

A Comparative Study: The Folktale of *Jaka Tarub* (Indonesia) and *Tanabata* (Japan)

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ABSTRACT

A folktale owned by one country can also be found in another country with either the same theme or motive. As there is numerous folktale around the world, it turns out that folktales from Indonesia have many similarities to folktales from Japan, one of which is *Jaka Tarub* folktale from Central Java and *Tanabata* folktale from Japan. This research aimed to discover the similarities and differences of the story structure and cultural element of the two folktales. In analyzing, the researcher employed three approaches, namely Greimas narratology structuralism approach to analyzing the story structure, cultural approach to analyze the cultural element and comparative literature approach. The result of this study indicated that there was both similarities and differences of story structure and cultural element. However, both *Jaka Tarub* and *Tanabata* did not influence each other as they represented their own characteristics which were descriptions of the society where they came from.

INTRODUCTION

The folktale is a traditional story that grew in society since ancient time. The folktale is included in the oral folklore category with the folklore genre. Most countries have folklores inherited from generation to generation. A folktale is a folk story considered really happened which is told primarily for entertainment despite depicting truth and containing moral lessons (Danandjaja, 2002:83).

Folktales are often regarded as belonging to a particular place or area. However, in fact, a folktale of an area sometimes have similarities with other areas, even fairy tales in certain countries sometimes have similarities with the fairy tales in other countries. Basically, the similarity can only be explained by two possibilities, namely: (1) monogenesis, which is an invention followed by a diffusion or diffusion process; (2) polygenesis, which is caused by self-discovery (independent invention) or parallel (parallel invention). From the motives of the same story, in different places as well as at different times and at the same time (Danandjaja, 2002:56; Endraswara, 2009:143-144).

In the world, there are many folktales that show the similarity between one country and another country. One of them is Indonesia and Japan, especially in terms of theme and story motive like *Jaka Tarub* and *Tanabata* folktales. Although,

it comes from two different countries from geographical location, population, language, and cultural, the tales have almost the same theme. Therefore, it was necessary to do this research to find the factors that caused the similarity and the difference between the two tales.

Based on the description of the background above, then the problem in this study could be formulated as follows:

- 1) How were the story structure of *Jaka Tarub* (Indonesia) and *Tanabata* (Japan) folktale?
- 2) How were the cultural elements contained in the folktale of *Jaka Tarub* (Indonesia) and *Tanabata* (Japan)?
- 3) What were the similarity of story structure and cultural elements of *Jaka Tarub* (Indonesia) and *Tanabata* (Japan) folktale?
- 4) What were the difference between story structure and cultural elements of *Jaka Tarub* (Indonesia) and *Tanabata* (Japanese) folktale?

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Folklore

The folktale is included as folklore with oral folklore genre. Folklore is any type of folk traditions, such as traditional

belief, heritage, culture and customs (Zaidan et al., 2007:74). According to Endraswara (2009:28-29), folklore is all about hereditary traditions, art, etiquette, behavior, and life of ancestors. In line with this, Danandjaja (2002:2) argued that folklore is part of the collective culture, which was dispersed and passed down from generation to generation, between any collective, traditionally in different versions, in both oral and exemplary form with motion or a mnemonic device. So folklore is all folk traditions; such as beliefs, cultural heritage and traditional customs that were verbally and non-verbally inherited by ancestors from generation to generation.

Folklore in Indonesian Literature

Folklore is included in the oral folklore group. According to Danandjaja (2002:50), folklore is divided into three major groups, namely; myths, legends, and folktales. The myth is a story that has a historical background, believed by the community as a story that really happened, considered sacred, contains many things that are miraculous, and generally fi ured by gods. Events took place in another world, or in a world not as we know it today, and occurred in the past and generally tell the occurrence of the universe, the adventures of the gods, and so on.

Legend is an ancient folklore story that has something to do with the historical event of a place. Legend is considered to be true by the owner of the story, but it is not considered sacred. Legends fi ured by humans who have extraordinary traits, and often assisted by magical creatures.

