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# FUNCTION AND MEANING OF MADURESE FOLK SONGS AND LITERARY EXPRESSIONS IN SUMENEP REGENCY

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***Abstract***

*Oral literature, such as folk songs and literary expressions (poems and proverbs), contains the local wisdom of the community that owns it. This research aims at explaining the function and meaning contained in Madurese folk songs and literary expressions. The description of the meaning and function of Madurese literature provides many valuable lessons regarding Madurese local wisdom. It is one of ways to maintain and develop the local culture. Research data was collected through documentation, observation and interview methods using note-taking and recording techniques. This research used qualitative descriptive analysis in semiotic study. Based on research results, Madurese folk songs and literary expressions have many functions such as giving advice, increasing joy, informing certain event procedures, showing certain beliefs, and increasing self-confidence and enthusiasm for working. Besides, Madurese folk songs and literary expressions have valuable meanings, such as religious, struggle, perseverance, patience, discipline, self-respect, beauty, manners of way, togetherness, hard work, sincerity, and honesty. These functionsare still maintained today. In fact, the meaning contained in these folk songs and literary expressions always accompanies the behavior and activities of the Madurese people. In brief, folk songs and literary expressions in Sumenep have various functions and dense meanings in daily activities.*

***Keywords:*** *Function, Meaning, Folksongs, Expressions, Madura Local Wisdom*

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## INTRODUCTION

Culture is a national identity, a characteristic of a nation, national character or as a sign that a country has a history of its life journey from the beginning when a country was formed. Culture is a symbol of pride for a particular society and even determines whether a country is developed or not. One part of culture is regional literature. Regional literature has great weight in culture. The progress of a nation's culture and civilization brings with it, and is reciprocally brought along by, the progress of its literature, such as the development of regional or local literature. Regional literature is also a means used to express a sense of beauty from within the human soul. Apart from expressing a sense of beauty from within the human soul, regional literature also has other functions, for example folk songs which function to determine norms for orderly behavior and transmit cultural customs and values. In general, regional literature can strengthen the bonds of solidarity in a society.

One of the activities to preserve local literature is through exploring the functions and meanings contained therein. Understanding the function and meaning will strengthen the existence of local literature in society. Moreover, local literature contains local wisdom values which are really needed by the community to create a comfortable and calm life. Besides, types of local literature has related meanings and functions.

Local literature is a literary work that has distinctive characteristics, which differentiate it from other local literature. Literary works are not only interpreted as works that have elements in their development, but also have signs that can be interpreted as symbols, which require concepts in understanding and capturing the meaning behind words and expressing things that are outside the richness of literature and which are the background for the birth of the work. literature [1]. Literary works use signs to create aesthetic values. Thus, literary works are not created just like that, but through a process and have a purpose. Goals direct specific functions. Literary works can function if they have value or meaning contained in them. The value or meaning contained in literary works makes local literature more beautiful and interesting to study. Literature is an important aspect of culture building [2].

Furthermore, regional literature is an aspect of culture that has great potential in developing tourism in a region. Therefore, exploring the function and meaning of regional literature is very necessary. In this way, people will be interested in enjoying local literature. One of the local literatures that has interesting functions and meanings is local Madurese literature.

This research uses semiotic theory to explain the function of each Madurese literature and reveal the meaning contained therein. Semiotics is a literary study that examines signs and their meanings [3]. The semiotic theory used to describe the function and meaning of Madurese literature in Sumenep Regency is very reasonable because semiotics in literary research can be used as an approach [1].

Hoed said that semiotics is a method or science for studying signs [4]. Semiotics is a science that studies signs and how these signs work [5]. Semiotics is a science that studies signs and everything related to signs, such as sign systems and processes in society [6]. Meanwhile, Barthes stated that semiotics is a theory that can explain the production and interpretation of meaning [7]. The basic principle is that meaning is created by the development of actions and objects that function as signs in relation to other signs. Each sign can be interpreted in three stages, namely focusing on the realization of general symptoms, focusing on the object/referent, and focusing on the interpretation.

