

## COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN INDONESIAN FOLKTALE'S *TIMUN MAS* AND DISNEY'S *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*

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### Abstract

This is a comparative literature study focusing on the differences of two literary works, namely *Timun Mas* and *Beauty and the Beast*. The study analyses the similarities and differences in two different cultures; Asian and Western cultures, by using American School theory. This research uses qualitative method, which was based on library research, the writers combine two types of triangulation with multiple data sources triangulation by checking the data findings related to the source or the data. The results of this study reveal that: 1) Both have similarities in facing the monster; (2) Both have differences in the way how the monster is described, and how the stories end; in *Timun Mas*, the monster is a green huge male, and in *Beauty and The Beast*, the monster is described as a huge animal. In *Timun Mas*, the story ends when the main character kills the monster, while in *Beauty and The Beast*, the main character marries to the monster. This research describes *Timun Mas* that represents the Asian culture and *Beauty and the Beast* that represents western culture.

**Keywords :** Comparative Literature, monster, American School

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### INTRODUCTION

Remak (1961) defines that comparative literature as a study that defines literature as beyond confines of one particular country and relationship between literatures on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief. He explains that comparative literature compares two literary works with other spheres of human expression. In this article, researcher analyses two different perspectives of monster in two literary works, *Timun Mas* from Asian culture, especially from the Javanese culture and *Beauty and the Beast* from American one. "Beauty and the Beast" is part of American popular culture, Griswold in Hixon (2006) argues that "Beauty and the Beast" is the "dominant myth of our times". Griswold in Hixon, (2006) postulates that the story appeals to modern society (Hixon, 2006). Both of the works have

similarities and differences in which the male characters are described as monsters that are huge, and ugly. The difference is in *Timun Mas*, the monster is an antagonist but in *Beauty and the Beast*, the monster is a protagonist.

Comparative literature studies beyond two cultures (Remark, 1961). The differences of two cultures in this article are, the monster in *Timun Mas* is described as a green huge male called *buto ijo*, and in *Beauty and the Beast*, and the monster is described as a huge animal called *beast*. The writers choose *Timun Mas* and *Beauty and The Beast* because two stories describe two different cultures that are Asian that people can find *Timun Mas*' story in Central Java, Indonesia, the story comes from Javanese culture that mentioned in *Timun Mas*, the Javanese culture such as salt, needle, shrimp paste and *Buto Ijo* (Dananjaya, 1992) and Europe

cultures can be found in *Beauty and the Beast*, such as prince, princess, curse, European society (Hixon, 2006). that can be analysed by using comparative literature.

Henry Remak, et al in Susan Bassnett (1993) defines that American School finds out what lies beyond the similarities and dissimilarities (social condition, economic condition, political conditions, cultures, architectures, beliefs, religions, and so on), and thus, the things beyond the similarities and dissimilarities of the literary works are not limited to literature only but can go to other discipline (1993). American school analyzes the two works that have the differences in the way how the writers describe the monsters; the Asian culture describes the monster as a huge male that is called *butho ijo* but the European culture describes the monster as a huge animal that is called the beast. The similarities of the two stories are the main characters have the same problem to face a monster. In Asian culture, the main character, *Timun Mas* faces the monster, described as an ugly and cruel character, using traditional tools such as cucumber seeds, needles, bamboo trees, sharp and thorny salt, shrimp paste as can be seen in this following quotation.

The giant was getting closer and closer, so Timun Emas opened the first bag she got from Mbok Sirni. Inside the bag were cucumber seeds. She threw the seeds, and instantly they grew into large cucumber field. But the giant ate them all, giving him more strength. As the giant was getting close, Timun Emas took the second bag with needles inside and spilled the content behind her. The needles turned into bamboo trees, sharp and thorny. The giant's body was scratched and bled. "Aaargh, I'll get you, Timun Emas!" shouted the giant as he tried to get himself out from the bamboo field. He made it and still chasing Timun Emas (Dananjaya, 1992).

In European culture, *Beauty and the Beast*, the main character, Belle faces the monster with

love because the monster is described as a kind character.

Susan Bassnett defines that Comparative Literature involves the study of text across cultures, interdisciplinary and that it is concerned with patterns of connection in literature and other studies across both time and space (1993). She adds that the true task of Comparative Literature is to examine the phenomena of literature as a whole, compare them, group them, enquire into the causes of them, and determine the results of them (1993) Comparative Literature can be applied in Indonesian Folktale's *Timun Mas* and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

The writers apply Comparative Literature, American School because the writers analyze two different perspectives of monster in two literary works that come from two different cultures, Asian and European cultures. The two literary works have same male characters who are monsters that are huge, ugly but different characters that why this research uses a qualitative method which was based on library research.

The issue has not been addressed and the research gaps have not been described. It is also unclear about aspects compared in this study. Please specify and add

## METHOD

This research used a qualitative method which was based on library research. There are two kinds of sources of data. The main data is taken from Indonesian Folktale's *Timun Mas* and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. The supporting data is taken from articles, journal of literature, e-book, and other related sources which have relationships with the main data.

