**Nini Towong** and Environmental Preservation: Manuscript Review

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**Abstract.** Traditional children's games on Java in the early 20th century have been documented in several texts, one of which was initiated by JL Moens. Almost all of the games described in the text of HL Moens are closely related to the environment in Java at that time, especially in Yogyakarta. One game that is described is the game **Nini Towong**. The condition of spiritualism and the education system in Java at that time could still provide space for **Nini Towong** to attend in the midst of the lives of children in Java. In contrast to the present situation where **Nini Towong** game became a very difficult to find. This research discusses Moens's writing about the game **Nini Towong** related to the environmental factors encountered. In the end we can find out that this magical game **Nini Towong** is loaded with environmental teaching and recognition.

**Keywords:** Moen's Album; Nini Towong; Environment

1. Introduction

In 1930 Ir. Jl. Moens has collected several Javanes manuscripts that were considered interesting at that time. The manuscript then was sent to the Museum van het Koninklijk Bataviasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen in Batavia, and this collection of texts became known as the *Platenalbum te Jogjakarta* or Moen's Album. The title of *Platenalbum* used because all the scripts in this collection are manuscripts accompanied by many pictures / illustrations. The texts *Platenalbum te Jogjakarta* are now stored in the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia in Jakarta.

In the manuscripts collection, there are two manuscripts which tell about the children's play found in Yogyakarta at that time, namely the manuscript of *Jongensspelen* and *Meisjesspelen*. The manuscript *Jongensspelen* is a Javanese text written in prose, explaining the various games of boys in Java. The text content consists of 83 forms of games which briefly described how to play or the form of the game, also accompanied by pictures/illustrations. While, the manuscript *Meisjesspelen* is also a Javanese text written in prose, also accompanied by pictures/illustrations, containing an explanation of 85 games designed for girls to play. A brief account of the history of these two texts can be seen in Tijdschrift Bataviasch Genootschap deel 71 (1931: 315-348). Moreover, from the various games described in these two manuscripts, there is one interesting game, named **Nini Towong**. This game is played in a pair by girls then it guided or supervised by several girls who have grown up to run the game.
2. The Nini Towong Game

_Nini Towong_ played by girls by making a doll whose embodiment made like a bride, the head made from a coconut shell scoop, the body from _icir_ (a tool to catch fish), the hand from a former dry rice stalk. The scoop that is considered a face made like a bridal makeup, the clothes are similar to the bride, using a stitch, neck decoration, cloth cover, belt, waist shawl and _tapih_. The game uses various equipment, such as certain flowers placed on plates, _brazier_ and fan to burn incense, large mirrors with poles, oil lamps, children made from Grinding stones smeared with betel lime like a baby. Moreover, its also includes the place of betel and the place of betel vine, a place to play on the sand with a base, and the location of the game is attempted to be on the front yard of the house.

When is the best time to play _Nini Towong_. Since it took hours to play, the equipment should has been provided since the daytime. At night, at 8:00 p.m., _Nini Towong_ was thrown in a grave, under a tree believed to be occupied by spirits, namely trees: Lo, Kepuh, Serut, Pace, Randu Hutan, Bibis, and Banyan. After being thrown away by many children, then _Nini Towong_ was given the means of burning incense with a thick smoke and could not be extinguished, the children's journey to the dump was accompanied by a call: "Pada guwang bocah bajang, pada guwang bocah bajang". The call is repeated. When you reach the place of exile, _Nini Thowok_ is placed in a smoky incense place, then left.

Approximately after half an hour, _Nini Towong_ was taken again, the trip to take it also accompanied by a cry: "Da mupu bocah bajang, rambute abang-abang". After it is taken, it is then brought to the yard where it has been provided with four children who are already older, this big child then receives the arrival of _Nini Towong_.

_Nini Towong_ was established. The bottom is held by the four children who received it. Incense placed under _Nini Towong_ should not be extinguished. The children then sang over and over again: “Bok lara sira bageya, manten anyar lagi teka” (there is also a voice: “bok lara sira bageya, manten anyar lagi teka”).

1) After welcoming the doll _Nini Towong_ then they sing the song _ilir-ilir_. "ilir-ilir tandure wong semilir, tak ijo rayo-rayo (riyo-riyo) tak sengguh temanten anyar, cah angon-cah angon, peneken blimbing kwue, lunyu-lunyu peneken, dinggo masuk dodotiro, dodotiro kemitir bedah ing pinggir, ndomndonoma, jlamatana, dinggo seba mengko sore, pupung gede rembulane, pupung jembar kalangane, yen suraka, surak: hi... ye....”

2) "Lir ilir gunanti, sabuk cinde lir gonanti, gilang-giilang layone, layone bok putra ugun, ra ugun dening dewa, ra dewa dening suksma, gumrubyug barate sanga, surak: hi... ye....” (may the voice tilt)

3) "Lir ilir gumuling, gumulinge sema katon, raga-raga muliya, ulihna dening suksma, ora suksma dening dewa, suraka, surak, hi ... ye .... "

4) "Kembang kapas sak jerong kamar, lera"

5) "Wong ayu wong ayu pilisa kunir apu, jelirat-jelirat tak adang dalan prapatan."