Furthermore, Semi said that semiotics is a branch of science that studies communication [8]. Communication is of course realized through language signs. The semiotic method in interpreting literature is in the form of searching for important signs [9]. Sutanto said that semiotics can be applied to all signs [10]. Literary works as a whole are signs [11]. Therefore, the use of semiotic theory in analyzing the meaning contained in Madurese literature is very appropriate. Furthermore, Besse, et al. emphasizes that oral literature, such as folk songs, must contain noble values or local wisdom that describes the characteristics of the community [12]. Literary works usually describe life that occurs around the author's life [13]. In other words, the characteristics of the community can be known through the local literature of the local community.

Fatima said that all signs in any work can know their meaning through semiotic studies [14]. This shows that any work in society communicates a certain meaning. Everything around us has meaning. Moreover, local literature definitely has a very important meaning because it was created by humans with full seriousness and awareness. Local literature is human work which is a sign. These signs have meaning, which can be studied in

semiotics. Larsen said that semiotics is a science that studies all signs in life [15]. This is in line with or the same as what Berger said that semiotics can be used for all kinds of signs [16].

The meaning emphasized in semiotics is social meaning. Therefore, according to Piliang, meaning in semiotics must be based on societal conventions [17]. Thus, exploring the meaning of literature can be done by connecting certain literature with other literature or interviewing sources, literary practitioners and local communities.

Ferdinand de Saussure said that semiotics talks about the relationship between form and meaning. Saussure used the terms signifier for form and signified for meaning [18]. The relationship between form and meaning is conventional, according to local community agreement. Thus, the same form in language or literature can be interpreted differently by different communities. In other words, the same form in one place can be interpreted differently in another place. Hoed shares the same view that the relationship between form and meaning is social or conventional, not personal. This meaning has rules that are collective in nature [19].

The expert views above show that signs must have meaning. In other words, something is said to be a sign if it consists of a signifier and a signified. Thus, a signifier (which marks) in the form of a form is not a sign if it does not have a signified (content or meaning). In fact, Sobur said that a signifier without a signified is not a form (meaningful form) [20]. Therefore, semiotics examines the relationship between signifiers and signifieds, which apply in society and communicate certain messages.

In particular, the use of semiotic theory in analyzing literary works is carried out through several processes. Wardoyo concluded three steps in analyzing literature using a semiotic approach, namely (1) looking for main markers, (2) analyzing main markers syntagmatically, and (3) analyzing main markers paradigmatically [21].

Based on the description above, this research discusses the functions and meanings contained in local Madurese literature. Madurese local literature in this research focuses on local literature in Sumenep, such as folk songs, rhymes, poetry and proverbs. This discussion is very important because apart from being part of preserving local Madurese literature, it is also an effort to introduce and internalize the function and meaning of local literature to the wider community, especially the younger generation of Sumenep. It means that present study contributes in maintenance and improving local literature, and also increasing the income of Sumenep's people. Through this present study, it is recommended that the government should facilitates the fully supports the development of local literature, like by integrating to the tourism sector.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The data collection was done through interviewing method [22, 23]. The interview was carried out by visiting all of the research locations and doing the interview through the question lists provided. Data collection also uses triangulation techniques [24]. The triangulation technique used in this research is the data source. Data that is still in doubt is asked again to other informants and also compared with the results of the literature review. The confirmed data is also validated by Madurese literature experts.

The data that has been tabulated is then analyzed according to the sequence of problems contained in this research. The data will be analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods that emphasize meaning [24] using semiotic theory. Meanwhile, the data processing and data analysis used refers to [25], which is as follows:

1) Collecting data and information, through interviews and direct observation.

2) Reduction, choosing which information is appropriate and which is not appropriate to the research problem.
3) Presentation, after the information is selected it can be presented in the form of a table, or an explanatory description.
4) The final stage is to draw conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before discussing, introducing the name *Sumenep* is very important because it is related to the meaning of Madurese literature. Regarding the name *Sumenep*, Ahmad stated that the old name of *Sumenep* was *Songennep* [26]. The change in the name *Songennep* to *Sumenep* occurred at the beginning of the 18th century. Etymologically, *Songennep* comes from two words, namely *song* 'valley' and *ennep* 'calm', so linguistically it means a calm valley. Another version states that *Songennep* comes from the words *eson* 'I' and *ginep* 'stay', so linguistically it means 'I spend the night'. Based on the origin of the word, *Sumenep* can be interpreted as a place that is liked and sought after by the outside community. This section discusses the functions and meanings contained in Madurese folk songs and literary expressions. Literary expressions include Madurese poetry and proverbs.

