

The Transformation of the Wedding Night in *Serat Centhini* into the Novel *Amongraga dan Tambangraras: Empat Puluh Malam di Pelaminan*

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Abstract— *Serat Centhini* work Pakubuwana V during the Surakarta Keraton era was a work composed in song macapat. Greatness *Serat Centhini* is characterized by various matter content, including art, plants, language, literature, ethics, sexology, petungan, history, medicine, flora, fauna, and so on, which are poured out in more than 3.000 pages. As work, Big *Serat Centhini* transformed into modern Indonesian novels. At least there are 8 titles of modern Indonesian novels, a transformation from *Serat Centhini*, one of them is the novel *Amongraga dan Tambangraras: Empat Puluh Malam di Pelaminan* (next) called the novel *Centhini* by Ardian Kresna (2015). This study examines the transformation of *Serat Centhini* in the novel *Centhini*, which focuses on the transformation of action figure Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras in the *Malam Pengantin* episode, also known as the story 40 *Malam di Pelaminan* in *Serat Centhini*, as well as the *Centhini* novel. This study utilises the theory transformation developed by Teuw (1983), Pradopo (1986), Jauss (1984), and Wiryamartana (1990). This study utilizes the method or technique of comparative literature, namely comparing the actions of Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras in *Serat Centhini* and the novel *Centhini*. Results of the study show occurrence transformation in the form of reduction, deviation, and addition in the novel *Centhini* from *Serat Centhini*.

Keywords— *transformation; action; comparative; reduction; and addition*

I. INTRODUCTION

Serat Centhini (hereafter referred to as *SC*) is a literary work initiated by Sunan Pakubuwana V (who at the time held the title Mangkunegara III) in 1815 in Surakarta [1]. *SC* was written in Javanese *S*Script and language, using the *macapat* metrical form. *SC* is one of the most popular works in the corpus of Javanese literature, considered a monumental work, and even regarded as *ngelmu pangawikan Jawi* or the “mother of Javanese knowledge” [2]–[10]. It is an extensive work of over 3,000 pages. *SC* was transliterated into Latin *S*Script by Kamajaya and published in twelve volumes by Yayasan Centhini Yogyakarta [11]. Due to its popularity and the richness of its content, *SC* has been transformed into several modern Indonesian literary works. To date, at least eight Indonesian novels, one anthology of short stories, and one anthology of Indonesian poetry have been produced [12]–[20]. Among these eight novels inspired by *SC* is *Amongraga dan Tambangraras: Empat Puluh Malam di Pelaminan* (2015) [21], hereafter referred to as *NC*, meaning “*Novel Centhini*.”

Several significant characters appear in *SC* and *NC*, including Jayengresmi (later known as Syekh Amongraga), Niken Tambangraras, Jayengsari, Niken Rancangapti, Cebolang, Ki Bayi Panurta, and *Centhini*. In the Wedding Night (*Malam Pengantin*) episode, the central characters are Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras. The discussion of the transformation from *SC* to *NC* focuses on these two characters, whose stories are narrated in the wedding night episodes. Both *SC* and *NC* are structured as journey narratives, specifically the motif of the wandering student (*santri lelana*). This study examines the transformation of these two characters in the wedding night episodes through comparative literary analysis, focusing on the actions of Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras in *SC* and *NC*. The analysis reveals changes and additions to the characters’ actions in *NC*.

II. METHOD

This study employs the theory of literary transformation and the method of comparative literature. From the perspective of transformation theory, the emergence of a literary work cannot be separated from previous works. In this context, the older text serves as the foundation for the creation of a new work and is referred to as the “hypogram” ([22, p. 11]; cf. [23, p. 11] in [24, p. 103]). The new text, in response to the hypogram, is termed the transformed work. The interpretation of the new work must therefore take the hypogram into account. Through their creativity, authors may borrow elements from earlier works. The relationship between the hypogram and the

transformed work may involve reduction, expansion, contradiction, or rejection ([25, p. 167], [22, p. 23], [26, pp. 87–88], [27], [28, p. 193]). This study focuses on the transformation of the behaviors or actions of Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras in the wedding night episodes of *SC* and *NC*.

