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**The Form of *Tapah Malenggang* Folklore from Batanghari Regency,
Jambi Province**

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ABSTRACT

This research describes the form of the *Tapah Malenggang* folklore based on the transcription conducted by Datuk Rasyid from the utterances of Datuk Zainul and Datuk Saharman. The folklore of *Tapah Malenggang*, as part of the oral literature of the Batanghari people, is gradually shrinking, and it can even be said to be on the verge of extinction. Through this research, it is hoped that the folklore of *Tapah Malenggang* can be found. The method used is descriptive analysis. The results showed that the *Tapah Malenggang* folklore was in the form of myths which functioned structurally to formulate the folk tales as myths.

Key words: Form of folklore, myth, *Tapah Malenggang*

INTRODUCTION

Oral traditions in society as cultural practices ultimately produce a form of oral art, namely oral literature that has a close relationship with the beliefs of the people. This oral literature is in the form of speech which has a structural aspect (form) as a fact of oral culture and also has an aspect of meaning (concept) as a belief that binds the rites in the cultural activities of the community.

In a society where oral traditions live and develop while oral literature develops through a series of messages, stories, testimonies (both collectively and individually) through a model of oral inheritance between generations (Vansina in Taum, 2011). The manifestation of this testimony by genre can be in the form of poetry, proverbs, as well as folk tales or fairy tales. In addition, as an oral art work, actually oral literature is a mental fact (mentifact), which has been part of the awareness process of the speakers' community from generation to generation (Kartodirdjo in Taum, 2011).

As an awareness of the community utterances, the importance of the study of oral tradition is to find features, forms, meanings, manifestations, to the knowledge system of oral culture before all of these have been destroyed due to changes in times and culture. Taum, 2011) in his book, says that the definition of the term oral literature itself is actually somewhat contradictory and complex. This is because etymologically, ontologically and epistemologically, the nature and aesthetic reality within the framework of oral literature cannot be easily sited. In this reality, Taum is very careful to conclude that oral literature is in the form of a working definition, which is a group of

texts that are passed down from generation to generation orally, in which there are literary means that are intrinsically closely related to the beliefs and culture of a group of people (Taum, 2011).

Oral literature as a material object has characteristics that can be identified structurally from its manifestation (Taum: 2011), namely

- a. In the form of literary texts that are spread orally. In this feature, it is found that there are elements of value and method. The value element is related to the literary dimension (aesthetic and poetic). The element of method is related to the medium used in spreading the speech.
- b. Oral literature exists in the language of the archipelago or region and is still spoken by the people who own it.
- c. Oral literature has a variety of versions and variations that tend to be different, the cause is none other than the method of spreading it orally.
- d. The spread of oral literature tends to remain in the long term, this condition makes oral literature survive traditionally.
- e. There are conventions and poetics of their own as manifestations of the aesthetics of oral literature that can be distinguished from written literature.

One part of oral literature is folklore. (Djamaris, 1993) provides the following classification of folklore:

"Folklore is a class of stories that live and develop from one generation to other generation. It is called a folklore because this story lives among the people and almost all levels of society are familiar with the story. Folklores are usually conveyed orally by storytellers who know the storyline by heart, which is why folklore is also known as oral literature. Stories are told by storytellers while sitting in a place to anyone, children and adults. "

This quote clearly explains the relationship between folklore and oral literature are very close to traditional society with a dominant oral basis. (Taum, 2011) specifically explains the nature of oral literature, namely "Folklore is a kind of prose story that is classified as fiction, can be based on a real incident, it can also be fiction, and not too serious in nature. In folklore there is no description of a specific time or place. However, folklore has an important function as a means of moral teaching. "

Based on the quotes above, it can be concluded that folklore is also a part of traditional literature, where its existence can be assumed as a verbal manifestation of people's expressions (Mitchel, 2003).