**Folksongs**

Basically, there are many Madurese folk songs. This research is only limited to a few Madurese folk songs. Several other Madurese folk songs, namely *Sottanang Mera, Joget Madure'en, Beto Karang, Sello' Soca Mera, Asal Madure, Abental dede, Bile Bule Enga', Tatandung, Bing Ana', Ging Kincing Kere', Ba Baba Bulan, Lelle Nareyo, Ko Soko Bibir, Aeng Lema', Daddaliyan, Lir Saalair, Lar Olar Kolarjang, Dipadhi Cemplo Lo'ling,* dan *Ta' Nyangka*. Madurese folk songs function to complement several activities in a series of events. The titles of these songs can be displayed in several places, so they can be remembered and sung continuously.

There are Madurese folk songs, which are especially sung by children or to accompany a game, such as the following song lyrics:

*Es lilin campor cabbi,* 'Ice lolly mixed with chilies'

*Ayo bi, bitas ngonyer* 'Seriously injured'

*Ayo nyer, nyerra otang* 'Pay your debt'

*Ayo tang, tanggel enem* 'Date six'

*Ayo nem, nembung pete'* 'Chased by Orphans'

*Ayo te', tekos juling* 'mouse squint'

*Ayo ling, lingker olar* 'wound bu a snake'

*Ayo lar, lar bereso* 'very big snake'

*Ayo so, soso kepa'* 'flat breasts'

*Ayo pa', pak salamet* 'Mr. Salamet'

*Ayo met, metto taeh* 'let's go defecate'

This song is usually sung by Madurese children when playing. This song is used as entertainment to increase children's sense of joy. Some of the lyrics contain philosophical meanings, such as nembung pete' which means 'big anger'. Likewise, the lyric tekos squint refers to a type of rat that is skinny and smells. This song is very interesting to study. A song usually contains one model. However, this song contains several models. The first and second lines contain the meaning of bad conditions. The third, fourth and fifth lines contain the meaning of debt repayment which must be done immediately. The sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth lines contain the meaning that something small and smelly is easily pounced on or destroyed by prey or something larger. The following lines contain the meaning of an invitation to separate.

Other chants can be observed in the following lyrics:

*Ti ti lia lio* (only as an opening note)

| | |
|---|---|
| *Poceddha koddho'* | 'young noni fruit' |
| *Pasere sealakia?* | 'who wants to get married?' |
| *Tagelem notodo* | 'can not be careless' |
| *Teng nayalateng* | 'the black back of the pan' |
| *Matoana soro datang* | 'the in-laws told me to come' |
| *Datenya sado malam* | 'coming in two days' |
| *Dika lama lantai* | 'you sit on the floor' |
| *Bula lama teker* | 'I sit on the mat' |
| *Dika se apangantan* | 'you are the bridegroom; |
| *Bula se alengker* | '1 sleep (with my legs curled up)' |

The song tells of a person who wants to get married, but feels shy and insecure. This song is usually sung by young people. There are several meanings contained in this song, such as Madurese culture which teaches anyone who wants to get married to talk to their parents first. Apart from that, children who want to get married must not come alone, but must first be represented by their elders or representatives/delegates from each party. The delegation deliberates on all matters related to the wedding according to the specified time and place. The song also teaches that marriage should be done consciously, seriously and sincerely. The *Ti Ti Lia Lio* song has several versions. These versions are thought to be caused by the creativity of the people of Sumenep who adapt to the conditions, game topics, or wishes of the children involved in the game. This encourages them to adapt or change some of the lyrics in the song. However, this change only occurred in a few lyrics.

There are many Sumenep folk songs that are usually sung by children or teenagers and have been documented, such as the songs *Cung Kucung Konce, Re-Sere Penang, Ker-Tanoker, Set-Set Maloko', Jen Anjin, and Dhe' Nong Dhe' Ne' Nang*. All of these songs contain local Madurese wisdom, which is full of meaning. The titles of these songs can be displayed in several places, so they can be remembered and sung continuously. Moreover, these songs contain local Madurese wisdom which is full of meaning in social life.