6) "Ijo ijo klambi gadung layangane jumantara, i ijo, ijo klambi gadung, layang ane gawe brongta."

7) "Kembang menur mambak-mambak pinggir sumur, dede kembang menur, dede kembang menur, widadari saweg pupur, lok-alok, o... se...."

8) "Kembang mlati, mambak-mambak pinggir kali, dede kembang mlati, dede kembang mlati, widadari saweg lati, lok-alok: , o... se...."

9) "Kembang mlati, mambak-mambak pinggir kali, dede kembang mlati, dede kembang mlati, widadari saweg lati, lok-alok: , o... se...."

10) "Papas-papasan mateng di unduh seg-segan, reg, regan.” Songs in numbers 3 to 10 are often not sung, but only replaced with a song: c kembang kapas roning kamal, lera lere selak sore, twice, continued: dutak, dute, anom-anom dasare, then paused.
After stopping for a while, the children sang again with the song: *Ni Towong, Ni Towong gayur gayur di nontong, di nontong te mu gandek, iderena neng dondongan, ramekena bocah dolan, aja suwe-suwe, dalan mesakake jing pada dolan, suraka, suraka: i... ye....*

Until this song usually *Nini Towong* was "alive". A sign that *Nini Thowong* was "alive" if the one holding the doll said heavily. After that, each of those children present took turns holding *Nini Towong*. Next, *Nini Towong*'s waist was held with a belt and a scarf, held by two children on the left and right, below it was held by five children, of course it would jump up and down, and get stronger.

*Nini Towong* if she laughs then stops jumping up and down, looks trembling, this is a sign of *Nini Towong* really lives. The children then told *Nini Towong* using a song: "Alon-alon wong ayu menek kesandung, yen kesandung wong ayu suda warnane."

*Nini Towong* then juxtaposed with a mirror to reflect herself, then told her using the song: "Wis ngilowa, mbok lara lagi busana, wis ngilowa, mbok lara lagi busana, aja lali aja lali pupurira."

After that *Nini Towong* was brought close to the betel nut to eat betel nut. How to offer it also uses the chant: "Wis gantena sedah ayu jambe wangen, wis gantena sedah ayu jambe wangen, aja lali kang sumbaga."

*Nini Towong* then given the care of the wooden boy accompanied by a voice: "Mesem-mesem mbok lara angemban putra, mesem-mesem mbok lara angemban putra pasrahena dening suksma." If her son is stolen and hidden *Nini Towong* would be very angry, then chases and nods as if to hit, all holding children follow the directions until *Nini Towong* can find her hidden child. If the child is missing, it is also sung: "Ni towong anake ilang, wong ayu ja nunjang-nunjang".

There are also those who believe that *Nini Towong* is truly "alive" or not, that is, by picking two leaves, held by the left and right hands and then shown, *Nini Towong* is asked to guess which one is picked first, if it really lives it could guess correctly. The elders of the children sang, then the other children imitated everything, as they wished themselves with noise and crowded. If it's really "alive", the game *Nini Towong* can last until 2 or 3 am. If all the children were tired, *Nini Towong* was then asked to go home using a song: "Bok lara sira muliya, sing nonton wis on lunga" (repeated over and over). *Ni Towong* then jumped as hard as she could, the children hold the bottom until it was released, *Nini Towong* turned upside down and the head was down, later died, the sign she had returned home. Then the children dispersed back.

2. Research Methods

The method used is a description and a brief review of the text found in the Moens' collection about *Nini Towong* game. Likewise, *Meisjesspelen*, the game *Nini Towong* was also discussed in *Javaansche Meisjesspelen en Kinderliedjes*. a game of Javanese girls and *dolanan* songs wrote by Overbeck in 1938. This book focuses on songs or *dolanan* songs on various traditional games in Java accompanied by translations in Dutch, including *dolanan* songs in the game *Nini Towong*. What Overbeck wrote about these *dolanan* songs even though, more complete than what Moens had compiled. Although it cannot be denied that Overbeck's writing leads in specific information and songs for various games. However, the discussion in this paper set Moens’ manuscript collection as a single source to gain a data. This decision underlined the age the older text, structured information, and its simplicity as a guide to play the game.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Overview of Spirituality

Beliefs about other worlds outside the human world (spirits) are believed by Javanese people both Brahma and Buddhism Hindu, Hindu Waisija's, Javanese Animism, or Islam [3]. Therefore, it is not unusual if in the text it is explained that before the game began, *Nini Towong* was dumped in a grave, under a tree believed to be occupied by spirits, namely trees; *Lo* (*Ficus racemosa* L.), *Kepuh* (*Sterculia foetida* L.), *_Drawstring* (*Streblus asper* Lour.), *Pace* (*Morinda citrifolia* L.), *Randu Hutan* (*Ceiba pentandra* L. *Gaertn.*), *Bibis* (?), and *Banyan* (*Ficus Benjamina* L.).
The beliefs about trees inhabited by these spirits indirectly protect plants that are considered sacred and eliminate the use of these plants as a necessity in the community so that these trees will help the availability of infiltrated water and maintain the surrounding ecosystem.

