

# A Comparative Study of Indonesian Fairy Tales Structure

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## Abstract

This study attempts an analysis of the similarities and differences of an intrinsic structure, the patterns of intrinsic structure, and their influence on the fairy tales. The research samples consisted of 12 fairy tales. The study finds that the plots consist of: a male character, who wandering in a jungle, accidentally comes across a lake where fairies are bathing. He steals a fairy's shawl and forces her to marry him. The fairy finds her shawl that is stolen and she finally goes back to heaven. The following tales are built on such structure: *Arya Menak* (East Java), *Jaka Tarub* (Central Java), *Telaga Bidadari* (South Kalimantan), *Raja Omas dan Bidadari* (Simalungun), *Oheo* (Southeast Sulawesi), *Lahilote* (Gorontalo), *Datu Pulut* (South Kalimantan), *Bulalo lo Limbutu* (Gorontalo), *Mahligai Kelayang* (Riau), *Putri Mambang Linau* (Riau), *Tumatenden* (Minahasa, North Sulawesi), *Rajapala* (Bali). The similarity among some fairy tales seems to have occurred because of the mutual correlation among them and the context of dissemination.

**Keywords:** fairy tale, intrinsic structure, the stories similarity and difference, and influence studies.

## Introduction

According to Wellek and Warren (111), the history of comparative literature study begins from studies on oral literature, folklore and its migration, that is, how and when it comes into the more artistic literary writing. In this terminology, comparative literature is encompassing the study of relationship between two or more literature. Furthermore, Darma (2007) says that comparative literature is drawn by the awareness that literature is not singular but pluralistic in nature. According to Block (Saman 95), the study of effect is the important study within comparative literature. Block says that the effect can be elaborated into several parts, such as (1) part of the art or creative art, use of past as an inspiration, (2) the authors' relationship and relevancies factor, (3) an accidental element, (4) as the source of the creation process, and (5) an aesthetic interaction that is not easily seen by the eyes.

Based on the background mentioned above, this article will discuss the similarities and differences found in some fairy tales in Indonesia. Those similarities and differences are reviewed from the intrinsic point of view, thus repeated similarities will eventually form the pattern of the fairy tales.

## Review of related literature

### Intrinsic Structure of Fairy Tales

In order to comprehend a story, an interpretation toward its elements is needed. Bacon (244) asserts that in the attempt to understand a novel (in this case, a folklore), which illustrates complete action from a unique world, the elements of the story needs to be described in terms of its plot, setting, and character.

Plot according to Stanton is a pattern that contains a sequence of events; but each event is only connected in cause and effect, an event which is caused or cause other events (Nurgiyantoro 113). The occurrences in a plot are usually cause and effect. The first occurrence causes the second one, and so on. On the other hand, the time-orderly occurrence cannot be defined as plot.

Setting defines the general circumstance, giving a concrete and concise illustration to a story. Setting provides readers with realistic pictures, so that they are able to operate their imagination in the manner that the author wants to. Nurgiyantoro (185) stated that setting can be divided into three main elements, namely the place, time and social. Setting of place shows the location where the events are recounted in a fiction. The place element used may be some places with a specific name, particular initial, may be a specific location without clear information. Setting of time relates to the time when an event occurs in literature. A matter of time usually associated with a factual, time related to historical events. Knowledge of reader about the incident is used by the reader to understand the story. Social setting related to the behavior of social life in a place which is told in fiction.

Characterization is often equated with the character and disposition, and it shows the placement of certain characters with certain characteristic in a story. Characterization present a clear picture of someone featured in a story. This view seems to put characterization as an important part in constructing a story. The characters in the story do not only serve to play the story, but also serve to convey ideas, motives, plots, and themes (Jones 33). The characters are the people appeared in a work of narrative or drama. That is why the characters occupy a strategic position as a carrier and transmitter of messages, mandate, moral, or something deliberately to convey to the reader (Abram 34).

