

## WHEN WOMEN ARE AS GUARDIANS OF NATURE: READING IDEOLOGY OF ECOFEMINISM IN INDONESIAN FOLKLORES

Wiyatmi

Indonesian Literature Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri  
Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Email: wiyatmi@uny.ac.id

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### Abstract

This study aims to explore and identify ecofeminism ideologies that place women as guardians of nature in a number of Indonesian folklores. The goal is motivated by the existence of imaginary and empirical realities that develop in the Indonesian society about the existence of super female figures who are considered to have influence and strength in protecting nature. By using purposive sampling this study examines three main female folklores who act as carers of nature, namely Dewi Sri and Nyi Ratu Kidul. As the characters in their folklore are created by the collective reasoning of the people. The results of the study are expected to provide an overview of the existence of female leaders as guardians of nature so that the realization of human life and nature can be achieved which will guarantee the survival of life on earth.

**Keywords:** Gender, feminism, folklore, Indonesian literature.

### 1. Introduction

Folk stories are one form of Indonesian intellectual property that lived and developed in society since ancient times until now. As one of the literary works, the existence of folklore is not only as entertainment but also as an educational medium. This is in accordance with the opinion of Haratius, a Greek philosopher who stated that literary works are essentially fun and useful (*dulce et utile*) (Teeuw, 2016). Through folklore, the previous generation taught life values that came from reality. As proposed by Propp (1984, p. 38) that folklore, like other arts, comes from reality. There is always a dialectical relationship between literature and reality. Besides being born from reality, literary works also become a model and reference for the community in understanding and creating reality.

In reality, Indonesia is an agrarian and maritime country, so it is rich in folklore around the life of agriculture and the ocean. For example, about the origin of staple foods (rice, taro, sago, etc.), which are included in *Asal-usul: Bunga Rampai Cerita Rakyat Sumatera Utara* (Syafriana & Mulia, 2015) or the relationship between the kings in Java with the southern sea guardian (Nyi Ratu Kidul) in *Babad Tanah Jawi* (Olthof, 2017) and *Kalaharu: Kumpulan Cerita Rakyat Jawa* (Mardiyanto, 2007). From the folklore, it illustrates how the

origin of the staple food of the Indonesian people. Why is rice a staple food in almost all regions in Indonesia? Why is the figure of Nyi Ratu Kidul considered to have an important role in relation to the power of kings in Java? From the folklore, indirectly the reader, from generation to generation is also taught about gender construction, about masculinity, femininity, and gender roles. Folklore can even be used to defend or challenge the prevailing status quo in a community (Nenola, 1999, p. 1). Folk stories can be used to express and strengthen the acceptance of dominant norms, concepts, and power structures. On the other hand, folklore can be used to try to refute the authority of dominant concepts and power holders or to present an alternative world (Nenola, 1999, p. 1).

Based on this background, it is necessary to explore and identify the existence of female figures in folklore who are considered to have influence and strength, especially those that play a role in preserving nature such as Dewi Sri and Nyi Ratu Kidul. By using an ecofeminism perspective, this study examines the existence and role of female figures as guardians of nature from a number of Indonesian folklores. Before going to the focus of the problem, several conceptual frameworks were explained, namely folklore and the role of women as guardians of nature in the perspective of ecofeminism.

Folk stories are one of the old literary works that live in a society (the people) whose spread is carried out verbally (Danandjaja, 2007, p. 5; Propp, 1984, p. 6). Danandjaja (2007, p. 50) distinguishes folktales into several types, namely myths, legends, and fables. Myth is a folklore that tells the life of a god or half-god figure in relation to human, a legend tells about human life that has extraordinary character and is related to the occurrence of a place. While fairy tales describe the lives of humans and animals whose stories are considered not really happening (Danandjaja, 2007, p. 50). Of the three types of folklore, myth occupies an important role in constructing people's mindsets and awareness. This is because myth describes the interaction between humans and the gods or supernatural figures related to religion (Daeng, 1991, p. 16). Myth contains the framework of a religious system that applies as religious truth. Daeng (1991, p. 16) also states that thanks to the terms of reference provided by myths, humans can be oriented in this life, he knows where he came from and where he went; the origin and purpose of his life were revealed to him in myths; myths provide a handle on life. According to Mircea Eliade, myths have several functions, namely (1) describing the history of supernatural behaviors, (2) history is considered absolutely true and sacred, (3) myths are always related to "creation" about existence, institutions, and behavior, (4) by knowing the myths about "origins" people can control and manipulate things according to their will, and (5) by "living out" the myths of people living in the all-sacred, having the power to be above "events" (Eliade, 1968, pp. 18-19).