The other side of spirituality in this game can be seen in the song lyric lir-ilir used in the game Nini Towong. Based on the text found, it is very clear that in the early period of the 19th century this song was used as an opening song in the game Nini Towong and also in the Jailangkung game [10]. At this time the song lyric lir-ilir has undergone a shift in function, the lyric lir-ilir is now more familiar to be found in the realm of Islamic da'wah. There is also a belief that this song is one of the works composed by Sunan Kalijaga which is full of Islamic teachings [11]. The translation of the lyric lir-ilir is more or less as follows: lir ilir, plants (already grown and able) in the green, lush wind, such as newlyweds, shepherd children, shepherd children, climb the starfruit tree, although it is slippery, climb it, it is used to wash your batiks, your batik cloth has been torn on it, sew it, tarnish it, use it later this afternoon, while the moon is big, while the field is open, if cheering, cheering; hiye ...

The message in a song lyric lir-ilir can be interpreted from different points of view, one of the interesting things is about the use of starfruit (Averrhoa sp.) to wash dodot (batik shirt). This is very rare to find in various information about batik cloth, the fruit commonly used to clean batik is lerak fruit (Sapindus rarak DC.) [9]. Consideration of the use of starfruit rather than lerak could arise because of the cultural background of poetry creation, especially concerning batik motifs, methods of making and maintaining batik that developed in some areas of Java. This shows that there are alternatives to use natural resources around us that can be used to meet the needs of human life.

4.2 Environmental Knowledge Review

Songs number 4 to 10 in the game Nini Towong is a dolanan song that besides having a game function also has a function of knowledge about the environment around them. "Kembang kapas sak jeroning kamar, lera-lere gẽnti gawe", the song's lyrics tell about cotton flowers. Indirectly the children who play will refer their knowledge with cotton flowers when this song is sung. In Javanese, cotton flower is called kadi.

"Wong ayu Wong ayu pilisa kunir apu, jelirat-jelirit tak adang dalan prapatan", the song's lyrics tell about pilis kunir apu (herbal paste made from turmeric (Curcuma longa L.) and whiting attached to the forehead to relieve pain or restore health. References to knowledge that arise in children's minds will refer to turmeric as a medicinal plant.

"Ijo ijo klambi gadung layangane jumantara, saya ijo, ijo klambi gadung, layangane gawe brongta.", The song's lyrics mention Gadung (Dioscorea hispida Dennst.), tubers that are propagating and poisonous if not cooked properly. Knowledge references that arise in children's minds will refer to Gadung plants as food crops.

"Kembang menur mambak-mambak pinggir sumur, dede kembang menur, dede kembang menur, widadarai saweg pupur, lok-alok, o... se...." The lyric of this song introduces the menur flower (Jasminum, sp.), that is a kind of jasmine flower with multilevel flower petals. It is often used as a plant in the yard.

"Kembang mlati, mambak-mambak pinggir kali, dede kembang mlati, dede kembang mlati, widadarai saweg lati, lok-alok: , o... se...." The lyrics of this song tell about jasmine (Jasminum sambac (L.) Aiton) lush on the river bank. Knowledge references in children's minds will refer to small, fragrant white flowers and are often used in certain ceremonies or events.

"Kembang sana mambak-mambak pinggir marga, dede kembang sana, dede kembang sana, widadarai saweg husana, lok-alok: , o... se...." The part of the lyrics of the song dolan introduces children to plants that are often planted on the side of the road, namely plants sonokeling (Dalbergia latifolia Roxb.). This plant is a perennial plant whose wood is often used as a household tool.
"Papas-papasan mateng di unduh seg-segan, reg, regan.", This last part tells about the fruit *papasan* (*Coccinia grandis* (L.) Voigt.), A creeping plant whose fruit is shaped like a small cucumber, when it is ripe it will be reddish.

5. Conclusion

The classic text of J. L Moens' initiative is an interesting source to be used as a message from the past that occurred in Java in the early 19th century. Although the explicit information he brought only about culture, however, it also brings many implicit good things in it. In one text in his archive collection there is a manuscripts that contains information about traditional game *Nini Towong* that is loaded with magical nuances but described in a crowded and pleasant atmosphere, not a frightening or tense atmosphere.

Based on the explanation in the text, it can be seen that there is a spiritual influence which is the background of the life of this game in its time. The first factor is because there is still strong community belief in supernatural things, including spirits who are protecting a specific place, including certain trees in places that are considered haunted. The second factor is that the existing socio-religious conditions are not the same as the current conditions. On the other hand, the *Nini Towong* game, which played accompanied by several songs, provided stimulation of knowledge to children about the surrounding environment. These seemingly simple things in the *dolanan* songs were a step away from a traditional educational series that has been passed down from generation to generation. This stimulation of knowledge will continue to grow in the minds of children and will become a chain of experience related to the daily lives of the children themselves.

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