## Method

The Indonesian fairy tales which will be analyzed in this study are the following: *Arya Menak* (East Java), *Jaka Tarub* (Central Java), *Telaga Bidadari* (South Kalimantan), *Raja Omas dan Bidadari* (Simalungun), *Oheo* (Southeast Sulawesi), *Lahilote* (Gorontalo), *Datu Pulut* (South Kalimantan), *Bulalo lo Limbutu* (Gorontalo), *Mahligai Kelayang* (Riau), *Putri Mambang Linau* (Riau), *Tumatenden* (Minahasa, North Sulawesi), *Rajapala* (Bali). These fairy tales are selected as the samples of the study as the twelve are the only existing Indonesian fairy tales. The elements to analyze the fairy tales are plot, setting, and character. Thus, the similarities and differences of structure will also be elaborated from those three elements.

## Findings and Discussion

### Plot

#### *Similarities*

Related to the fairy tales, the plot begins with the introduction of a male character that wanders into the wood. Some of the characters in different stories simply take a walk, others are doing something related to their respective job, such as catching birds, looking for firewood, gardening, and looking for a break in their journey. The male figure then finds a lake where fairies take a bath. The beauty of the fairy figure leads him to steal a shawl or wing of the fairy. This makes the fairy who loses her shawl unable to return to heaven. With this condition, she is forced to accept the marriage proposal of the man who stole her shawl. Before her marriage, she offers some requirements that must be made by the male character. The climax stage of the plot is that those requirements are violated by the male; so it becomes the cause of the fairy's finding her shawl. Finally, the fairy goes back to heaven, leaving her husband and her children.

### *Differences*

The differences of storyline are found in certain parts of the plot. Generally it is on the climax part when the fairy finds the shawl. In *Arya Menak*, Arya Menak violated fairy's agreement that prohibits him to open the lid of the pot so that the fairy could not cook with a grain of rice. Formerly she was cooking rice with just one grain, but when her power was gone, the supply of rice in the barn was empty. Arya Menak hid the fairy's shawl under a heap of rice and consequently the fairy finds her shawl back. This story has a similar climax with *Jaka Tarub* fairy tale.

In *Lahilote* fairy tale, the fairy found her shawl when she took some rice at the bran; therefore, she was back to heaven with her children. The climax stage of *Raja Omas dan Bidadari* reaches when the fairy tries to find her clothes. Raja Omas did not predict that his wife still had an intention of returning to heaven. The fairy tried to take her children from him, but she often failed. In *Oheo* the climax comes when Oheo would not keep the promise that has been agreed upon when they get married. He promised to wipe up his child when it would defecate. Oheo was working when he asked his wife to wipe up his child's feces. Anawangulari was sad since he broke the promise and inadvertently she saw the shawl.

The climax of *Putri Mambang Linau* tale occurs when Bujang Enok asked his wife Putri Mambang Linau to dance before the King. In fact, before hand, Putri Mambang Linau had asked her husband not to ask herself to dance. But Bujang Enok who was very loyal to the King still asked her to dance.

The climax of *Mahligai Kelayang* tale also occurs when Datuk Sakti broke his promise. He promised not to tell people the identity of his wife. However, *Datuk Sakti* who was very proud of his wife unintentionally told his wife's identity to others. The climax of *Datuk Pulut* and *Telaga Bidadari* tale is when the fairy found her shawl in the granary. However in *Telaga Bidadari*, she discovered it accidentally when she chased away the black hens that were spoiling rice. The climax of *Bulalo la Limbutu* occurs when Mbui Bungale was fighting with some of people who wanted to steal *mimelula* inscription placed on the edge of lake. In *Rajapala* the climax occurs when a fairy named Ken Sulasih asked her shawl to *Rajapala* since he had promised to return it when they have children. In *Tumantenden* the climax occurs when *Mamanua* found a bug and accidentally three pieces of Lumalundung hair were taken off. As a result, blood raced down her head. Therefore, Lumalundung took her shawl and went back to heaven.