The research employs the listening and note-taking technique (*simak-catat*) [29]. First, the behaviors or actions of Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras in *SC* and *NC* were recorded. Second, these actions were compared to identify similarities and differences in the wedding night episodes. The comparison of characters' behaviors in *SC* and *NC's Amongraga dan Tambangraras: Empat Puluhan Malam di Pelaminan* reveals whether the novel adopts, expands, reduces, alters, or rejects the actions originally depicted in *SC*.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The wedding night in *Serat Centhini* (*SC*) is found in Volume 6, beginning on page 55 until its conclusion, and continues in Volume 7, from the first page through page 138 [1, Vol. 6, p. 55], [1, Vol. 7, pp. 1–138]. In contrast, in the novel *Centhini* (*NC*), the wedding night is narrated between pages 256 and 315 [21, pp. 256–315]. The narratives of the wedding nights differ between the two works. These differences and similarities may be explained as follows.

On the first night in *SC*, it is recounted that Syekh Amongraga asked Niken Tambangraras about her relationship with Centhini [1, p. 66]. Niken Tambangraras later told Nyi Malarsih that she had not engaged in sexual relations with Syekh Amongraga [1, p. 68]. In contrast, *NC* states that Syekh Amongraga moved the statues of *loroblonyo*, representations of Dewi Sri and Sadono symbolizing harmony. Syekh Amongraga sat cross-legged before his wife at the side of the bed and directed his gaze toward Niken Tambangraras. He asked her to remain seated on the bed, which he likened to a ship, with Niken Tambangraras at the stern and himself at the bow. Syekh Amongraga declared that for 40 nights he would traverse seven boundless seas: the sea of foam, the sea of fire, the yellow sea filled with desire, the blue sea, the sea of mud, the dark blue sea, and the sea of sugarcane nectar that was white and sweet. Meanwhile, Niken Tambangraras remained seated on the bridal bed, still wearing her wedding attire with flowers in her hair. She also told Nyi Malarsih that she had not consummated her marriage with Syekh Amongraga. The distinction lies in Syekh Amongraga's statement in *NC* that he would expound upon the seven types of seas during the forty wedding nights, which constitutes an addition in the novel.

On the second night in *SC*, Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras returned to their private chamber to read the Qur'an. At Syekh Amongraga's request, Tambangraras recited Surah al-Fātiḥah [1, p. 86]. In *NC*, however, it is narrated that Niken Tambangraras felt embarrassed to tell her mother that she had not yet consummated the marriage [21, p. 267]. Thus, there is a divergence in the actions of Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras between *SC* and *NC* on the second night.

On the third night in *SC*, Syekh Amongraga explained the *qirā'āt* (recitations) of Surah al-Fātiḥah to Niken Tambangraras [1, pp. 87–88], after which he invited her to perform ablution and the 'Asr prayer. He also asked her to teach religion to Centhini [1, p. 116]. Furthermore, Syekh Amongraga provided explanations about ominous days and the *pawukon* calendar [1, Vol. 7, p. 4]. After receiving religious instruction from her husband, Niken Tambangraras kissed Syekh Amongraga's feet as a sign of gratitude [1, p. 115]. In *NC*, however, it is stated that Syekh Amongraga sat naked before his wife, asking for her permission to explain the primordial essence (*jauhar awal*) as prophetic light. On the same night, Niken Tambangraras held her husband's hand and led him to perform ablution for the dawn prayer. This indicates a divergence in narrative and a behavioral deviation in *NC*, as Syekh Amongraga is described as sitting unclothed in front of Niken Tambangraras.

On the fourth, fifth, and sixth nights, *SC* recounts interactions between Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras, whereas *NC* omits them entirely. On the fourth night, Syekh Amongraga expounded on the knowledge of *sasmitaning gesang* (the essence of life) [1, p. 7], which delighted Niken Tambangraras [1, p. 13]. On the fifth night, he discussed the concept of "death within life" and "life inseparable from death" [1, p. 11], without reference to Niken Tambangraras. On the sixth night, Syekh Amongraga imparted lessons on praising Allah, to which Niken Tambangraras responded with respect [1, p. 18]. These omissions in *NC* indicate a reduction from *SC*.