The folktale is a story that does not really happen, especially about the weird events of ancient times. Fairy tales is included as folklore stories that are not considered to really happen and are told primarily for entertainment, although many of them also depict the truth, containing moral lessons, or even satire.

According to Priyono (2003:9-11) folktales can be divided into four major groups based on its types as follows:

- 1) Animal tales are a kind of folktale whose characters in the story are pets and wild animals, such as fish, poultry, snakes, insects, and so on. In this type of tale, the animals can speak and have a human-like sense in the fairy tales of Indonesian animals, the most popular fi ure is the clever and cunning deer, while in the Japanese fairy tale popular animals are cranes and foxes.
- 2) Ordinary tales are a kind of folktale whose characters are ordinary people who experienced the joy and sorrow in his life. For example the tale of *Ande-Ande Lumut*, *Jaka Tarub*, and so on.
- 3) Jokes and anecdotes are a kind of folktale that is ridiculous, it can make both the storytellers and listeners laugh. The jokes and anecdotes can also cause particular groups which are the target of the tale nurse a grievance. Anecdotes can be regarded as part of a particular personal fictional "life history", while jokes can be regarded as the "nature" or "character" of the fictive members of a particular group.

Formula tales are tales whose structure consists of repetition. This formative tale consists of many heaped tales, a tale to play with people and endless tales.

Fairy tales usually have a common opening and closing phrases. In English, it usually starts with the opening sentence: *Once upon a time, there lived a... and closing:..., and they lived happily ever after.* In Indonesian, it is expressed by *in ancient times, there lived..., and so on.* In addition, in many languages of the world, synonym terms which are often used to refer to folktales are *folklores*, *nursery tales*, *wonder tales* (in English); *Siao Suo* (in Mandarin) and so on (Danandjaja, 2002:84).

Folklore in Japanese Literature

In Japanese literature, the term folktale is known as the *minwa/mukashi banashi*, being in English referred to as folktales or fairytales. Thus, folklore or fairy tale can be interpreted a fictional story narrated verbally since the birth of human civilization (Purnomo, 2007:vi). According to Danandjaja (1997:70), Japanese folklore is also categorized into three groups, namely myths, legends, and folktales.

Myth in Japanese is *shinwa* which means the story of the gods. The *Shinwa* is an amalgamation of native themes and those from the East Asian mainland, and was influenced by Buddhist and Taoist teachings that entered the life of the society.

The legend in Japanese is *densetsu* which means events related to history and natural phenomena. *Densetsu* is still alive in Japanese society because it is still supported by strong public belief. As a result, there are many folktales that have been considered fictitious in other countries, but in Japan, it is still considered to be true.

Folktale in Japanese is *mukashi banashi*. Just like other countries' tales, Japanese folktales are not considered true (fictive) and are not bound by time or place, but contain messages that are the values of the nation that supports them, so they can serve as pedagogical tools. In Japan, *mukashi banashi* is a folktale that is usually told to children. The stories always begin with a sentence; *Mukashi, aru tokoroni.* (in the past, somewhere)

Based on its kind, *mukashi banashi* is divided into three groups, namely (1) *doobutsu mukashibanashi* is the Japanese term for animal tales, (2) *honkaku mukashibanashi* is the Japanese term for common tales, and (3) *waraibanashi* is the Japanese term for the funny tales.

Comparative Literature

Comparative literature is a literary scholarly part that studies the correlation between literature and literary comparison with other fields (Endraswara, 2008: 128). The term comparative literature, in practice, involves the field of literary studies and other problems, so comparative literature has a very wide study because it involves other elements outside literature in the study.

In the comparing process, Damono (in Wulandari, 2014: 53), stated that comparative literature is an approach in the literature that does not produce its own theory. In other words, any theory can be utilized in comparative literary research, in accordance with the object and purpose of the research. In principle, in comparative literature studies, the

use of comparison methods is a major step. Therefore, in comparative literature, the process being carried out is comparing.

So, comparative literature is an approach in literature that does not produce its own theory, which examines the comparison of literary inter-country by comparing literature with other fields, and in its assessment can use any theory based on the goal it wants to achieve.