This study aims to identify and analyze the form of the folklore *Tapah Malenggang* in Batanghari Regency. Through this identification and analysis, it is hoped that the form and of the Tapah Malenggang folklore in Batanghari Regency, Jambi Province will be known.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The kind of this research is qualitative research. Mcmillan and Smasher in (Syamsuddin and Damaianti, 2006) states that qualitative research is an investigative approach because researchers usually collect data directly interact with the people involved in the research. It can also be interpreted that

qualitative research is a study whose emphasis is related to activities, situations or materials that require a complete description of something.

Research of form the *Tapah Malenggang* folklore is a folklore or field research. The research data were collected using the library method and ethnographic method. To obtain more complete data, researchers used various techniques, both direct and indirect techniques. According to (Danandjaja, 2007) that the collection or inventory of folklore can be done in two ways, namely; (1) collect all the titles of essays (books and articles) that have been written about the folklore *Tapah Malenggang*; and (2) collecting materials from the *Tapah Malenggang* folklore from the interviews. and the results are then immediately archived. The aim of this technique is to complement the research

RESEARCH RESULT

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The Form of the *Tapah Malenggang* Folklore

The folklore of *Tapah Malenggang* is a folk tale that develops in communities along the Batanghari River. The folklore tells of three magic *tapah* fish who made a long journey. Until now, the *tapah* fish is considered an important icon by the Batanghari people. In the life of the Batanghari people, *tapah* fish are considered as sacred fish as stated in the *Tapah Malenggang* folklore that there are three sons of gods who transform into *tapah* fish. Some people in Batanghari Regency believe that the *tapah* fish, the god incarnation in the *Tapah Malenggang* folklore, is still alive today so it cannot be caught carelessly.

Bascom (in Dananjaya, 1994) argues that of all folklore forms or genres that are widely studied by experts is folk prose stories. This shows that people's prose as an oral literary work is easier to identify narratively and is able to provide information related to the content it contains. In accordance with its nature, folk prose is a type of free story (essay) that has developed from generation to generation in society. Bascom (in Dananjaya, 1994) also provides three basic classifications of the types of folk prose, namely myth, legend, and folktale.

Based on the identification of the aspects of the form and types of folk prose mentioned by Bascom above, the folklore of *Tapah Malenggang* is categorized as myths. This can be seen from the manifestation of the characters who are the incarnation of gods or demigod beings who have the ability to surpass ordinary humans. These figures are Mambang di Awan who transformed into *Tapah Malenggang*, Mambang Di Bulan who transformed into *Tapah Kudung*, and *Mambang Sakti* who transformed into *Tapah Tembago*. Their father was named Sati Menggung and their mother named Sicindai Laut. The three brothers asked permission to pick up Putri Kasumo Ampai who was in Lubuk Sebedar Alam. Putri Kasumo Ampai is a match for *Tapah Malenggang* (Mambang Diawan). To meet her soul mate, Mambang Diawan had to disguise

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herself as a *tapah* fish. The three brothers faced obstacles after obstacles. They have to face the Bide Snake, White Labi-labi, Rajo Mudo, and Sawo Snake

In the *Tapah Malenggang* folklore it is also stated that the time setting is the past, not the present and it is set in another world, not the world we know as it is today. For example the name of the place mentioned in the story setting, namely *Alam Pintu Langit* and *Lubuk Sebidar Alam*. The setting of the place clearly conforms to the concept of myth that Bascom intended to characterize. In addition, it is based on the relationship between the *Tapah Malenggang* folklore and the growing belief in the community along the Batanghari river, that *tapah* fish are sacred fish that are consecrated because they are believed to be the embodiment of the character Mambang Di Awan.

CONCLUSION

In general, the folklore of *Tapah Malenggang* in Batanghari Regency has the form and type as myth. This is evidenced by the characters who surpass humans (have strength, supernatural powers) and also the setting of events in the past which are also not just the human world in general so that the story tends to center on things that are magical, supernatural, extraordinary and beyond human reason. The structure proves that the *Tapah Malenggang* folklore, which consists of characters and story settings, has characteristics that lead to the type or form of the story, namely myth. This can be proven by the condition of the character in the form of a demigod, both the main character and the extras. In addition, the characters have abilities beyond the limits of human reason, even tend to be magical and can do magical things. This formula is one of the most dominant indications in order to identify the narrative form of the story structurally.

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