

The Interpretation Of Oral Literature Of Sedekah Bumi In Caruy Village Cilacap Anthropological Study Of Literature

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17113772>

Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>In Indonesia, oral literature constitutes an integral part of the cultural fabric of society, reflecting the values, norms, and traditions upheld by the community. In the village of Caruy, located in the Cipari district of Cilacap Regency, Indonesia, there exists a tradition known as "sedekah bumi," which is expressed through oral literature. This research aims to examine the significance of this oral literature within the context of literary anthropology. The methodology employed is a qualitative approach, utilising data collection techniques such as interviews, observations, and documentation. Through direct dialogue with participants, this study provides profound insights and objectives regarding how this tradition is experienced, interpreted, and preserved within the framework of local cultural values. Consequently, this article contributes to a deeper understanding of how oral literature serves not only as a cultural artefact but also as a medium that encapsulates identity and local wisdom. The implications of this research may support the preservation and development of oral literature as an integral component of the cultural heritage of the Caruy community. The findings indicate that the oral literature associated with sedekah bumi functions not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a means to reinforce the cultural and social identity of the Caruy village community.</i>
Received: 25-08-2025	
Accepted: 10-09-2025	
Published: 13-09-2025	
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Citation: Dwi Setiyawan, (2025), The Interpretation Of Oral Literature Of Sedekah Bumi In Caruy Village Cilacap Anthropological Study Of Literature, UKR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (UKRJAHS), volume 1(7), 95-100.	Index Terms – oral literature, sedekah bumi, literary anthropology, caruy village, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Tradition within Indonesian society represents a vital cultural asset that enhances harmony (Taufiq et al., 2023). Traditions are formed through the adaptation of societal needs to values and norms, which are subsequently structured into ceremonial protocols (Schäfer, 2019). According to Wongsopatty, E. (2020), oral literature encompasses the literary expressions of the members of a culture that are disseminated and passed down orally from generation to generation. Setiyawan, D. (2017) states that oral literature is constituted mainly of spoken narratives. Thus, oral literature serves as a form of verbal expression that embodies local wisdom and the cultural values of a community. Furthermore, oral literature is not merely a source of entertainment; it also plays a significant role in preserving and transmitting cultural identity from one generation to the next. In the field of literary anthropology, "oral literature" refers to literary works conveyed orally and inherited through oral traditions across generations. This includes various narrative forms such as folktales, myths,

fables, songs, and other oral traditions that are integral to the culture of a society. The significance of oral literature in literary anthropology lies in its function as a custodian and conduit of values, norms, cultural identity, and traditional knowledge of a community. Oral literature is an integral part of Indonesian culture, reflecting the values, norms, and local wisdom found in Caruy Village, Cipari District, Cilacap Regency, Indonesia. In this context, oral literature manifests in the ceremony known as "Sedekah Bumi." According to Huda, M. T. (2017), Sedekah Bumi is a customary ritual symbolising humanity's gratitude towards the Almighty for the blessings provided through the earth in the form of various agricultural products. This ritual serves not only as an expression of gratitude to God but also as a medium for preserving cultural values. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Cilacap, approximately 70% of the residents of this village steadfastly uphold traditions and customs, including the observance of Sedekah Bumi. This ceremony is held

annually, specifically during the month of Sura (in the Javanese calendar), on either a Tuesday or a Friday Kliwon, and serves as an important occasion for the community to gather and interact, thereby strengthening social bonds and cultural identity.

The Earth Offering is marked by various rituals, including the recitation of prayers, traditional dances, and the communal enjoyment of agricultural produce. Previous research by Setiawan, D., & Septriana, H. (2025), titled "Values and Symbolic Meaning Of Offerings In The Sea Alms Tradition At Teluk Penyu Beach, Cilacap Regency: A Literary Anthropological Study," has indicated that Java is rich in diverse traditions spread across various regions, possessing a strong cultural identity. The people of Cilacap continue to preserve these traditions from generation to generation. This is evidenced by the implementation of the Sea Alms, which is usually held once a year at the beginning of the Islamic month or Sura month (Javanese calendar), often on specific days such as Tuesday or Friday Kliwon. The purpose of the Sea Alms is to pass down the cultural traditions of our ancestors and to express gratitude to God for the blessings received, as well as for the abundant marine resources. According to research conducted by Sari (2021), this activity serves not only as a symbol of gratitude but also as an opportunity to strengthen solidarity among community members. This aligns with the anthropological perspective that acknowledges the crucial role of rituals in reinforcing social cohesion within communities. This study will delve deeper into the meanings contained in the oral literature of the Earth Offering and its influence on the cultural identity of the Caruy community, while also examining how oral literature and rituals are closely interconnected with the daily practices of the people. Field data indicate that the content of oral literature associated with the Earth Offering often reflects agrarian values that are highly relevant to the lives of farmers. For instance, during the recitation of poetry that narrates the fertility of the land, hopes for abundant harvests, and expressions of gratitude to nature. Based on this understanding, this research will explore how this oral literature shapes, reflects, and influences the identity of the Caruy community in Cilacap Regency, Indonesia.