One theoretical framework that is deemed appropriate to understand the myth that raises the role of female leaders as guardians of nature is the theory of ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is one school of thought that connects patriarchal domination of nature with the oppression of women (Gaard, 1993, p. 1; Shiva & Mies, 2005, p. 15; Tong, 2006, p. 359; Warren & Cheney, 2015, p. 180; Warren, 1990, p. 123). Nature and women in patriarchal societies are seen as objects and preparations that deserve to be exploited (Candraningrum, 2013, p. 4; Shiva & Mies, 2005, p. 3; Warren & Cheney, 2015: 180). Ecofeminism is born as a social movement that has a strong ideology in opposing the exploitation of women and nature, including economic growth that does not pay attention to the sustainability of ecosystems (Candraningrum, 2013, p. 4; Shiva & Mies, 2005, p. 15; Tong, 2006, p. 359). As one type of feminist thought and movement, ecofeminism has the same characteristics, namely the existence of forms of oppression of women caused by the patriarchal system. However, unlike other schools of feminism, ecofeminism offers the broadest and most demanding concept of self (human) relations with others (Tong, 2006,

p. 11). Ecofeminism understands human relations with other humans, but also with the world not humans, namely animals, even plants (Tong, 2006, p. 11; Warren, 1990, p.125). In this connection, often humans destroy natural resources by machinery, polluting the environment with toxic gases. As a result, according to ecofeminism, resistance by nature is also carried out, so that every day humans are impoverished in line with the falling of trees in the forest and the extinction of animals' species. To avoid this, then according to ecofeminism, humans must strengthen relations with one another and relations with the world not humans (Tong, 2006, p. 11; Warren, 1990, p. 125).

## 2. Research Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive method to identify and understand various folklore that places women as guardians of nature in a number of Indonesian folklores. By using purposive sampling this study examined the three main female folklores who act as guardians of nature, namely Dewi Sri (*Cariyos Dewi Sri*, Suyami, et al., 1998; "Dewi Sri and Sedana" in *Kalaharu: Kumpulan Cerita Rakyat Jawa*, Mardiyanto, 2007) and Nyi Ratu Kidul (*Babad Tanah Jawi*, Olthof, 2017; *Kalaharu: Kumpulan Cerita Rakyat Jawa*, Mardiyanto, 2007). Data collected from both folklores were then analyzed with the perspective of ecofeminism.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The two folklores that were studied in this study were "Dewi Sri and Sadana" and "Nyi Ratu Kidul" born from agrarian and maritime societies. Dewi Sri, also known as Dewi Padi (Rice Goddess), is one of the agrarian folklores because it tells the origin of rice plantations in Java, while the Nyi Ratu Kidul is a kind of maritime folklore because it tells of a queen of the *jinn* kingdom who controls the ocean. In both folklores, it appears that in addition to being the main character, women also show their role as bearers of food sources and guardians of nature, especially the ocean.

The two female leaders in the two folklores were basically not ordinary people. Dewi Sri is a creature sent from *kahyangan* (heaven) to earth to bring rice seeds to Java, while Nyi Ratu Kidul is a southern sea spirit (*jin*) who is married to Senapati, who helps and protects him from becoming king of Mataram. The two female figures are present in human life to protect human life from the adequacy of food sources and lead their people. The birth of the two folklores is certainly inseparable from collective reasoning or the worldview of the supporting community in understanding life in a world that is in harmony with nature and its rulers. In addition, the two folklores also show that women also have an important role in life. Women are not regarded as the second sex, as in the patriarchal system adopted in most modern societies (Walby, 1990, p. 20), but also serve as a carrier of the basic food source and guardian of nature and life.

### 3.1 Dewi Sri as the Goddess of Rice and the Source of Prosperity

Rice is one of the staple foods as a large part of the Indonesian people. As one of the agricultural countries, it is not surprising that most Indonesian people become farmers, cultivate rice fields and grow rice. From this agrarian society was born the myth of the origin of rice found in various regions in Indonesia. In the study of Yeti (2014, p. 55) entitled "The Motives of the Origins of Rice Plants in Three Indonesian Folk Stories" it was stated that at least the stories of the origin of rice are found in Java, Bali, Madura, Kalimantan, Maluku (Kei Island), and Sumatra Utama (Batak).

This study does not compare the stories of the origin of rice from various regions but will limit the story of the Javanese version of Dewi Sri. The myth of the Javanese version of Dewi Sri is told in *Serat Cariyos Dewi Sri*, stored at the Sonobudoyo Museum, Yogyakarta (Javanese Lontar Manuscript, number: U42/81/S.DL.38). This text has been reviewed by Suyami, Nurhojorini, and Astuti with the research title *Kajian Nilai Budaya Naskah Kuna Cariyos Dewi Sri* (1998). The study was equipped with a transliteration of Javanese letters to Latin and translations from Javanese into Indonesian. The results of the translation were used as data sources for this study. In addition, data sources also came from "Dewi Sri and Sedana" in *Kalaharu: Kumpulan Cerita Rakyat Jawa* (Mardiyanto, 2007).