On the seventh night, *SC* narrates that after returning from the mosque, Syekh Amongraga taught religious practices related to faith, prayer, almsgiving, and charity [1, p. 24] until dawn, after which he returned to the mosque for the morning prayer [1, p. 25]. Niken Tambangraras attentively listened to these teachings until dawn. In *NC*, however, on the seventh night, at Niken Tambangraras's request, Syekh Amongraga refrained from any explanation. Thus, the episode in *SC* was either reduced or eliminated in *NC*. On the eighth night, *SC* narrates that Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras returned to their chamber, showed affection toward each other, and then he explained the pillars of Islam [1, p. 31]. Niken Tambangraras was overjoyed, and they spent the night together until morning [1, p. 30]. In *NC*, however, it is stated that on the eighth night Syekh Amongraga received envoys from Mataram while he was delivering religious teachings [21, p. 77]. This marks another divergence between the two works.

On the ninth night, *SC* recounts that Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras went to their chamber but did not sleep. Instead, he expounded on the perfection of worship [1, pp. 33–34]. Niken Tambangraras expressed her gratitude by kissing his feet and pledging obedience, after which they performed ablution and the dawn prayer [1, p. 34]. In *NC*, however, Syekh Amongraga is depicted as sitting naked before Niken Tambangraras, explaining that human life is like a fish in the sea, with the fish symbolizing humankind and the sea symbolizing God. Life, he added, was akin to the work of a goldsmith. Niken Tambangraras listened to his teachings. This represents a narrative deviation in *NC* from *SC*.

On the tenth night, *SC* narrates that Syekh Amongraga performed the ‘Isha and tahajjud prayers before entering the chamber with Niken Tambangraras [1, p. 37]. He then explained three types of *dhikr* [1, pp. 38–39], which she attentively received. In *NC*, however, Syekh Amongraga is described as holding and massaging his wife’s feet, which made her feel comfortable. This indicates a divergence and deviation in *NC*. From the eleventh to the thirteenth nights in *SC*, it is narrated that Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras entered the bridal chamber, where Syekh Amongraga explained the twenty attributes of God. Niken Tambangraras listened attentively to her husband’s teachings [1, p. 44]. In the *NC*, the episodes of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth nights are also included. However, *NC* presents an addition to the narrative, stating that Niken Tambangraras observed Syekh Amongraga’s phallus. On the fourteenth night in *SC*, it is described that Amongraga spoke about death and prayer to Tambangraras, who felt pleased upon receiving his guidance [1, p. 68]. In contrast, *NC* depicts Syekh Amongraga sitting naked on the bed opposite Tambangraras and stating that “the one who sees is also being seen, and the one who commands is also being commanded” [21, p. 292]. This constitutes a deviation of the narrative in *NC* from *SC*. From the fifteenth to the thirty-ninth nights, *SC* contains no account of Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras. Only on the thirty-ninth night does *SC* describe their consummation of the marriage. In *SC*, sexual intercourse between Niken Tambangraras and Syekh Amongraga occurs at least on the fortieth night or afterward. By contrast, *NC* recounts the consummation as taking place on the thirty-ninth night. This difference indicates a reduction in *NC* compared to *SC*, as the consummation is narrated earlier in the novel than in the original text.

In *SC*, volume 7, following the fifteenth night and continuing over the subsequent twenty nights, numerous other episodes are presented. Among these are the story of Kyai Bayi Panurta mobilizing the community to build a new house for the couple, Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras, which was eventually completed and followed by their relocation. In addition, the narrative recounts the *ngunduh mantu* (post-wedding celebrations) of Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras, held from one relative’s house to another, such as those of Ki Suharyo, Ki Wiradhusta, Ki Pangulu, Ki Kulawirya, and others.