Apart from Madurese folk songs, Madurese syi'ir is one of Madurese literature, which contains local wisdom, as follows:

*Pong-pong gi' kene' gi' ngodha-ngodha* 'While still small still young'

*Pabajeng nyare elmo akida* 'Be Dilligent in getting knowledge of the faith'

*Manabi nyaba dhapa' gan dhadha* 'When life reaches your chest'

*Kastana ampon bi' tadha'padha* 'Even regretting is of no benefit'

The poem contains advice for making the best use of time, especially in studying the faith. A life that is thick with Islamic religious nuances is clearly visible in this poem. The strong belief of the Madurese people in the afterlife is also implicitly conveyed in this poem. The local wisdom of Madura, where every life has an Islamic nuance, is still visible today.

Madurese people also have poetry that they sing, namely the *macopat* song. *Macopat* songs contains Madurese lyrics sung like a song. Several poems from the Macopat song were late published in a book entitled "Berkenalan dengan Kesenian Tradisional Madura (Getting to Know Traditional Madurese Arts)". Madurese song consists of three types, namely *Tembang Raja, Tembang Tengahan,* and *Tembang Kene' or Tembang Macopat* [27]. *Tembang Kene' or Tembang Macopat* consists of 11 songs, namely *kinanti, pucung, mejil, maskumbang, durma, kasmaran, pangkor, megatruh, gambuh, senom*, and *artate'*. This part explains the meanings of one of *macopat* songs, namely *pangkor* which meaning can be linked to the characteristics of Madurese society shown in other Madurese literature. The following are the lyrics of the Pangkor song

***Pangkor***

*Raja onggu panremanna* 'Her gratitude is great'
*Tanenmanna pon a nglebbi'I oreng* 'the plant is already as tall as a person'
*Oreng se mratane lebur* 'one who cares for joy'
*Klamon cokop landhu'na* 'if you have hoeed it eanough'
*Buwana ba' lebba' ka' bungka'enna dhuluk* 'the fruit is so dense that the tree bends'
*Nyaman bai long polongan* 'if you need it, just take it '
*Panyeramanna la mare* 'before every moment is watered' [27]

This song contains the meaning of gratitude and joy. This song also describes the characteristics of Madurese people who are disciplined and like to work hard. Their discipline in caring for plants is reflected in the song's poetry, namely in the words "hoeing", "watering", and "caring for". This shows the hard working nature of the Madurese people. The meaning contained in this song is related to folk songs, folklore and Madurese proverbs which describe tenacity and perseverance, such as the proverb *Cea sapoan le malem* 'Don't sweep before evening/at night' and the folk song Tondu' Majâng. This regional literature describes the nature of hard work and discipline of the Madurese people. The Pangkor song also describes the religious nature of the Madurese people. The religious nature of the Madurese people is very strong and prominent, which in this song is placed in the lyrics or first line.

This song also describes the greatness and cleverness of the Madurese people in planting. Seedlings or seeds that are planted grow well and produce lots of fruit. The characteristics of Madurese people who have expertise in planting and caring for plants are still maintained today. Madurese poetry has several functions, namely giving

enthusiasm for activities, expressing happiness and pleasure, giving praise, giving advice, expressing feelings, and accompanying certain activities/rituals.

Madurese people sing syi'ir to encourage themselves and others when working, namely poetry that contains the spirit of struggle, such as the poem *Pong-pong gi' kene' gi' ngodha-ngodha* 'While still small, still young', *Pabajeng nyare elmo akida* 'Be diligent in seeking knowledge of the faith'. Expressions of joy and gratitude are usually sung in the form of poetry, such as the lyrics of the *Pangkor* song. Syiar is also used as a means of giving advice, such as the lyrics in the gambuh song. Some Madurese poetry can only be found in certain rituals or events as accompaniment, such as the sintung poetry. *Sintung* poetry is sung as an accompaniment to the art of *Sintung*. This *sintung* poem has a salami feel. Apart from songs, Madurese people know the term *kidung*. *Kidung* is a literary work that looks like a sung poem. *Kidung* has similarities with song. The difference is that song generally contains advice, while *kidung* generally contains descriptions of a person, event or situation, such as the song *Sorandaka, Panji Wijayakrama, Rangga Lawe* and *Harsawijaya*. Song *Sorandaka, Panji Wijayakrama*, and *Rangga Lawe* tell the whereabouts of Aria Wiraraja and her family. Likewise, *Kidung Sorandaka* tells of the existence of Aria Wiraraja and her relationship with Pranaraja. Thus, song has a clearer aesthetic value than *kidung*.