Furthermore, from a historical perspective, the Earth Offering in the Caruy Village is not merely a seasonal tradition but embodies a heritage that has deeply rooted itself within the social psyche of the community. Referring to the work of Marzuki (2020), this ritual represents a form of adaptation by the community to changes in time and environment, while simultaneously serving as a medium for the preservation of tradition. Therefore, the interpretation of oral literature within this ceremony becomes crucial to understand in the context of literary anthropology as a form of interaction between humans, nature, and their

community. This research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics of oral literature in the Earth Offering, as well as its implications for the comprehension of culture and identity among the residents of Caruy Village. Through careful observation and in-depth interviews, it is anticipated that a comprehensive picture of the cultural and social dynamics encompassing this activity will emerge.

LITERARY ANTHROPOLOGY

Through the lens of literary anthropology, an analysis of the earth almsgiving tradition can entail a profound understanding of how this tradition interweaves with daily life, how oral narratives play a role in transmitting meaning, and how this practice reflects the cultural values of a community. Oral literature holds a central role in documenting and perpetuating the cultural heritage of a society. The village of Caruy, as a rich cultural landscape, illustrates a daily existence imbued with traditions and rituals. In this context, the earth almsgiving is not merely a routine event; it is also a rich oral literary expression laden with meaning and symbolism.

According to Endaswara (as cited in Rahmat: 2019), literary anthropology is the study of the reciprocal influences between literature and culture. Meanwhile, Ihsan, B (2018) defines anthropology as a body of knowledge or study of human behaviour. Thus, anthropology is a scientific discipline concerning humans, encompassing an understanding of culture, society, evolution, and human behaviour. Literary anthropology is a branch of scientific inquiry that amalgamates the principles of anthropology and literary studies to comprehend and analyse the relationships between culture, society, and literary expression. By integrating the concepts and methodologies of anthropology with literary studies, literary anthropology provides a framework for understanding cultural meanings through the medium of literature and how literary works become integral to the cultural heritage of a society.

The earth offering in the village of Caruy is the main focus of this article, as it not only constitutes a customary event but also manifests in various forms of oral literature. Through this discovery, we can gain an understanding that every aspect of the earth offering celebration in this village carries profound meaning, conveyed through songs, folklore, and traditional rhymes that have been passed down through generations. The analysis of oral literature related to the earth offering presents both a challenge and an opportunity to appreciate the cultural values inherent within it. This article aims to elaborate on the significance of oral literature in the context of the earth offering in the village of Caruy, revealing the close relationship between local traditions and literary expression. By fostering a deeper

understanding of the meaning behind each element of oral literature, we can enrich our interpretation of the sustainability and relevance of this culture within the community of Caruy, Cilacap Regency, Indonesia.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to explore the meanings of the oral literature associated with the Earth Offering tradition in Caruy Village. Data collection techniques involve in-depth interviews with community leaders, cultural practitioners, and the younger generation engaged in the Earth Offering tradition. Additionally, direct observation of the Earth Offering rituals is conducted to gain a more profound understanding of the social and cultural context underpinning this tradition. The data obtained is subsequently analysed thematically to identify patterns of meaning that emerge from the oral literature expressed during the rituals.

Interviews were conducted with 15 informants, comprising community leaders, religious figures, and members of the general public. The interview process was semi-structured to allow informants the freedom to express their views and experiences related to the tradition of 'sedekah bumi' (Earth Gratitude). Additionally, observations were made during the implementation of the 'sedekah bumi' ritual, which is typically held in the month of Syawal each year. During these observations, the researcher noted various forms of oral literature that emerged, such as prayers, poetry, and narratives presented by the ritual leaders. Documentation also played a significant role in this research methodology. The researcher gathered various documents pertinent to the 'sedekah bumi' tradition, including historical records, articles, and promotional materials from the Tourism Office. This data was utilised to enrich the understanding of the background and development of the 'sedekah bumi' tradition in Caruy Village. By employing a combination of interview, observation, and documentation methods, it is hoped that this research will provide a comprehensive overview of the significance of oral literature within the cultural context of the Caruy community.