This demonstrates that *NC* reduces portions of the narrative. The accounts of house construction and the *ngunduh mantu* are omitted in *NC*. Instead, these omissions are balanced by the addition of new episodes. In *NC*, the wedding night narrative of Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras is extended to nearly every night, from the first through the fortieth night. This constitutes an expansion by the novel’s author. In short, this may be regarded as a substitution of narratives. For example, the stories in *SC* volume 7 concerning the twenty-day construction of a new house for the couple and the *ngunduh mantu* ceremonies at the homes of Ki Bayi Panurta’s relatives are entirely omitted. In their place, the novel inserts a continuous narrative of the wedding nights of Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras up to the fortieth night. Likewise, the accounts of Syekh Amongraga dining with Niken Tambangraras and her extended family, found in *SC*, are absent in *NC*. All these omissions serve to highlight the narrative of the forty wedding nights. Meanwhile, in *SC*, the episodes following the fifteenth night do not focus exclusively on wedding nights. It may therefore be inferred that the inclusion of nearly every night’s account in *NC*, centered on the wedding nights of Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras, reflects the author’s intention to emphasize the significance of these events. This emphasis is underscored by the allocation of three distinct chapter titles, Malam-Malam Pengantin, Menyelami Kedalaman Kalbu, and Memahami Rasa Cinta Sejati. all of which narrate the wedding nights of Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras over forty days and forty nights. During these nights, their activities consisted of imparting religious knowledge, performing night prayers, and engaging in conjugal relations. Clearly, *NC* expands and accentuates the depiction of the wedding nights, while excluding narratives unrelated to them over the course of forty days and nights.

After consummating the marriage, Niken Tambangraras and Syekh Amongraga remained together in the bridal chamber for several days, even before Syekh Amongraga later secluded himself for seven days and nights. During this time, he continued to provide Niken Tambangraras with various teachings. For example, (1) he explained the content of *Serat Sabdajati* [1, pp. 130, 285]; (2) he expounded on the essence of life in four aspects: speaking kindly, teaching religion, fearing God, practicing good deeds, and showing gratitude [1, p. 134]; (3) he emphasized the importance of maintaining proper conduct in social interactions [1, pp. 134, 34–53]; and (4) he imparted knowledge of conjugal relations, including *asmaragama*, *asmarayoga*, *asmaranala*, *asmaratantra*, *asmarajuwita*, and others [1, pp. 35–36].

Only after imparting this knowledge of love in five categories did Amongraga grow sorrowful, unable to bring himself to tell Niken Tambangraras that he intended to depart in search of his two younger siblings. He then withdrew into seclusion for seven days and nights, which caused Niken Tambangraras to grieve and suspect that he regretted marrying her [1, p. 137]. In *NC*, however, it is narrated that on the fortieth night Centhini informed Nyi Malarsih, Niken Tambangraras’s mother, that her daughter’s hymen had been ruptured, signifying consummation

with Syekh Amongraga. Nyi Malarsih then asked Mbok Doyo to prepare traditional herbal medicine (jamu) for Niken Tambangraras. No further episodes are recounted after this event in *NC*. By contrast, in *SC*, for seven days following the consummation, Syekh Amongraga continued to impart religious knowledge to Niken Tambangraras. Ultimately, he told her that he intended to leave in search of his two younger siblings. This revelation left Niken Tambangraras deeply saddened. Syekh Amongraga even advised her to remarry if he did not return or if he were to die.

After consummating the marriage, Syekh Amongraga explained to his wife that he intended to continue his journey in search of his siblings. This again demonstrates a difference between *SC* and *NC*. In *NC*, it is merely stated that Syekh Amongraga wrote a farewell letter to Niken Tambangraras. In the letter, he wrote:

Kekasih jiwa dan ragaku yang ditaksirkan Allah sebagai istriku. Di jalan kehidupan ini ada pertemuan dan perjumpaannya kembali. Kita sedang berjalan di kedalaman sendiri-sendiri, Aku memohon izin membawa ragaku menempuh kewajiban berbakti kepada orangtuaku. Akulah Sang Amongraga dan engkaulah keselarasan tembang dalam setiap langkahku. Jangan engkau mengira bahwa aku telah pergi meninggalkanmu, karena sesungguhnya aku sedang mengembara dalam dirimu [21, pp. 340–341].