**Madurese Literary Expressions (Poem and Proverbs)**

Besides folksongs, the religiousness of the Madurese people is also depicted in poem (traditional peotry), such as the following rhyme:
*Celana etampe celana sakola* 'folded trousers school trousers'

*Celana sakola gagghar dha' kolam* 'School trousers fell into the pond'
*Agama napa se paling samporna* 'what is the most perfect religion'
*Se samporna pasti agama Islam* 'the most perfect religion is definitely the Islamic religion'.

The poem is used as media to give advice to people in keeping their faith. The advice relates to the faith or islamic belief. The poem has dense meaning. Although someone has highest degree in educational aspect, the faith is still number one. The goodness of someone depends on his/her faith.

Furthermore, there are quite a lot of Madurese proverbs which have much meanings and functions. Several examples of Madurese proverbs, described in this section, have been published in the Contemporary Madurese-Indonesian Dictionary [28]. In general, Madurese proverbs contain advice. The Baras mare tedhung comfortable proverb 'When you're done sleeping, you're calm' contains many meanings, such as a peaceful life can be realized when the work is finished. Another meaning is that to get comfort you have to complete your obligations first. When all tasks are completed, life will become comfortable. Several Madurese proverbs contain advice to women, as in the following expressions:

1. *Cele'nang neter kolenang* 'Don't walk slowly'

2. *Alembaya meletas manjeling* 'If the road must be narrow'

3. *Bibireh jeruk saloni* 'lips like *Saloni* oranges'

These expressions contain the meaning that women are prohibited from beautifying their ways to attract men. Apart from that, Madurese women are advised to walk casually, like women in general, and not to resemble men. Women's nature must still be maintained. Likewise, those who speak must use good and beautiful language.

Another proverb in Madurese society is: *Namen cabbi molong cabbi: jube'na oreng gumantong dhari lakona dibi*' 'Planting chilies reaps chilies: the badness of a person depends on his own behavior'. This proverb contains a very important lesson in life. People who hope for goodness must be able to behave well. When society or people are able to behave well or treat other people well, in essence they are doing good for themselves. This proverb is also the motto of the Madurese people in living their lives, namely avoiding behavior that hurts other people. Likewise, vice versa, when society or people behave badly or treat other people badly, in essence they are doing bad things to themselves. This was also confirmed by Mistortoify, et al. that Madurese people have a habit of helping each other, especially at certain celebrations [29]. It is believed that helping others will make our activities easier and smoother.

The family nature of Madurese people can be observed through proverbs, such as *Aèng èpeddhâng ta' apèsa* 'water struck by a sword does not separate'. This proverb means that Madurese family relationships are very close. Even though there are many threats or external influences that tear relationships apart, the feeling of kinship is not easily lost. In fact, even though they are just friends, the relationship is like brothers. This can be observed through the proverb *bilâ kènca palotan, bilâ kanca tarètan* 'if kenca sticky rice, if friends are brothers'. Kenca is a food made from grated coconut cooked with sugar. Kenca is usually served with sticky rice. Therefore, sticky rice is difficult to separate from kenca. The two go together, like one type of food. In other words, kenca is part of sticky rice. Likewise, friends are part of brothers. The proverb means that Madurese view friends as if they were brothers. However, Madurese people still maintain boundaries in making friends. This means they don't want to interfere in other people's affairs. This can be observed through allusions in the proverb *paghârrâ orèng èrèksaghi, mon paghèrrè dhibi' ta' èrèksaghi* 'people's fences are taken care of, their own fences are not taken care of'. This proverb contains an allusion to not minding other people's affairs. This also implies that introspection or self-correction is more important or takes precedence over correcting others.