In *Cariyos Dewi Sri*, it is said that Dewi Sri and her brother, Ki Sedana, got the assignment from God (Hyang Sukma) to go down to earth to bring property and seeds from the *khuldi* fruit.

*Mula-mula dikisahkan bahwa Hyang Sukma (Tuhan) berkenan menurunkan Dewi Sri dan Ki Sedana ke dunia dengan membawa harta benda dan benih dari surga yang berasal dari buah kuldi. Isi buah kuldi akan menjadi benih rejeki. Kulitnya dibuang ke samudera menjadi segenap jenis ikan, Getahnya merasuk pada badan manusia. Getah yang berwarna merah menjadi darah. Getah yang berwarna putih menjadi nyawa. Getah yang berwarna kuning menjadi cahaya. Getah yang berwarna hijau menjadi sukma. Getah yang berwarna hitam menjadi bulu dan rambut, serta merasuk ke biji mata.*

*Perjalanan Dewi Sri dan Ki Sedana sampai di negeri seberang, yaitu di Kerajaan Cepamulya. Mereka masuk ke rumah Suwardana. Kedatangan mereka diterima dengan sangat baik Dewi Sri lalu meminta sesuap nasi dan seteguk air. Mereka lalu dijamu nasi jagung, dengan lauk ikan. Sebagai ucapan terima kasih Dewi Sri dan Ki Sedana menghadiahkan kepada Suwardana harta benda yang dibawanya dari surga. Kemudian Dewi Sri dan Ki Sedana diboyong oleh malaikat Jibril ke Jawa untuk mengatasi paceklik yang terjadi di Jawa.... (Suyami, et al., 1998, p. 49).*

[At first it was told that Hyang Sukma (God) was pleased to send Dewi Sri and Ki Sedana to the world by carrying the property and seeds from heaven which came from the fruit of the *kuldi*. The contents of the fruit will be the seed of fortune. The skin is dumped into the ocean into all types of fish, the sap penetrates the human body. The sap is red to blood. The sap which is white becomes life. The yellow sap becomes light. Green sap becomes soul. The black sap becomes hair and hair, and enters the eye seeds.

The journey of Dewi Sri and Ki Sedana arrived in the other country, namely in the Kingdom of Cepamulya. They entered Suwardana's house. Their arrival was very well received by Dewi Sri and then asked for a mouthful of rice and a sip of water. They were then treated to corn rice, with fish dishes. As a thank you, Dewi Sri and Ki Sedana, presented to Suwardana the property he brought from heaven. Then Dewi Sri and Ki Sedana were carried away by the angel Gabriel to Java to overcome the famine that occurred in Java ... (Suyami et al., 1998, p. 49).]

From the quotation it appears that Dewi Sri and Sedana, are creatures originating from heaven (*kahyangan*), handed down to earth to carry rice seeds so that humans on earth (Java) are free from lack of food ingredients. From the story indirectly it also appears that previously in Java and the other countries (Cepamulya Kingdom) the staple food was corn. Rice is a food ingredient derived from heaven. *Cariyos Dewi Sri* already gained Islamic influence because the one who ordered Dewi Sri and Sedana descend to earth (world) was Hyang Sukma (God). In addition, the figure of the Angel Gabriel (angel of revelation) also shows that the text was written in the Islamic tradition. This is different from the text "Dewi Sri and Sedana" in *Kalaharu: Kumpulan Cerita Rakyat Jawa*, (Mardiyanto, 2007), which,

although written and published later, still has a Hindu nuance because it still refers to the characters of Batara Guru and Narada, with the background Kahyangan Jonggring Salaka.

*Pada zaman dahulu di Tanah Jawa kekurangan bahan makanan. Kemudian, Batara Guru memanggil Resi Narada ke Kayangan Jonggring. Resi Narada ditugasi oleh Batara Guru untuk menurunkan benih padi ke Tanah Jawa. Dewi Sri dan Sedana diberi tugas membawa benih padi itu. Dewi Sri membawa dua bulir padi berwarna putih dan merah, sedangkan Sedana membawa dua bulir padi berwarna putih dan hitam.*