My beloved, my soul and body, whom God has destined to be my wife. In this life, there are meetings and reunions. We are each journeying into our own depths. I ask your permission to take my body to fulfill the duty of serving my parents. I am Amongraga, and you are the harmony of song in every step I take. Do not think that I have left you, for truly, I am wandering within you [21, pp. 340–341].

Meanwhile, in *Serat Centhini* volume 7, it is stated that Syekh Amongraga wrote three farewell letters. The first was addressed to Niken Tambangraras, the second to his sibling named Jayengresmi, and the third to his father-in-law, Ki Bayi Panurta. He placed all three letters beneath Niken Tambangraras's pillow, where they were later discovered by Centhini, who found the papers under the pillow. Centhini immediately retrieved the letters and delivered them to Ki Bayi Panurta. The text reads as follows:

Tiyang tiga Centhini kagyet ningali, anulya ingalap, ingaturaken ing Jeng Kyai, Ki bayi gupuh ngandika. Kyai Bayi ningali alamatneki, marang Tambangrars, satunggil mring rayi kalih, satunggil marang keng rama [1, p. 145].

Centhini was startled upon seeing the three writings. She quickly took them and handed them to Kyai Bayi, who then said, "The addressees are clear: one for Tambangraras, one for his younger sibling, and one for his father" [1, p. 145].

It is thus narrated that Amongraga wrote three letters: one for his wife, Tambangraras; one for Jayengresmi Jayengraga; and one for Ki Bayi Panurta [1, p. 141].

This stands in contrast to *NC*, which recounts Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras every night from the fifteenth to the thirty-ninth. However, *NC* does not provide accounts for the twenty-ninth and thirty-seventh nights. Viewed from the perspective of *NC*, these episodes represent both additions and deviations from the wedding night narratives in *SC*.

IV. CONCLUSION

As a monumental work, *Serat Centhini* has frequently been transformed into various literary adaptations. To date, no fewer than six Indonesian novels have been produced from the transformation of *Serat Centhini*, one of which is *Amongraga dan Tambangraras: Empat Puluh Malam di Pelaminan* by Ardian Kresna, published by Diva Press, Yogyakarta, in 2013. This demonstrates that as a hypogram, *SC* possesses several strengths and advantages. The transformation of *SC*, originally composed in traditional Javanese literature with *macapat* meter, into an Indonesian novel makes a significant contribution to its readability. It is certain that with the emergence of these novelistic transformations, the readership of *Serat Centhini* has expanded considerably.

From the nature of its transformation in the Indonesian novel *Amongraga dan Tambangraras: Empat Puluh Malam di Pelaminan*, it can be stated that the process involves both additions and deviations. A reduction occurs, for instance, when *SC* Volume 7 recounts the construction of a new house for Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras, which took nearly twenty nights. This episode is not narrated in *NC*. Second, in *SC* volume 7, the *ngunduh manten* ceremonies held at several houses of Ki Bayi Panurta's extended family, such as those of Ki Suharya, Ki Wiradhusta, Ki Pengulu Basarodin, and Ki Kulawirya, are also omitted in *NC*. Similarly, *SC*'s detailed descriptions of Syekh Amongraga's unique dining etiquette are not included in Ardian Kresna's *Centhini* (2025). Conversely, *NC* features Syekh Amongraga and Niken Tambangraras's wedding nights for nearly forty days and nights, creating the impression that these episodes are of central importance for readers. This addition was deliberately crafted by the author. Thus, the transformation is characterized by both reduction and expansion. Therefore, to obtain a complete and accurate understanding of *Serat Centhini*, one must read the original *SC* itself, as the transformed novel alone is insufficient. Indeed, the transformation reflects the creativity and authorial right of Ardian Kresna to re-present Pakubuwana V's *Serat Centhini* in the form of a modern Indonesian novel,

Amongraga dan Tambangraras: Empat Puluh Malam di Pelaminan, which draws upon Volumes 6 and 7 of the original work.

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