As an initial step, the researcher conducts a literature review to comprehend the fundamental concepts of oral literature and the tradition of 'sedekah bumi'. The references utilised encompass academic works and relevant prior research, such as books on literary anthropology and studies of local culture. This is essential for establishing the theoretical framework that underpins this research. Furthermore, the researcher performs an analysis of the data obtained, employing a hermeneutic approach to understand the meanings inherent in the oral literature of 'sedekah bumi'. With a holistic and multidimensional approach, this

research aims to make a significant contribution to the understanding of oral literature and cultural traditions in Indonesia, particularly in the village of Caruy. It is also hoped that this research will serve as a reference for future studies related to oral literature and the preservation of local culture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Practices and Rituals of Earth Offering

The Earth Offering practice in Caruy Village encompasses a series of processes rich in meaning. The process commences with the clearing of land, symbolising the preparation to receive the harvest. According to data from the Research Team's Observations (2024), this stage involves the entire village community, reflecting collaboration and unity. Each community member assists one another, from preparing tools to discussing their hopes for an abundant harvest. This activity not only strengthens social bonds but also serves as a reminder to the community of the importance of mutual assistance in daily life. Following the land clearing process, the ritual continues with the recitation of prayers and aspirations. The poems recited in this context are laden with symbols representing the community's hopes for the fertility of the land and blessings from God. According to a literature analysis by Rahmat (2019), the recitation of these poems contains a narrative structure that reflects the relationship between the community and nature, filled with expressions of gratitude for the agricultural yields obtained. This subsequently becomes a reflection of the community's dependence and obedience to the external forces that govern their lives.



The situation and process of communal dining and the ritual slaughter of a goat for a traditional *sedekah bumi*

<https://www.antaranews.com/foto/56027/sedekah-bumi>

Amidst the procession, various artistic performances are typically showcased, including dances that depict agricultural life. According to Rudi (2020), these performances are accompanied by traditional musical instruments, which further enliven the atmosphere and invite active participation from all segments of society. Participants do not merely observe; they often engage in dancing, transforming the ritual process into an unforgettable collective experience. The involvement of all community elements in the performances serves as a symbol that each individual plays a significant role in the continuity of the event.



The situation in which the community brings food to exchange dishes and then shares a meal together is an expression of gratitude for the abundance of the earth.

<https://jogja.antaranews.com/berita/576421/budaya-leluhur-sedekah-bumi-dilestarikan>

After the entirety of the ceremonial proceedings, the event will conclude with the distribution of agricultural produce and food that has been prepared in advance. This process is not merely a ritual; it also reflects an attitude of mutual respect and sharing among individuals. Referring to a survey conducted by the Cultural Research Institute, over 80% of the community desires for this programme to be continued from generation to generation. The distribution of agricultural produce serves as a symbol of sharing blessings and is hoped to strengthen the bonds of kinship among the residents.

Through the analysis of this practice and ritual, it becomes evident that the Earth Offering (Sedekah Bumi) is not just a mere celebration but a cycle of life intertwined with the

cultural and social ecosystem of Caruy Village. The continuity of this ritual underscores the important role of oral literature in the life of the community and affirms that traditions can endure and even adapt amidst the changes of the times. Within this lies a profound meaning that serves as a foundation for future generations to comprehend their identity and local wisdom while facing the challenges of globalisation.

The Meaning and Function of Oral Literature in the Sedekah Bumi Tradition

Oral literature within the practice of Sedekah Bumi embodies various complex meanings and functions. Firstly, oral literature serves as a medium for the socio-cultural expression of the community, depicting agricultural conditions and their relationship with nature. In this context, as reported by sources from the Cultural Research Centre (2021), many of the recited poems and stories contain symbols that reflect the community's hopes for abundant agricultural yields. Thus, oral literature acts as a representation of the realities of life experienced by the community. Furthermore, oral literature also functions as a conduit for disseminating moral and ethical values. Every piece of information conveyed through poetry and stories in Sedekah Bumi carries an educational message that instructs the community to maintain a harmonious relationship with nature. Researcher Hidayati (2022) indicates that there are expressions within oral literature that teach the community how to be grateful and avoid greed in managing natural resources. These messages serve as a guide for the community in preserving the ecological balance of their environment.



The situation of burying a goat's head as an expression of gratitude.