Theory of Narratology Structuralism

There are many types of structuralism approaches, one of which is the structuralism of narratology developed by Algirdas Julien Greimas has the advantage of through presenting the lives of the characters in the story from beginning to end. In addition, narratology structuralism of this model is able to show clearly between the protagonist and the antagonist.

Narratology comes from the word *narratio* and *logos* (Latin). *Narratio* means story, word, story, saga; and *logos* means science. Narratology is also called the theory of narrative discourse (text), according to Rokhmansyah (2014:79), both narratology and narrative discourse theory (text) is defined as a set of concepts about story and storytelling. Narratology develops on the basis of linguistic analogies, such as syntactic models, just like the relationship between the subject, predicate and the object. In connection with that matter, concepts related to narratives and narrators on discourse and text will vary according to the initiators. Therefore, to understand, it needs to be associated with the peculiarities of each expert (Ratna, 2011:128).

In the narratology structuralism developed by A.J. Greimas, in his study, the action takes more concern rather than the doer. The subject in the discourse is a pseudo-man formed by actions called actans and acteurs. According to Kenan (in Ratna, 2011:138), both actans and acteurs can be actions, not necessarily human, but also non-human.

Actant

Actant in Greimas theory viewed from story order shows different relationships. It means that in an actant scheme, a

function can occupy multiple roles, and from role's character, character criteria can be observed. In Greimas's theory, a character can occupy several functions and roles in an actant (Jabrohim, 1996:12).

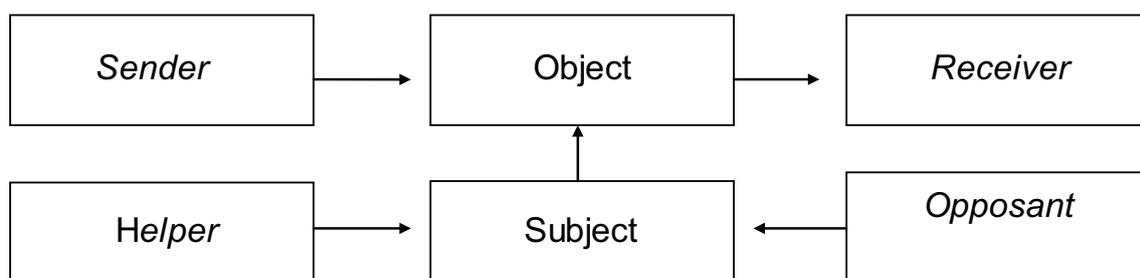
The core of Greimas's theory is the power to take action (actant). Actant is the actor, actant is the role that exists in the action, which can be occupied by all kinds of entities. Actant is different from a character, it exists in the inner structure of a text. Meanwhile, the character is the appearance of a living being, while the actors of action are not just human, but all kinds of entities can also be actors of action: objects, animals, institutions, feelings, and values. So, the so-called power of action is everything that takes part in action (Zaimar, 2013:39).

Actant in Greimas theory occupies six functions, namely (1) subject, (2) object, (3) sender or sender, (4) receiver or receiver, (5) helper or helper and (6) opponents. The six functions of actants can also be referred to the three oppositional couples (Zaimar, 2014: 39). The scheme 1 of actants by Greimas is described as follows:

Beside the actant analysis above, A.J. Greimas also proposed a story model that remains as plot, which later on is called functional model. Greimas addressed functional model as a plot which does not change. The role of the functional model is to outline the role of the subject in order to implement the role of the sender which exists in actant (Jabrohim, 1996:16). The chart below shows the functional schematic.

Elements of Culture

Culture has a very broad definition as it includes almost all human activity in their lives. Therefore, to analyze the concept of culture clearly, it can be specified in the more special element. The element is called as the universal cultural element because this element can be found in all cultures in the world either in villages or society of complex and big cities. According to Koentjaraningrat (2009:165), Culture in the whole world has seven universal elements (*seven cultural universals*), namely (1) language; (2) livelihood system; (3) technology system; (4) knowledge system; (5) social organization; (6) religion; and (7) art.



Source. Greimas (1971:165).