Thus, in conclusion, there are differences in terms of the plot as follows:

- a. The fairy returns to heaven and separates like the plots in *Arya Menak* and *Nawangwulan, Jaka Tarub, Putri Mambang Linau, and Mahligai Keloyang, Rajapala*.
- b. The fairy was back to heaven, but her family was not willing to accept her. So she was transformed into *saringgon* (howling wind) like in *Raja Omas dan Bidadari*.
- c. The fairy returned to heaven and her husband followed her and this occurs in *Oheo, Lahilote, and Tumatenden* fairy tales. Oheo followed his wife to heaven and then they came back to earth and lived on earth forever. Lahilote also followed his wife to heaven and lived in heaven with his wife and his son. However, after *Lahilote* has gray hair, he returned to the earth while his wife and his son stayed in heaven. *Mamanua* and his son met his wife and lived forever in heaven.
- d. The fairy did not return to heaven as she continued her life on earth, namely *Bulalo La Limbutu* fairy tale.
- e. The fairy returned to heaven, but she was back to earth at the time of breastfeeding her child, such as in *Datu Pulut* and *Telaga Bidadari* fairy tale.

### **Character**

There are three main characters in the fairy tales, namely, a young unmarried man, a beautiful, young woman coming from the heaven, and a child born from the marriage of the man and the woman. However, not all tales mention the latter character.

### **Similarities**

#### *Male Character*

The main characters of fairy tales consist of a male character who stole fairy's shawl and fairy character as the targeted theft.

#### *Fairy Character*

The fairy character is illustrated as a young and beautiful heavenly woman having wings (or shawl). The beautiful lady loses her shawl as it is stolen by a man when she is taking a bath with her sisters in a lake.

### **Differences**

#### *Male Character*

Male characters consist of two groups of society, namely lower social class and upper social class. Lower social class characters can be found in the *Jaka Tarub, Arya Menak, Oheo, Lahilote, Putri Mambang Linau, Datu Pulut* and *Rajapala* fairy tales. In several fairy tales such as *Jaka Tarub, Datu Pulut, and Rajapala*, the male character is usually a poor young man who commonly hunts birds with blown bamboo equipment. For examples, *Arya Menak* was a young man who liked to wander into the woods; *Oheo* was also a young farmer who would open a sugar cane plantation on the edge of the forest. *Lahilote* living on the edge of the forest was a *polahi* who did not get

along and communicate with people since he has power that could harm people. Bujang Enok in *Putri Mambang Linau* was a poor and lonely man who worked to get firewood in the forest.

The upper social class can be found in *Telaga Bidadari*, *Raja Omas dan Bidadari*, *Tumatenden*, and *Mahligai Kelayang* fairy tale. In *Telaga Bidadari* fairy tale, Awang Sukma who titled *datu* was a district ruler. Raja Omas in the story of *Raja Omas dan Bidadari* came from the royal family. However, his stepmother who hated Raja Omas washed him away to a river then he was found by a poor old woman. A powerful Datuk Sakti in *Mahligai Kelayang* fairy tale was a district ruler who traveled in order to monitor his region. Mamanua in *Tumatenden* fairy tale was a rich man.

*Bulalo La Limbutu* fairy tale has a different male character. The man coming from the sky (*Jilumoto*) was walking in the forest when he met the fairy who was bathing in a lake.

Table 1. The Table of Man Character

No	Title	Upper class / Rich	Lower class / Poor	Occupation
1	<i>Arya Menak</i>		√	Fond of wandering
2	<i>Jaka Tarub</i>		√	Dove catcher
3	<i>Oheo</i>		√	Open farmland cane
4	<i>Lahilote</i>		√	<i>Polahi</i> has black magic
5	<i>Telaga Bidadari</i>	√		A Leader (Datu)
6	<i>Datu Pulut</i>		√	Bird catcher
7	<i>Mahligai Kelayang</i>	√ (Datuk Sakti)		A leader
8	<i>Mambang Linau Princess</i>		√ (Bujang Enok)	Firewood seeker
9	<i>Bulalo lo Limutu</i>	X	X	Come from heaven
10	<i>Raja Omas dan Bidadari</i>	√		Son of the king (Tapper cane)
11	<i>Tumatenden</i>	√		The rich man
12	<i>Raja Pala</i>		√	Bird catcher

### Fairy Character

The fairy character is generally the youngest daughter such as in *Telaga Bidadari*, *Raja Omas dan Bidadari*, *Arya Menak*, *Lahilote*, *Oheo*, and *Tumatenden*. Two fairy tales, *Putri Mambang Linau* and *Datu Palut*, marked the shawl as an orange one. *Mahligai Kelayang*, *Jaka Tarub* and *Rajapala* fairy tales did not mention whether the fairy who lost her shawl was the youngest or the oldest fairy. *Bulalo la Limutu* fairy tale indicates that the fairy who has lost her shawl was the oldest fairy.