Some Madurese proverbs contain a lot of advice in the form of satire, such as the *Mara aèng è daunna tales* 'like water in taro leaves'. This proverb is an allusion to people who are difficult or cannot be advised. Apart from that, this proverb implies a person's condition that is inconsistent and cannot be trusted. The proverb *mara aèng ebâdḍ hâi kèrèng* 'like water in a basket of fish' is also an allusion to people whose wealth is not blessed, so it is never stored properly. This proverb means that wealth must be obtained and spent in a good way. If wealth is not blessed, no matter how much wealth you have, it will quickly run out. This proverb is related to the Madurese expression *saduhuna* 'what is'. This expression means that Madurese people like to tell the truth and do not hide what is in their hearts. If they are not happy, they will say so. Likewise, if they are happy, they will say it honestly, plainly and as it is (not exaggerating).

Madurese proverbs also sometimes insinuate the hypocritical or untrustworthy behavior of some people, as in the proverb *dâdâ ghulâ bâlâkang mèmbhâ* 'breast of sugar, back of neem'. This proverb describes the condition of a hypocritical person, who likes to show his goodness, but hides his badness. He behaves well in front of people, but harbors a lot of ugliness and hatred. A Madurese proverb which is quite unique, is about self-esteem, as illustrated in the following expression: *More bae pote tolang ètèmbhâng*

*pote mato* 'Better the white of the bones than the white of the eye' or *ètèmbhâng potè mata, angoan apotèa tolang* 'rather than the white of the eye, better the white of the bone'. This proverb contains the meaning that self-esteem is more important than life. This proverb has also become a motto for the Madurese people in living their lives, namely that self-respect is highly valued. Madurese people prefer death rather than have their dignity trampled or humiliated. This proverb shows that the Madurese people have strong convictions and life principles and courage.

Madurese literature can be inventoried through digitizing Madurese literature and Madurese literature bookkeeping. Bookkeeping can be done separately as part of reading and documenting Madurese literature. Digitization of Madurese literature can be done through the encranization of Madurese folk stories, including stories with mystical nuances, which have not been widely researched. Digital cultural literary information that displays local wisdom can have economic value. Fiske's model shows production houses that can sell information that has been formatted in video form, such as films, news or soap operas [30]. Especially for oral literature, inventory can also be done through recording via a cassette recorder or transcription. This activity is carried out so that oral literature data is not lost, especially those related to the authenticity of the literary lyrics. Transcription is the activity of transferring literature from the oral realm to written form [31].

Furthermore, this present study differs to previous studies. It also discussed the relation of folksongs and literary expressions in addressing meanings or messages, and creating functions. For example, certain folksong has similar meaning to certain poem and proverb. Through the comparison method, all folksongs and literary expressions support and srengthen one another. Besides, the result of thisy study gives contribution to the development of tourism sector through investigating and integrating the local literature. It is one of the strengths of this present study. Although this study does not discuss the other local literature, such as folklore and traditional play, it has described more the functions and meanings of local literature.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that Madura has very diverse regional literature. Madurese literature in Sumenep Regency has a specific function and contains local wisdom, which can be investigated through semitoc theory. It expands the use of semiotc theory in investigating the signs as meanings. Folk songs include Madurese literature which is still often found in everyday life. Madurese folk songs contain noble local wisdom, with a variety of meanings that are very important in life. Madurese local literature functions to give advice, increase joy, inform certain event procedures, show certain beliefs, increase self-confidence and enthusiasm for work. Apart from that, Madurese literature is used as a medium for entertainment, lullabies, accompaniment to certain rituals or events, and a medium for expressing feelings of advice.

Apart from function, Madurese literature contains very deep meanings, such as religious meaning, togetherness, appreciation, loyalty, hard work, religion, and courage, struggle and humility. This folk song also teaches us to avoid cheating that endangers other people or parties.

Madurese proverbs also contains a lot of local wisdom, such as the message to have mutual respect and affection, especially towards parents. Several Madurese proverbs or literary expressions contain the meaning that people who hope for goodness must be able

to behave well. Madurese literature has a very relevant meaning to be applied in today's life. Madurese literature as a cultural product plays a role in representing the characteristics of its society. This means that local literature serves as an identifying identity for certain community groups. Madurese local wisdom is a characteristic of the Madurese people who have noble values. Internalization of values in Madurese local wisdom products is a potential tool in efforts to popularize Madurese literature.

This study does not investigate specifically the meaning for each kind of folksongs. However, the meaning in general can be used for further researches. Therefore, other researchers can study the commodification of Madurese literature in Sumenep Regency. It enriches the knowledge and domain of local literature.

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