First Part	Second Part	Third Part
Initial Situation	Transformation	Latter Situation
	Filter Trial	Glory/Fall Trial
	Main Trial	

Source: Zaimar (2014:42).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research harnessed comparative descriptive method to find the similarities and differences between the tale of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata. The obtained data were then analyzed using the comparative descriptive method. According to Nazir (2009:54), the goal of the descriptive research is to make a description, illustration or image systematically, factually and accurately related to facts, characteristics as well as the relationship of investigated phenomenon. According to Dalen (in Arikunto, 2010:311), comparative research is to compare two or three cases by observing the causes. Thus, it can be concluded that comparative descriptive method is a method which outlines the result of analysis based on obtained data then compare them.

The technique of collecting data in this research used documentation technique. The technique of analyzing data used content analysis by comparing the two tales as the data. The source of data for this research was the tale of Jaka Tarub taken from the book of Nusantara Folktales (*Cerita Rakyat Nusantara*) by Oktavianti and friends, and the tale of Tanabata taken from The Collection of Selected Japanese Folktales (*Kumpulan Cerita Rakyat Jepang Pilihan*) by Antonius Pujo Purnomo.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

After analyzing and comparing the story structure as well as the cultural element of the tale of Jaka Tarub and the tale of Tanabata, it was found that there were similarities and differences in the story structure and cultural elements of those two tales. Those similarities and differences were as follows:

The Similarities of Story Structure and Cultural Elements

a. Story Structure

From the story structure, the similarities in the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata were as follows:

- 1) The theme told in the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata was same, that is about the marriage between a human and an angel.
- 2) The subject of the tales was a man. In the tale of Jaka Tarub, the subject was a man who lived alone. Likewise in the tale of Tanabata, the subject was a man who lived alone.
- 3) In the two tales, the subjects wanted the same thing, that is clothes of angels. In the story, Jaka Tarub as the subject of the story took the angel's clothes. So as in the Tale of Tanabata, the man also took the clothes of an angel.
- 4) Both in the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata, the subjects successfully persuaded the objects to go to their homes and live with them together.
- 5) Both in the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata, there was the willingness of women characters (objects) to marry the men characters (subjects).
- 6) Both in the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata, the husband were both left by their wives who returned to heaven.

b. The Cultural Elements

Viewed from its cultural elements, the similarities in the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata were as follows:

- 1) Livelihood System
The similarity in the element of livelihood systems, both in traditional Javanese societies and traditional Japanese societies was most people were dependent on agricultural products.
- 2) Technology System
The similarity in the element of technological systems, both in traditional Javanese society and traditional Japanese society at that time were both already familiar with the technology in making the house and make clothes.
- 3) Knowledge System
The similarity in the element of the knowledge systems in both traditional Javanese society and traditional Japanese society at that time was already familiar with the system of knowledge about the natural state around.
- 4) Social Organization System
The similarities in the element of social organization systems in both traditional Javanese society and traditional Japanese society were as follows:
 - a) Basically, women in Javanese and Japanese culture where the type of hardworking women.
 - b) Both Javanese culture and Japanese culture, a wife may demand divorce to her husband for a certain reason.
- 5) Religion
The similarity in the religious element in both traditional Javanese society and traditional Japanese society was both people believed magical things. It came from the original belief of the community itself.

The Differences of Story Structure and Cultural Element

a. Story Structure

In the structures of the stories, the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata had the following differences:

- 1) In the tale of Jaka Tarub, the subject was depicted by a village youth who always spent the time to please himself, whereas, in Tanabata tale, the subject was depicted as a village boy who always worked hard.
- 2) In the tale of Jaka Tarub there were two subjects, namely Jaka Tarub and Nawang Wulan, while in Tanabata tale, the subjects were: the young man, the wife, and the parents of the wife.
- 3) In the tale of Jaka Tarub (subject) took the object's clothes because of love, whereas in the tale of Tanabata, the young man (subject) took the clothes of the girl (object) because interested in the beauty of the clothing.
- 4) In the tale of Jaka Tarub, Nawang Wulan (object) left Jaka Tarub (subject) for having broken his promise, while in the tale of Tanabata, the wife (object) left the husband (subject) since she was disappointed because his husband lied her by hiding the clothes she had been looking for.
- 5) In the tale of Jaka Tarub, Nawang Wulan (object) left Jaka Tarub (subject) and his son, whereas, in Tanabata

tale, the wife (object) went with his son leaving the Husband (the subject).