The fairy bathing in the lake was commonly not alone. Most of the fairy tales stated that the fairy was bathing with her 7 sisters. According to 12 kinds of fairy tales being analyzed, there are 9 fairy tales mentioned that information (see table). However, *Tumatenden* fairy tale mentioned that there were 9 fairies who were bathing in the lake. Two other fairy tales used the word a lot or a numbers of such as in *Jaka Tarub* and *Mahligai Kelayang* fairy tale.

Table 2. The Fairy Character Profile

No	Title	The numbers of fairy who are bathing in the lake	The status of fairy
1	<i>Arya Merak</i>	7 fairies	The youngest
2	<i>Jaka Tarub</i>	A lot	No explanation
3	<i>Oheo</i>	7 fairies	The youngest
4	<i>Lahilote</i>	7 fairies	The youngest
5	<i>Telaga Bidadari</i>	7 fairies	The youngest
6	<i>Arya Menak</i>	7 fairies	Having orange shawl
7	<i>Mahligai Kelayang</i>	A numbers of	No explanation
8	<i>Putri Mambang Linau</i>	7 fairies	Having orange shawl
9	<i>Bulalo lo Limutu</i>	7 fairies	The eldest
10	<i>Raja Omas dan Bidadari</i>	7 fairies	The youngest
11	<i>Rajapala</i>	7 fairies	No explanation
12	<i>Tumatenden</i>	9 fairies	The youngest

### *The Fairies and their Children*

Nine fairy tales stated that the marriage between human and fairy produced a child (see Table 3). While the characteristic of the child in the *Bulalo La Limbutu* fairy tale was different with others since the child was the embodiment of *mustika* stone. *Mahligai Kelayang* fairy tales specified that there were two children, a son and a daughter. *Arya Menak* and *Putri Mambang Linau* fairy tales did not tell further.

Children born by a fairy were living on earth when the fairy was back to heaven as in *Jaka Tarub*, *Oheo*, *Telaga Bidadari*, *Datu Pulut*, *Mahligai Kelayang*, *Raja Omas dan Bidadari*, and *Rajapala*; however, it is different with *Bulalo La Limbutu* fairy tale. In this fairy tale, the husband, wife and child came from heaven to live on earth. Thus, eight fairy tales indicated that the children of fairy lived on earth. On the contrary in *Lahilote* and *Tumatenden* fairy tales, the children lived in heaven. However *Arya Menak* and *Putri Mambang Linau* fairy tales did not explained about it.

*Tumatenden*, *Oheo* and *Lahilote* fairy tales reflect different things. The children and the husband followed the fairy to heaven; however, there are some differences in characteristics. In *Tumatenden*, the husband and child lived in heaven after they came to heaven and met the fairy. On the contrary in *Oheo*, *Oheo* and his child who met an fairy in heaven had to return to earth with the fairy since man could not live in fairyland. *Lahilote* has also different pattern of plot. *Lahilote* and his child who successfully found and met a fairy in heaven lived happily there until sometime *Lahilote* has gray hair. *Lahilote* must return to earth himself while his wife and his child remained in heaven.

