on to their descendants. The most striking thing about 75 ancestor worship is during

worship ceremonies and burial ceremonies. The ancestors who first came to the island of Sumba are highly respected by their descendants to this day. This respect for ancestral spirits later gave birth to a local religion called the Marapu belief. The Marapu belief cults the spirits of ancestors (ancestors) as intermediaries to worship the Almighty Creator or Supreme Divine⁵. Apart from referring to a particular religious system adhered to by the people of Sumba, the term Marapu also refers to another, narrower meaning, namely the spirits of ancestors. In the cosmology of the Sumbanese people, the universe consists of three layers, namely the upper layer (sky), the middle layer (earth), and the lower layer (under the earth). As the supreme ruler, Anatala, who is also called Hupu Ina - Hupu Ama (mother and father of all things) lives in the sky. In the concept of the Sumbanese people, the sky consists of eight petala (cone-shaped layers, the top part has the narrowest land, while the bottom part has the widest land).

In the first layer, which is called Awangu Walu Ndani (eighth layer of heaven), Hupu Ina - Hupu Ama live with the Marapu. From the conception of the people of Sumba, it can be seen that the existence of God is very different from that of humans, both because of his supernatural nature and his place far above. Initially, when the Marapu had not yet descended to earth, the relationship between humans and the highest God could be established directly. However, when they decided to stay on earth, the relationship between God and humans was broken. Communication with God can only occur through the spirits of ancestors, namely the Marapu. Through Marapu, humans can ask for help to be conveyed to Hulu Ina - Hupu Ama, and through Marapu Hupu Ina - Hupu Ama also sends messages or answers to these requests. ⁶ The existence of Marapu can be said to have changed the role of God (Hupu Ina - Hupu Ama) in the life of the people of Sumba.

The understanding that God is far above makes Marapu's position important. Marapu is important because it can be a link between humans and God. In addition, he has represented God with the tasks of helping or punishing humans. If Marapu is worshiped, he will provide help, protection and safety. Likewise, if it is not worshiped, it will cause disaster. Apart from believing in the spirits of their ancestors, the people of Sumba also believe in the existence of spirits that can help or harm human life. Belief in spirits is a necessity to ward off evil, disaster, or to ensure safety. Sumba people believe that by giving offerings to spirits who are close to the community, these spirits will see and protect the community from bad things.

2) Marapu Ritual Objects

To commemorate Marapu, Sumba people sacred objects that are usually used in ceremonies. Based on their function, sacred objects can be divided into two types, namely ceremonial objects and ceremonial tools. Ceremonial objects are used as objects of worship, because they are considered symbols that represent the Marapu. Meanwhile, ceremonial tools are not used as objects of worship. However, these tools are also considered sacred because they have long been used as tools of worship. The sacred area is called Tanggu Marapu

(ancestral part). Tanggu Marapu can be divided into two groups, namely; First, the Marapu la hindi tanggu (the part of the marapu above the attic), namely objects that are so sacred that no one is allowed to touch these objects except the queen and paratu. According to belief, the spirits of the ancestors are in these objects (usually made of gold) so it is considered Marapu itself.

Tanggu marapu of this group are heirloom objects owned by a kabihu and are not as sacred as the tanggu marapu la hindi. Second, Tanggu Marapu la kaheli. Tanggu Marapu la kaheli includes jewelry - silver gold jewelry, cloth, ivory bracelets, beaded necklaces, gongs, head jewelry and so on. When there are important events, such as death ceremonies, langu paraingu parties and ndiawa langu parties, these objects are exhibited. The ceremonial tools include containers made of woven palm leaves, coconut shells, copper or bronze plates, knives, machetes, spears, scissors, wooden plates, mortars, earthen pots, ropes and horse reins.

3) Marapu Offerings

In carrying out rituals for the Marapu, the community usually has to provide offerings that are used in the ritual to offer to the Marapu that each kabihu adheres to. Offerings are a means of begging and asking the Marapu. The offerings usually provided in the ritual include betel nut, chicks, goats, even large four-legged animals such as cows, horses and buffalo. People bring offerings of pahapa, kawadaku, hunggu maraku, a goat and four chicks to the Marapu, especially to Uma Ndapataungu. A tau mapingu papuhi (a person who is clever in the magical arts) when performing aggressive magical arts, offers his thighpa, kawadaku and several chickens (two, four or eight depending on needs) to the marapu who are in Uta Muru-Kaba Watu (green forests and rock cliffs), to conquer his enemies.

4) Marapu Organizing Figures

When carrying out the Hamyang ritual or worship ceremony for the Marapu, the queens who play a very important role in the ritual ceremony. This is because the Queens from generation to generation are given rights and authority by the community as guardians of the Marapu tangu (people who are allowed to use ritual tools), and people who are trusted by the community as people who have the role and rights in leading ritual events to the Marapu. Queens are believed to have a special ability to communicate with Marapu (ancestral spirits). Therefore, the Queens function as a liaison between humans and the Marapu. This is what causes the Queens to play a very important role in carrying out worship rituals for the Marapu.

5) Marapu Procession

Religious ceremonies in Sumba are always considered sacred, therefore the ceremonial places, ceremonial times, objects which are tools in ceremonies and people who carry out ceremonies are also considered sacred. The worship of Marapu has formed the belief system of the Sumbanese people which animistic in nature. Houses of worship, monuments and special objects were

created with the aim of serving as a medium for worshiping ancestral spirits and spirits. The physical existence of these worship facilities is important to convince Marapu believers that ancestral spirits and spirits are truly near them.