- 6) In the tale of Jaka Tarub, the subject did not manage to go meet his wife in the heaven, whereas in Tanabata's fairy tale, the Husband (subject) tried to go to heaven to see his wife and son.
- 7) In the tale of Jaka Tarub, the parents of Nawang Wulan (object) were not depicted in the story, whereas in the Tanabata fairy tale, the wife's parent roles (object) were clearly illustrated in the attempt to separate their daughter from her husband.

b. *The Differences of Cultural Element*

Viewed from the elements of culture, then in the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata, there were differences in cultural elements. The differences included:

- 1) **Livelihood System**
In Javanese culture, Javanese people in fulfilling their needs only relied on agriculture products only from rice fields or from the moor, but in Japanese society, besides agriculture they also already admitted trade. In trading, they sold handicrafts like woven, earthenware and so on.
- 2) **Technology System**
In the Technology system, traditional Javanese society only knew the technology in making homes, clothing, and weapons. While in traditional Japanese society, in addition to recognizing technology to make homes and clothing, they were also familiar with the technology in making pottery
- 3) **Social Organization System**
The differences in the social organization system included these following things as follows:
 - a) In facing the life of traditional Javanese society is more receptive because the Javanese view of human life was that human life was already managed so that human just need to live it, whereas, in Japanese society that had the nature of *Bushido*, people would bend over backwards to achieve what they wanted
 - b) Traditional Javanese society in their daily life could not be separated from the intervention of a shaman, because the Javanese more trusted a shaman as a place to solve a problem they faced. Whereas, Japanese society did not admit anyone who had the power which could realize a desire, but they would only pray in the temple before doing something and bend over backward to be able to realize what he wants.
 - c) Traditional Javanese society also recognized a divorce, a divorce could occur if the husband violated a requirement already made before marriage or a wife was unhappy with her husband. Meanwhile, in Japanese society, a divorce usually proposed by men who decided to divorce his wife. However, the wife could also demand a divorce to her husband if the wife felt unhappy.
 - d) In the Javanese society, child custody due to a divorce would be handed over to the husband but if the child was still nursing, then the child would join the wife and the husband was obliged to support the child as long as the child lived with the wife. Meanwhile, in Japa-

nese society child custody due to a divorce would be the responsibility of the wife because in the tradition of Japanese society all the household affairs and the affairs of the child were the responsibility of the wife, while the husband was only obliged to make a living.

- 4) **Religion**
Javanese society very believed in dreams because a person's dream was regarded as a clue (*wangsit*). Meanwhile, Japanese society did not believe in the existence of a dream.
- 5) **Art**
Basically, both Javanese and Japanese people had been familiar with the art. It is just that art in Javanese culture was clearly illustrated in Jaka Tarub tale through flute played by Jaka Tarub, while Japanese art was not represented clearly because there was no musical instrument or art performance in the tale.

DISCUSSION

The tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata could be regarded as tales about the social groups of both societies, namely Javanese and Japanese. In the life of Javanese society, Jaka Tarub represented the poor people, while the Nawang Wulan fi ure represented the rich class. In the life of Japanese society, the young man fi ure represented merchants. Meanwhile, the girl character and her parents represented the nobility. The relations of the main characters of the two tales both represented the relation of interest of the low class to the high class and illustrated how the efforts of the lower classes to be part of the upper class. Jaka Tarub's tale represented the interest of the poor people on the rich people social status and the tale of Tanabata represented the relationship of the merchant's interest to the social status of the noble class.

Both the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata told the willingness of female characters to marry male characters. The difference was that one was because of compulsion/helplessness, while the other was because of feelings of debt. The differences between these two tales were that each of them illustrated the true conditions in the life of the community of their societies. The facts of the tales described the cultural conditions of Javanese and Japanese people who made women as a weak party while the male as the ruling party.