*Perjalanan mereka dari Jonggring Salaka ke Tanah Jawa itu harus melewati tempat-tempat yang sulit. Di antaranya, naik gunung, turun ke jurang, dan menyeberangi sungai. Perjalanan mereka selalu dibuntuti oleh seekor babi hutan yang bernama Kala Srenggi. Dewi Sri dan Sedana lari agar benih padi itu tidak jatuh ke tangan Kala Srenggi. Ketika sampai di pegunungan, bulir padi yang berwarna merah yang dibawa oleh Dewi Sri jatuh. Bulir padi itu kemudian tumbuh menjadi tanaman padi gaga (beras merah). Dewi Sri dan Sedana terus berlari. Kala Srenggi pun terus mengejarnya. Dewi Sri dan Sedana melewati tanah yang berlumpur sehingga ia tidak dapat berlari. Kala Srenggi terus mengejarnya sehingga bulir padi berwarna putih yang dibawa oleh Dewi Sri jatuh. Bulir padi itu kemudian tumbuh menjadi tanaman padi (beras putih). Bulir padi yang dibawa oleh Sedana juga jatuh di tanah yang berlumpur itu. Bulir padi yang berwarna hitam tumbuh menjadi tanaman padi ketan hitam dan padi ketan putih. Tanaman padi itu kemudian tumbuh subur dan berbuah lebat. ...." (Mardiyanto, 2007, pp. 23-24).*

[In ancient times in Java, there was a shortage of food. Then, the Batara Guru calls Resi Narada to Jonggring Kayangan. Rishi Narada was assigned by Batara Guru to lower rice seeds to Java. Dewi Sri and Sedana were given the task of carrying the rice seeds. Goddess. Sri brought two rice grains in white and red, while Sedana carried two white and black rice grains.

Their journey from Jonggring Salaka to Java must pass through difficult places. Among other things, going up a mountain, going down a cliff, and crossing a river. Their journey is always followed by a wild boar named Kala Srenggi. Dewi Sri and Sedana ran so that the rice seeds did not fall into the hands of Kala Srenggi. When it arrived in the mountains, the red grain of rice brought by Dewi Sri fell. The rice grains grow into gaga rice (brown rice). Dewi Sri and Sedana continued to run. When Srenggi continued to chase him. Dewi Sri and Sedana passed the muddy land so she could not run. When Srenggi continued to chase him so that the white rice grains brought by Dewi Sri fell. The rice grains then grow into rice plants (white rice). The rice grains carried by Sedana also fell on the muddy soil. Black rice grains grow into black sticky rice plants and white sticky rice. The rice plants then thrive and bear fruit. ..." (Mardiyanto, 2007, pp. 23-24).]

To carry out the duties of carrying rice seeds to Java, Dewi Sri and her sibling had to fight and fight the intruder (Kala Srenggi or Celeng Sarenggi), which would become a pest of rice plants. In the text *Cariyos Dewi Sri* their duty was assisted by the Angel Gabriel, while in "Dewi Sri and Sedana" they were assisted by sparrows.

*Dalam perjalanan burung pipit yang ditugaskan mengangkut benih dari surga merasa kecapaian dan tidak lagi mampu bergerak sehingga benih yang dibawanya terjatuh pada kubangan Celeng, Sarenggi. Burung pipit terus menjaga benih yang terjatuh tersebut. Tak lama kemudian benih tersebut tumbuh sehingga Celeng Sarenggi mengetahuinya. Dewi Sri dan Ki Sedana mencari burung tersebut dan ditemukannya sedang menunggu benih yang baru tumbuh. Mereka mendekat akan mengambil benih tersebut, tetapi Celeng Sarenggi melarangnya. Mereka*

*saling bersikeras akhirnya terjadi pertempuran yang cukup seru. Celeng Sarenggi tewas oleh panah pusaka Ki Sedana. Setewasnya Celeng Sarenggi terdengar suara yang menyatakan bahwa dirinya akan berubah wujud untuk mengganggu tanaman manusia. Lidahnya akan menjadi tikus. Giginya menjadi burung gelatik. Bibirnya menjadi segenap hama penyakit. Matanya menjadi kepik lambing. Telinganya menjadi belalang kapa. Darahnya menjadi berembang kuning, Bulunya menjadi sesundep. Lemaknya menjadi leladah putih. Tulangnya menjadi tepak. Kulitnya menjadi rarebah. Ekornya menjadi ulat terik.*

*Dewi Sri dan Ki Sedana lalu mengambil benih tersebut untuk diserahkan kepada Seh Sahluke yang telah ditunjuk oleh Hyang Sukma untuk menanamnya. Seh Sahluke berhasil dijumpai di pondoknya, yaitu di puncak Gunung Adil. Mereka berdua dijamu dengan nasi paren beserta lauk pauk yang terdiri dari ikan dan sayur-sayuran. Sesudah makan dan merasa kenyang, Dewi Sri dan Ki Sedana lalu menyerahkan benih yang dibawanya, yang kemudian oleh Seh Sahluke dinamakan "padi", (padi). Ki Sedana memberitahukan bahwa dalam menanam banih tersebut harus menyelenggarakan selamatan karena banyak hama yang akan memangsanya. Setelah memberi petunjuk seperlunya tentang tata Cara selamatan, dalam menanam padi, Dewi Sri dan Ki Sedana lalu melanjutkan perjalanan. Kemudian Dewi Sri dan Ki Sedana memberi pelajaran kepada orang-orang yang dijumpainya, yaitu orang yang berhati jahat diberi hukuman, sedangkan yang berhati mulia diberi anugerah... (Suyami, et al., 1998, pp. 94-95).*