The people of Sumba pay close attention to the conditions for carrying out the Marapu ritual. This is because the people of Sumba think that if the ritual requirements are not carried out it will cause anger from the Marapu, therefore the ritual requirements must be fulfilled immediately by the community before carrying out the ritual for the Marapu. One of the rituals that the author has participated in in the Marapu ritual is when people carry out the rice planting ritual. This ceremony is held in September at the beginning of the rainy season. Before the community starts planting rice in their respective fields, the community will first call the queens and ask the queens to immediately carry out the pest ritual for the Marapu, so that the Marapu will give instructions to the community that the community's rice crop this year will have an abundant harvest or crop failure.

After the queens gathered, the queens immediately met the community, and asked the community to immediately provide all the requirements for the ritual and the queens asked the community to comply with the conditions for carrying out the Marapu ritual. First, the queens conveyed when the ritual would take place to the community, and the right time to carry out the Marapu ritual, then the queens asked the community to provide offerings in the form of a white chick aged three to four months, betel nut, and women were encouraged to cook it. delicious food - delicious. Ceremonial moments are felt as times that are considered sacred, critical and full of supernatural danger. Therefore, the moments of the ceremony must be timed so that they align with the rhythm of the universe. After arriving at the day to perform the ritual, the queens and the people immediately rushed and walked towards the ritual place, namely at Uma Marapu. People are advised to wear nice and neat clothes, mothers must bring food, while the queens wear attributes in the form of red headbands, white clothes, wear halopa, and carry mbolapahapa with red strings.

In the belief system of the Sumbanese people, worship of ancestral spirits and spirits is carried out in two places, namely worship inside the house and worship outside the house. Worship in the house is divided into two places, namely in the house where no one lives (uma bokulu). The worship that is carried out is carried out in the house where people live (is a worship of Marapu queen) which is held at certain times. Apart from worshipping inside the house, worshiping ancestral spirits and spirits is also carried out outside the home, namely in several specially created locations. Sumba people believe that certain places are controlled by ancestral spirits and spirits who have supernatural powers.

Therefore, to ask for safety for all Kabihu residents, in these places a cult monument called the Katoda was built. Katuada is a place for pamujaan ceremonies outside the house in the form of a monument (a kind of linga-yoni) made from a piece of kunjuru or kanawa wood on the sides of which are placed flat stones. On this flat stone, various offerings, such as pahapa, kawadaku,

anduhu mangejingu, are placed to be offered to the Umbu-Rambu (gods and goddesses) who are in that place. After arriving at the Marapu house (uma bokulu), people are expected to wait outside and are not allowed to enter the Marapu house, only the queens are allowed to enter.

After the queens enter the Marapu house (uma bokulu), the queens will immediately take the ritual objects that are in the uma bakulu attic. Marapu's presence is manifested in various forms of objects, such as spears, gold, ivory, gongs, beads and others. etc. Before taking these heirlooms, the queens must perform a hamayang and ask permission from the Marapu before taking these heirlooms. After the Marapu objects were lowered, the queens would immediately carry out the ritual, at that time the queens asked 8 Ibid. to the community to immediately prepare offerings in the form of betel nut and a white rooster that is three to four months old. Siri piang plays a very important role in the lives of the Sumba people, in fact it can relatively replace the role of food ingredients. Betel nut serves to express the community's respect for the Marapu.

Therefore, in the Marapu ritual, what is spread first as an offering is betel nut. When the Hamyang ritual is to be carried out, the queen first asks the people to cut a chick and give its heart to the queens. After the chicken liver is given to the queen, the queen will perform a ritual and ask permission for the Marapu to tell the people about the harvest they have obtained. The queens immediately looked at the contents of the chicken's liver. Whether the chicken's liver was cut was black or had black spots, then this year's harvest would be damaged by pests. Meanwhile, if the chicken's liver is brownish and there are no black spots, then this year's harvest will be satisfactory.

After knowing the results of this year's harvest, the queens will perform the last ritual and the queens will immediately return the ritual objects to their place and after that the queens leave the Marapu house and immediately go to the community, the queens inform the community of the harvest that will be obtained on at the time of the upcoming harvest. After learning that the harvest was coming, the people immediately served betel nut at Marapu's house and put it on the cathodes as a thank you to the Marapu. When they arrived at their homes, each community held a lively party together with the people of the village. Musical instruments began to be played, accompanied by singing and dancing. while other communities began to slaughter animals such as pigs, cows and buffalo and distribute the meat of these animals to everyone who celebrated the ritual.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research has several conclusions in accordance with the problem formulation stated in the introduction. These conclusions are:

- a) Animism can be observed and found in traditional cultures that still adhere to ancestral traditions. Traditions will still exist and continue to be carried out if people who adhere to these traditions agree and simultaneously maintain the traditions or rituals believed in by their elders or ancestors before them. Animism is a part of animism where

belief in ancestral spirits, gods or supernatural beings is still firmly held. Anismism in Central Sumba still exists and continues to this day even though religion has entered the region. Local people still carry out the Purung Ta Liang Marapu ritual even though they have a religion and believe in God.

- b) The Purung Ta Liang Marapu ritual system is a representation of the thoughts of the people of Central Sumba, NTT, Indonesia. They think that God is a figure who is far away and difficult to reach, so they think that the closest God they can reach is the gods in the caves located on Sumba. On the one hand, the traditional thinking that they promote has had a positive impact, namely the survival of the Purung Ta Liang Marapu ritual and a unified western system in carrying out this ritual.

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