Both tales described how one could break a relationship. Through the tale, Javanese people wanted to say that someone who was bound by a marriage could break the relationship if the partner broke taboos. Just as the Javanese were not tolerant of the abstinence of a taboo, the Japanese were also intolerant of a lie. Therefore, the Japanese had view that anything would be done for a fulfillment of the debt, but if the recipient felt that he had lain, then the bound of the relationship between the person who received the debt and who gave this debt would end if the recipient felt having had paid all the debts and no longer needed to maintain its relationship. Under these conditions, a person could leave his partner without having felt guilty.

Through their tales, both Javanese and Japanese people would like to convey that in a society where the tale was derived there was an eloping marriage that is a marriage with-

out being known by their parents. This was because their relationship was not approved, so both partners choose to elope.

Both tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata described intergroup marriage. In Javanese society who wanted intergroup marriage was the poor, while the rich class rejected it. In Japanese society, the lower classes who wanted marriage with the upper-class, while the upper-class society rejected it. The inter-marriage marriages were avoided by the Javanese and Japanese communities, in particular, it was shown by their tales as a marriage between a high-status woman and a lower-status man, not the other way around. Through the tales, Javanese and Japanese society conveyed the existence of an ideal marriage and non-ideal, the lasting and the non-lasting. The ideal and lasting marriage is a fellow marriage of factions. A non-ideal marriage is an intergroup marriage.

In the tale of Jaka Tarub, Jaka Tarub did not try to follow his wife to heaven, whereas in Tanabata tale, the husband tried to follow his wife to the heaven. The tales describe the culture of Javanese and Japanese society. The decision of Jaka Tarub not going after his wife described the Javanese character who were *nerimo*, the Javanese character who consider the life of every human being was arranged so that people just need to live it. Meanwhile, in Tanabata tale, the husband tried to go after his wife, the fact of the tale described the nature of Japanese people having the spirit of bushido, that is unyielding nature to achieve its goal.

Both tales describes the determination of child custody resulting from a divorce. Through the tale, the Javanese wanted to say that the overflow of children custody from divorce would be the responsibility of the husband. In contrast to the culture of Javanese society, in Japanese culture, all household activities until taking care of children was the responsibility of a wife, then so was the custody of children resulting from a divorce was also the responsibility of a wife.

From the results of the above analysis, the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata were independent literary work, which did not affect each other, although it has the same story motives in the analysis result, It showed the differences both from story structure and cultural elements of both countries.

Therefore, the phenomenon of motive similarity of the story was most likely caused by the existence of polygenesis, a literary work arising from the invention of the independent invention or parallel invention. It means that the same story motive could occur simultaneously even though the places were different. The similarity was likely because there was the similarity between the societies of Indonesia and Japan.

CONCLUSION

Based on these findings that had been done on the tales of *Jaka Tarub* and *Tanabata*, it could be concluded as follows:

- a. After conducting the comparative analysis, it was known that there were similarities and differences in the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata. These similarities and differences included the structure of the story and their cultural elements reflected in the tales
- b. The similarities of story structure in the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata covered; Theme of the stories, the objects wanted by the subjects (subjects tried to get an angel dress), subjects of the stories (subjects left by their wives); Whilst the differences in the structure of the stories covering the subject of the perpetrator, the subjects' motive for getting the objects, the departure of the subject to the heaven and the attempt of the object's parents in separating their son from the subject.
- c. Based on the results of the cultural elements analysis contained in the tale of Jaka Tarub including livelihood elements, the element of technology systems, the element of the knowledge systems, element of social organization system, religion, and art.
- d. Based on the results of the cultural elements analysis contained in the tale of Tanabata including livelihood elements, the element of technology systems, the element of the knowledge systems, element of social organization system and religion.
- e. The similarities of the cultural element in the tales of Jaka Tarub tale with and Tanabata included livelihood system, technology system, knowledge system, social organization system, and religion. While the different elements of culture included Livelihood systems, technology systems, social organization systems, religion, and art.
- f. The similarities and differences contained in the tales of Jaka Tarub and Tanabata provided a clear description of the characteristics of each tale that described the culture of the people of both countries.

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