- The village of Caruy is indeed a region that remains deeply rooted in the traditions and customs passed down from its ancestors. Although times have evolved, the community has not forgotten the practices that have been carried out by their forebears through generations. One such tradition is the earth offering ceremony. This annual ritual is conducted as each event carries its own significance. Below are some interpretations of each activity associated with the earth offering in the village of Caruy.
- The month in which the earth offering is conducted in the village of Caruy is Sura, the first month in the Javanese calendar. This Sura month coincides with Muharram in the Islamic calendar. The community believes that the Sura month is sacred and possesses mystical qualities.
- The day chosen for the earth offering in the village of Caruy is Friday Kliwon. The Javanese community observes the tradition of wetonan, wherein Friday is regarded as the king of days and Kliwon as the king of market days. Therefore, Friday Kliwon is deemed the appropriate day for the earth offering tradition. Additionally, Friday Kliwon appears only once during the Sura month.
- The holes created in locations frequently traversed by the community are believed to offer safety to those who pass by, as the community considers that these pathways grant protection to its inhabitants.
- The burial of the heads of cattle, goats, several chickens, food from rice tumpeng, and a sum of money voluntarily contributed by the community signifies their gratitude to God for the abundance of blessings that have been bestowed upon them.
- The tip of the rice tumpeng taken home and placed atop a jar containing rice is believed to bestow blessings and prosperity upon the household. Conversely, if the rice tumpeng is taken and stored in their rice fields or gardens, it is thought to yield a bountiful harvest.
- The communal meal shared among the villagers of Caruy represents a symbol of brotherhood within the community. Here, they exchange rice tumpeng so that everyone may partake in the dishes they have brought, embodying the joy of the community in gratitude for the abundance provided by God, such as plentiful harvests,

thriving and healthy livestock, good employment opportunities, and much more.

Oral literature in Sedekah Bumi also serves a social binding function. This moment provides an opportunity for the community to gather and celebrate together, which in turn reinforces the sense of togetherness and unity among them. According to Hartono's study (2018), the tradition of sharing stories and experiences during this celebration creates a space for individuals to understand and appreciate each other's contributions within the community. Thus, oral literature acts as a bridge that unites differences and solidifies collective identity.

In the context of social change, oral literature also plays a role in cultural adaptation within society. Amidst the rapid challenges of globalisation and modernisation, various elements of tradition must be endeavoured to remain relevant. Research by Yudiansyah (2023) reveals that oral literature in Sedekah Bumi has transformed by integrating new elements without erasing the original values contained within. This demonstrates the community's flexibility in responding to change while still preserving their cultural roots.

Overall, the meaning and function of oral literature in Sedekah Bumi illustrate the significance of this tradition as an integral part of the life of the Caruy Village community. The active involvement of residents in the ritual's execution reflects how oral literature not only serves as an artistic work but also as a tool for constructing identity, cultural values, and maintaining balance between humanity, nature, and social interactions within the community. The stories and values encapsulated in this oral literature are a heritage that must be preserved and passed on to future generations.

CONCLUSION

The significance and integrity of oral literary traditions such as the Sedekah Bumi in the Village of Caruy are crucial in preserving local wisdom and cultural identity. As has been elaborated, oral literature in this context transcends mere artistry; it serves as an entity that reinforces social bonds, upholds agrarian values, and acts as a medium for expressing the community's gratitude and aspirations. The continuity of Sedekah Bumi as an annual ritual indicates that the people of Caruy possess a collective consciousness regarding the importance of maintaining tradition, even amidst the relentless tide of modernisation. This reflects their ability to adapt while simultaneously preserving their identity as an agrarian community. This research illustrates that oral literature, in its manifestation within tradition, is a vital cornerstone in the existence of culture that will shape future generations. Therefore, it is imperative for us to deepen our understanding and support the preservation of traditions such as Sedekah Bumi to

ensure they remain safeguarded and relevant in the midst of societal developments. Furthermore, further research is necessary to explore various aspects of oral literature in other traditions, in order to enrich our body of knowledge and cultural awareness. In the long term, such efforts are expected to enhance appreciation for the wealth of local culture that deserves to be upheld in the current era of globalisation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all parties who have provided resources during the process of writing this article, including libraries, data, and information that have broadened our insights. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my parents, my beloved family, my wife, and my children, as well as the local government of Caruy Village, Cipari District, Cilacap Regency, Indonesia, for granting permission to use their facilities as a site for research. My appreciation goes to my fellow lecturers and educators who have offered motivation, and to the "Book Lovers Community" (KOPEBU) as a platform for literacy that fosters camaraderie and enriches information and education. I also wish to thank STKIP Darussalam Cilacap, the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Programme, and "UKR" Universal Knowledge Research Publisher for providing an excellent opportunity to present my work. May they continue to thrive and succeed.

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