[In the course of the sparrow assigned to transport the seeds from heaven to feel tired and no longer able to move so that the seeds he brought fell on the Wild Boar, Sarenggi. Sparrows continue to look after the fallen seeds. Shortly afterwards the seed turned on so that Wild Boar Sarenggi found out. Dewi Sri and Ki Sedana searched for the bird and found it was waiting for a new seed to grow. They approached to take the seed, but Wild Sarenggi forbade it. They insisted on each other, finally there was a battle that was quite exciting. Celeng Sarenggi was killed by the arrow of Ki Sedana heritage. Death of Sarenggi Wild Boar is heard that states that he will change form to disturb human plants. His tongue will become a rat. His teeth become sparrows. His lips become all pests of disease. His eyes became scapegoats. His ears became a grasshopper. The blood becomes yellow in color, the fur becomes sundown. The fat becomes a white container. The bone becomes flat. His skin is becoming thick. The tail becomes a hot caterpillar.

Dewi Sri and Ki Sedana then took the seeds to be handed over to Seh Sahluke who had been appointed though Hyang Sukma to plant them. Seh Sahluke was found in his hut, namely at the peak of Mount Adil. The two of them were treated with rice *paren* and side dishes consisting of fish and vegetables. After eating and feeling full, Dewi Sri and Ki Sedana then handed over the seeds they were carrying, which Seh Sahluke later called "padi" (paddy). Ki Sedana informed that in planting the seed must hold salvation because many pests will eat it. After giving the necessary instructions about the procedure for salvation, in planting rice, Dewi Sri dan Ki Sedana then continued the journey. Then Dewi Sri and Ki Sedana gave lessons to the people they met, namely those who were evil-hearted were given punishment, while the noble ones were given gifts ... (Suyami, et al. 1998, pp. 94-95).]

From the story also revealed the struggle of Dewi Sri and Sedana to secure the rice seeds before reaching the right hands. Interference from Wild Boar Sarenggi shows that rice plants will always get threats from unwanted pests, so that rescue needs to be done.

As a folklore, myths have an important position in society. As Haviland (1992, p. 223) argues that myths are basically religious, because they give a ratio to religious beliefs and practices, relating to the main problems of human life, from where humans come from and

everything in this world. Myth about the origin of rice, as a staple food source, is clearly in accordance with these characteristics. Therefore, the myth of the origin of rice is still alive today. To express gratitude for the fertility of rice plants which also symbolically express their gratitude to God, through Dewi Sri, the people in Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, and West Java perform the Wiwitan ceremony or *mapag* Dewi Sri before starting the harvest (Rohmana & Ermawati, 2014, p. 153).

In the Surakarta Palace, the myth of the origin of rice underlies the birth of the "Sri Mulih" puppet play which is often performed on Grebeg Sekaten. As stated by Sukatno (2013, p. 11) that this play essentially tells that the Pendawa family who needed happiness by always maintaining tradition, respecting their ancestors turned out to forget Dewi Sri and Sedono as symbols of adequate clothing and food. The knights were sad if the children lacked clothing and food. The leaders then self-introspect and examine behaviors that are deemed deviant. It turned out that the Pendawa knights and knights had forgotten about Dewi Sri and Sedana the god of clothing and food. Dewi Sri has left, leaving behind Pendawa because it has been forgotten in the sense that it is not placed properly. With persistent effort and through a heavy struggle finally, the goddess Sri returned to the hands of the beloved family. Amarta is back in prosperity, happy with adequate clothing and food.

### ***3.2 Nyi Ratu Kidul as the Ruler of the Ocean and Supporting Power of the King of Mataram***

The birth of the myth of Nyi Ratu Kidul as ruler of the ocean (especially the Indian Ocean along Java Island) is inseparable from the identity of Indonesia as an archipelagic and maritime country. Geographically, Indonesia as an archipelagic nation based on maritime can be seen with a coastline of 95.181 km which then makes Indonesia the fourth country that has the longest coastline after the United States, Canada and Russia. Indonesia's sea area is two-thirds of Indonesia's area of  $\pm 3,273,810$  km<sup>2</sup> making Indonesia the largest archipelago in the world. Judging from the context of the ASEAN region, Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country followed by Japan and the Philippines (Adhayanto, 2014, p. 140).

In a study entitled "Various Myths about the Sea: Revealing the Maritime Concept of the Indonesian Nation," Taum (2013, p. 4) states that Indonesia has many myths about the sea. For example, Ina Fae (from Lamalera), Putri Mandalika (Lombok), Nyi Ratu Kidul (Yogyakarta), and Ina Kabuki (Buru Island). Various folktales in the Indonesian region even show that in a maritime country like Indonesia the sea is the most important provider of life. Taum (2013, p. 8) also stated that during the heyday of the Majapahit Kingdom, the Archipelago was a maritime unit and the largest sea kingdom among civilized nations on the face of the earth.