Table 3. Child Fairy with Human Marriage Results

No.	Title	Child	Sex	The place where children live
1.	<i>Arya Menak</i>	X	X	X
2.	<i>Jaka Tarub</i>	1 child	Female (Nawangsih)	On earth
3.	<i>Oheo</i>	1 child	No explanation	On earth ( <i>Oheo</i> and his child come to heaven but they return to earth)
4.	<i>Lahilote</i>	1 child	Male (Uti)	On earth ( <i>Lahilote</i> and his child meet an fairy to heaven and his child live in heaven)
5.	<i>Telaga Bidadari</i>	1 child	Female (Kumalasari)	On earth ( <i>Datu Awang</i> calls a fairy, his wife, to breastfeeding their child; 7 candle nuts on a basket are shaken with the sound of flute)
6.	<i>Datu Pulut</i>	1 child	Female	On earth (the place where the fairy breastfeeding her child)

				should be prepared by Datu Pulut: a swing under the tree, and Datu Pulut is not allowed to come closer
7.	<i>Mahligai Kelayang</i>	2 children	Male and Female	On earth
8.	<i>Putri Mambang Linau</i>	X	X	X
9.	<i>Bulalo La Limutu</i>	1 child	Female	On earth
10.	<i>Raja Omas and Fairy</i>	1 child	No explanation	On earth. The fairy is failed to bring her child to heaven.
11.	<i>Rajapala</i>	1 child	Male	On earth
12.	<i>Tumantenden</i>	1 child	Male	The family lives in heaven

### **Setting**

#### **Similarities**

The place where the male character and the fairy meet is set in a lake where the fairy and her sisters are taking a bath.

#### **Differences**

The difference in setting occurs sometimes with the bathing in the lake. Nine fairy tales that stated the fairies were bathing in the lake during the day are *Jaka Tarub*, *Oheo*, *Lahilote*, *Telaga Bidadari*, *Datu Pulut*, *Putri Mambang Linau*, *Bulalo La Limutu*, *Raja Omas dan Bidadari*, *Rajapala* and *Tumatenden* fairy tale. *Arya Menak*, *Lahilote* and *Mahligai Kelayang* fairy tale implied that the fairies were bathing in the lake when there was a full moon. However, most fairy tales specified the fairies were bathing at day time.

#### **Pattern Found in the Setting**

From the discussion, it is revealed that all the fairy tales contain a very high level of similarity, thus making them interrelated with one another. Furthermore, there are similarities in terms of the motives behind the stories due to close original place where the stories first came up in the society.

The closeness can be found, for instance, in the story of *Arya Menak* and *Jaka Tarub*. Both stories tell the reader/listener about the same rule applied to the male character, that is, opening up the pan cover. This similarity might have come up as both stories came from two very close

provinces, namely, Jawa Tengah Province and Jawa Timur Province. Both provinces serve as the border to one another.

The tales of *Oheo*, *Lahilote*, and *Tumatenden* greatly influence one another as the three stories tell us about the man's attempt to bring back the child to his mother who happens to be a fairy living in the heaven. The character Lahilote asks a help from a *rattan* tree in order to give him power to fly up to the heaven. Even after arriving at heaven, Lahilote needs to pass several requirements before meeting his wife. Here Lahilote receives helps from ants, the king of snake, and fireflies. The character Oheo in the *Oheo* story is also helped by a *rattan* tree. As he arrives at heaven, he is given some other requirements to satisfy before he is able to meet the fairy. Then Oheo is helped by a group of wild boars, mice, sparrows, doves, quails, a fly, a cat, and a firefly. The story applies to *Tumatenden* in which Mamanua, the main character, asks for help from a black tree, *rattan*, wild boar, fish, and eel in order to bring him to heaven. The three stories contain a lot of similarities as they come from three closely related regions, namely, Gorontalo Province (*Lahilote*; previously Gorontalo is a part of Sulawesi Utara Province), Sulawesi Tenggara Province (*Oheo*), and Sulawesi Utara Province (*Tumatenden*). All the three provinces are located in the same island, that is, Sulawesi Island.

Meanwhile, the stories of *Datu Pulut* and *Putri Mambang Linau* have a great influence as the fairy who loses her shawl is the one wearing pink shawl. *Datu Pulut* comes from Kalimantan Selatan Province, while *Putri Mambang Linau* is from Riau Islands Province. The provinces are located in different islands. However, according to the earliest geographical map, it is seen that these two provinces were close with each other. This leads to the distribution of stories very quickly. The two stories are connected with a same ending, that is, the fairy goes back to the earth to breastfeed her baby.

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