The Nyi Ratu Kidul myth as the ruler of the ocean is one of the myths that raises the story of women as rulers and sea guards who are popular along the coast of Java. In addition to living in oral traditions, the story of Nyi Ratu Kidul in writing is recorded in *Babat Tanah Jawi* in the Chapter "Senapati Bertemu dengan Ratu Kidul." *Babad Tanah Djawi* is a work originally written by Ngabehi Kertapradja, then submitted to J.J. Meinsma, later translated by W. L Olthof, was given an introduction by J.J Ras and published by Foris Publications Dordrecht Holland/Providence-USA, in 1874, which had been printed in Latin letters (Lestari, 2017, p. 203). In *Babad Tanah Jawi* (Olthof, 2017, pp. 93-98) it is said that in order to achieve his dream of becoming the king of Mataram, Senapati meditated on the edge of Parangkusumo Beach, in the southern city of Yogyakarta.

*Alkisah menurut yang empunya cerita di Laut Kidul ada yang menjadi raja di sana, raja putri nan cantik jelita, namanya Rara Kidul. Ia menguasai seluruh makhluk halus di Jawa. Waktu itu Rara Kidul baru di dalam istana, istirahat di tempat tidur (kantil) emas, berhiaskan intan, berlian, dan batu mulia lainnya, dilayani para jin, setan, peri perayangan. Rara Kidul terkejut melihat gegernya ikan di laut, serta panasnya air seperti direbus. Suara laut mengerikan. Rara Kidul bicara dalam hatinya, "Selama hidupku, aku belum pernah menyaksikan laut seperti ini. Kenapa ini. Apa kena gara gara, apa karena matahari jatuh, atau aka nada kiamat?"*

*Nyai Kidul lalu keluar, berdiri di atas air. Melihat dunia teranhg tidak ada apa-apa, hanya seorang sakti berdiri di pinggir samudra mengheningkan cipta memohon kepada Allah. Nyai Kidul berbicara sendiri, "Ini dia mungkin yang membuat huru hara di samudra." Ia lalu memerlihatkan diri pada Senapati. Segera didekati, lalu menyembah, bersujut di kakinya, berkata dengan hormat, "Semoga berkenan menghilangkan sedih hati, agar hilang pula gara-gara ini, segera berbahagia seluruh isi laut, yang rusak akibat kenan gara-gara ini...."*

*Penembahan Senapati tiga hari tiga malam tinggal di Laut Kidul. Selalu berkasih-kasihan dengan Rara Kidul. Di sana setiap hari diberi petunjuk tentang ilmu orang menjadi raja yang memimpin manusia, jin, dan peri. Senapati berkata, "Ni Mas, terima kasih atas segala ajaranmu. Saya yakin mika kelak ada musuh Ni Mas akan membantu, tetapi siapa yang akan aku utis memberi tahu?"*

*Rara Kidul menjawab, "O, itu mudah saja. Jika paduka mau memanggil, sedekap dalam sikap semedi menengadah ke langit, pasti saya segera dating membawa bala jin, setan, peri perayangan. Lengkap dengan alat perangnya" (Olthof, 2017, p. 96).*

[Once upon a time, according to the owner of the story in the South Sea, there was someone who became a king there, the beautiful princess, his name was Rara Kidul. He controls all spirits on Java. At that time Rara Kidul was new in the palace, resting on a golden bed, decorated with diamonds, diamonds and other precious stones, served by *jins*, demons, fairy nymphs. Rara Kidul was surprised to see the commotion of fish in the sea, and the heat of the water like boiling. The sound of the sea is terrible. Rara Kidul spoke in her heart, "During my life, I have never seen the sea like this. What happens is it because of it, is it because the sun is falling, or is there a doomsday?"

Nyai Kidul then came out, standing on the water. Seeing the world is nothing, only a magic person stands at the edge of the ocean, a moment of silence pleading with Allah. Nyai Kidul spoke to himself, "This is probably the one who made riots in the ocean." He then showed himself to Senapati. Immediately approached, then worshiped, bowing at his feet, said respectfully, "Hopefully he will dispel sadness so that it will disappear because of this, immediately happy with the contents of the sea, which is damaged because of this ...

The three-day and three-night visit of the Senapati lives in the South Sea. Always sorry for Rara Kidul. There every day are given instructions about the knowledge of people becoming kings who lead humans, jinn, and fairies. Senapati said, "Ni Mas, thank you for all your teachings. I am sure that if there is an enemy, Ni Mas will help, but who will I send to tell? "

Rara Kidul replied, "O, that's easy. If your majesty wants to summon, as soon as he is in the attitude of meditating looking up at the sky, surely, I will soon come to bring a *jin*, a demon, a fairy. Complete with war equipment" (Olthof, 2017, p. 96).]

From the quotation above, it appears that in order to gain power as king, Senapati must meditate at the edge of the ocean and must face the female king of the Jinn rulers of the sea. The meeting ended with a marriage between the two. In fact, the queen gave knowledge to Senapati about the knowledge of being a king who led humans and jinn. Nyi Ratu Kidul also

promised to always help Senapati in dealing with his enemies. Here, it appears that Nyi Ratu Kidul's position was not only the wife of the future king of Mataram, but also became a teacher in the science of leadership, his protector in holding his power as king, and against his enemies.

From the quote, it appears that Nyi Ratu Kidul (Nyi Rara Kidul) is not a human, but is a queen of the Jinn. About the origin of the Queen of South Nyi, Robert Wessing (1997, p. 97; 1997, p. 318), states that the Queen of the South was originally the daughter of the Kingdom of Galuh, around the 13th century. Narrated, Ratu Ayu from Galuh gave birth to a baby girl. Strangeness appeared, the baby girl could talk and said that she was the ruler of all the supernatural creatures in the land of Java and would dwell on the South Coast. At the same time, the spirit of King Sindhula from Galuh appeared and said that his grandson would not be married to maintain his sanctity, and if he married then it would only be able to be married by the kings of Islam on Java. The South Coast Queen is waiting for her husband for two centuries. Panembahan Senapati, who ruled Islamic Mataram 1585-1601, went to the South Coast to meditate asking for clues to win the war against the Sultan Pajang in Prambanan. It is said that his perseverance made the southern sea turbulent. The palace of the Queen of the South Coast which was basically in ruins because of the power of prayer Panembahan Senapati (Arif, 2019, p. 271; Aryono, 2005; Wessing, 1997, p. 97; 1997, p. 318).

The location of Senapati's meeting place is currently considered a historical place and is built a *cepuri*, a place that is a place of prayer before the harbor event which is often carried out by the Yogyakarta Palace on certain days (Jalil, 2015, p. 103). In this *cepuri*, there are two stones which are placed as the seat of Panembahan Senapati and Ratu Kidul which are then called "love stones" because this place is referred to as the meeting of the first Mataram King, Panembahan Senapati with the South Coast Ruler, Queen Kidul who questioned the beginning of the request Panembahan Senapati towards Queen of South to help him realize becoming the ruler of Mataram.

Until now, the Yogyakarta Palace and the community are still carrying out the *labuhan* customary ceremony as a thanksgiving to God Almighty, through Nyi Roro Kidul. In addition, the ceremony of *Pelabuhan* is also intended as a form of political retribution for Nyi Roro Kidul or Ratu Kidul (Jalil, 2015, p. 104). As stated by Jalil (2015, p. 105) that according to the Yogyakarta Palace, the *labuhan* ceremony is a tradition that must be carried out to preserve nature. This is because the harbor implies that as a human being it must not continue to give residue to nature, but also must maintain the sanctity of its balance by recycling residues must maintain the sanctity of its balance by recycling the residue.

The myth of Ratu Kidul also lives along the coast of West Java and East Java, to Madura. As shown in Setiawan's research (2009, p. 189) that the myth of Nyi Roro Kidul (another name for Nyi Ratu Kidul) lives in communities around Sukabumi, Cianjur, Garut, Tasikmalaya, and Ciamis. Setiawan (2009, p. 192) revealed that in Cianjur society there were a number of traditional ceremonies related to the existence of Nyi Roro Kidul on the coast of South Cianjur, namely *nyalawena*, *syukuran pasisiran*, *hajat mulud*, *babad astana*, *bebersih cikahuripan*, *ngaruwat*, and *mitembayan panen pare*. The purpose of the ceremony is as an expression of gratitude for the blessings given by God the Almighty. In addition, the expression of gratitude was also directed at the rulers of the southern sea, Nyi Roro Kidul, who had been pleased to give an abundance of sea produce, as well as the safety of fishermen both while at sea and the activities carried out around the coast (Setiawan, 2009, p. 194).

In East Java and Madura, the existence of Nyi Ratu Kidul was also seen in the ceremony of the sea tradition. From Setiawan's research (2016, p. 231) it was stated that the Muncar community, Banyuwangi every 15 Muharram (Suro) held a sea-picking ceremony by

providing various offerings for Nyi Roro Kidul. The offerings consist of various kinds of “uba rampe” (offerings) totaling 60 types, such as golden fishing rods, two live roosters, opium, *kangang*, make-up tools, raw saba bananas, plants, all kinds of fruit, rice along with the side dishes and various market snacks. This ceremony was held as a tribute to Nyi Ratu Kidul. They believe that the sea is a source of livelihood because most coastal communities have their livelihood as fishermen who depend their lives on the sea.

### **3.3 Women as Nature Guardian in the Spiritualism Ecofeminism Perspective**

In the ecofeminism perspective, the existence of women as guardians of nature in the myth of Dewi Sri and Nyi Ratu Kidul shows that women are believed to be the source of life. Women as mothers of life, Mother Earth. Dewi Sri as a source of prosperity is here to provide life through the staple food seeds in the form of rice that she carries from heaven (heaven), teaches how to plant, and care for her, even teaches how to avoid pests that threaten her.

In the ecofeminism perspective, it appears that Dewi Sri as a creature from heaven (heaven) is not a human being. He was revealed to earth, sown with his brother, Sedana, as a representative of the gods to provide food to humans on earth who were experiencing food shortages. The Wiwitan custom ceremony or Dewi Sri Mapag, as well as the “Sri Mulih” puppet show worship of Dewi Sri as Dewi Padi, the goddess who provides a basic food source (Rohmana & Ernawati, 2014, p. 155; Suyami, et al, 1998, p. 2). This is in accordance with the ideology of spiritual ecofeminism which draws an analogy between the role of women in biological production and the archetypal role of “Motherland” or “Birth Mother” as the life giver and creator of everything that exists (Shiva & Mies, 2005. p. 18; Tong, 2006, p. 381).

Nyi Ratu Kidul as ruler of the ocean shows that the mother figure as a giver of love and life is in the ocean (Sunindy, via Taum, 2013, p. 5). The sea is guarded and controlled by a female figure from the Jinn nation, a supernatural creature named Ratu Kidul. From the marriage story of Senapati with Nyi Ratu Kidul, it appears that without the help of Nyi Ratu Kidul, then Panembahan Senapati could not be the king of Mataram. For three days and three nights, staying at Nyi Rati Kidul palace, Senapati got a lesson from Nyi Ratu Kidul about how to become a king who leads humans, jinn, and fairies. From this motive, it can be interpreted that one of the sources of power of a king (leader) is a woman who is one with nature. In the perspective of ecofeminism, it can be interpreted that to achieve his power, masculinity, symbolized as a king, needs help and support from femininity. The source of knowledge and power is essentially in femininity symbolized by the figure of Nyi Ratu Kidul, the ruler of the ocean. The fact that Indonesia’s sea area is two-thirds of Indonesia’s size is  $\pm 3,273,810 \text{ km}^2$  and makes Indonesia the largest archipelagic country in the world (Adhayanto, 2014, p. 140) giving birth to the belief that there are other forces that control the ocean.

Nyi Ratu Kidul’s relationship with Senapati in this case can also be understood in the framework of spiritual ecofeminism developed by Starhawk and Charles Spretnak (Shiva & Mies, 2005, p.18; Tong, 2006, p.380). Shiva & Mies (2005, p. 18) consider that the spiritualists are mostly identified with female sensuality, sexual energy, and the most valuable life force. Therefore, spiritualist ecofeminism draws strength from a variety of earth-based spirituality and tends to focus on worshipping ancient goddesses. In addition, spiritual ecofeminism draws an analogy between the role of women in biological production and the archetypal role of “Mother Earth” or “Mother of Birth,” as the life giver and creator of everything that exists (Tong, 2006, p. 381).

By referring to the opinion of Arivia (2014, pp. 58-59) which states that since the Paleolithic era, long before the existence of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism there have been beliefs that believe in the Goddess, that is, God imagined in character women, the figure of Dewi Sri and Nyi Ratu Kidul can be considered as the God of women who legitimize women's power, love and independence (Christ via Arivia, 2014, p. 54). God has worshiped thousands of years, until the days of monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam forbade it because it was considered superstitious and distorted (Arivia, 2014, p. 57). The worship of the figure of Dewi Sri and Nyi Ratu Kidul can thus be interpreted in relation to the spirituality of the Indonesian people, Java in particular, before recognizing monotheistic religion. From the myths of Dewi Sri and Nyi Ratu Kidul, it appears that our ancestors from the era before the monotheistic religions have placed women in high positions, not as marginalized.

#### 4. Conclusion

Some conclusions that can be drawn based on this research are (1) the myth of Dewi Sri and Nyi Ratu Kidul is an example of folklore that provides an overview of the existence of female leaders as guardians of nature, so that harmony between human life and nature is achieved which guarantees the continuity of life on earth. (2) Dewi Sri who is present as a goddess of rice and prosperity, and Nyi Ratu Kidul who is present as a goddess who controls the ocean, protects and supports the leadership of the king of Mataram, in accordance with the ideology of spiritual ecofeminism which draws an analogy between the role of women in biological production with the archetypal role of "Motherland" or "Mother of Birth," as the giver of life and the creator of everything that exists. (3) From these two myths, it can also be concluded that our ancestors from the era before the monotheistic religions had placed women in high positions, not as marginalized.

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