The technique of collecting data had some steps. First, close reading, reading the novel from the beginning to the end of the story. Second, note taking was done to write the data related with. Data was sorted out and filtered by taking notes at once to obtain the main and important data. These notes at once obtain the main and important data. Third, select notes to

classify the data based on the formulation of statement problems. This step is done to make the data sorted, filtered and classified properly based on the problems of the study.

The final step is interpretation and discussion the data. The data interpretation is done to make the data meaningful, while the discussion is done to validate and clarify the data analysis. In this research, the writers triangulated the data by corroborating the data collected from some resources (Denzin, 1989).

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

The writers apply Comparative Literature, American School because the study focuses on two different perspectives of the main characters in two literary works that come from two different cultures that are Asian (*Timun Mas*), and European culture (*Beauty and the Beast*).

The main characters of *Timun Mas* are Timun Mas and Buto Ijo. Timun Mas is a daughter of Mbok Rondo. Mbok Rondo does not have a daughter or son. She wants to have a baby and comes Buto Ijo to promise her that he can make mbok Rondo have a baby. He gives her the cucumber seeds to grow. Inside one of the cucumbers there is a baby that is called Timun Mas. Buto Ijo says that he will come back to see mbok Rondo to take the baby back in 16 years.

Timun Mas grows as a beautiful young girl. Buto Ijo comes to see mbok Rondo after 16 years waiting for Timun Mas to grow up. He comes to take Timun Mas back from mbok Rondo to be eaten. Mbok knows that the coming of Buto Ijo puts her daughter in dangerous. She has to do something. She has to fight against Buto Ijo to save her. She asks Buto Ijo to come again the following year because Timun Mas will be more delicious to be eaten when she is 17 years. She uses the weakness of Buto Ijo who never makes any notes. She just makes the time longer for Buto Ijo to wait to take Timun Mas from her, and to make her able to stay with Timun Mas any longer.

The other resistency that mbok Rondo does is she prays and fasts to ask the help of God. Javanese calls it as *laku prihatin*. Finally, she finds the way how to save Timun Mas from Buto Ijo. She goes to a *pertapa* and is given 4 bags of cucumber seeds, needles, salt and shrimp paste.

Timun Mas and mbok Rondo are the representation of women in Java who have to be treated unfairly by men that repressed by Buto Ijo. As a woman, both Timun Mas and mbok Rondo are treated with violence, anger, threat, such as Timun Mas will be eaten by Buto Ijo. Mbok Rondo resistency to save Timun Mas from the danger caused by Buto Ijo is implemented by promising Buto Ijo to give back Timun Mas in one year. And Timun Mas's leaving her village with her four bags full with different things is the other type of women resistance to men. As a girl, Timun Mas needs weapons to protect her. Women is considered as weak different from men. That is why she needs those kinds of weapons.

By using those weapons Timun Mas can fight against Buto Ijo and save her life. To have a better life and happy life with her mother, mbok Rondo, Timun Mas has to struggle for life from any problems and dangers. The happiness of Timun Mas is also the happiness of all people in her village since the death of Buto Ijo there will be no baby that will be eaten by Buto Ijo.

The main characters of *Beauty and the Beast* are Belle, a beautiful, brave, smart and creative village girl, and the Beast, a noble prince who is cursed into a beast because of the mistakes he did in the past.

Belle is described as a village girl who is beautiful, smart and brave and wants to have a better life. Her bravery can be seen when she enters an old and haunted castle without anyone who accompanies her to look for her father who is missing. And when she sees the Beast for the first time, we do not see her afraid of him. Even she asks him to show up under the light and negotiates with him to replace her father's position being trapped by the Beast in his cell for uncertainty.

Belle is also a smart girl, and she is the only girl in the village who can read. She teaches the girls in the village reading, and she is given punishment by the villagers because of this. Even when she wants to borrow books from Pere Robert, it is founded that she has already read all the books. And she can remember a quote from the Shakespeare.

The relationship of Belle and Beast leads them in an intimacy, in which both of them start to be in love to each other. She pays more attention and cares very much with Beast. She also says to the villagers that Beast is no a monster, but he is kind, gentle and will never hurt anybody.

What makes Belle falls in love with Beast, a monster with an ugly face, as stated before while Belle herself is not an ordinary girl in her village? She is very different from any girl there. She is the only girl who can read while school at that time is only for boys. She wants to get more that the girls in her village can get. She wants to have a better life. By living and loving the Beast she can get what she needs. She can fulfill her psychological needs and physical needs. In the castle she is treated as a princess. She finds happiness and love in the castle. She is respected by all the household staff different from what she gets from the villagers who thinks that she is an odd girl.

The two literary works have the similarities in the male characters who are monsters that are huge, ugly but they have different personalities. In *Timun Mas*, the monster is described as an ugly, frightening, huge, strong male with his green skin has long sharp teeth. He said that he likes hunting human that is why he is called Buto Ijo. Buto Ijo is believed by the Javanese as the one who is responsible for any disaster in the world, such that Buto Ijo is the one who causes the eclipses. Buto Ijo is also believed to cause why the moon and the sun eclipse. Buto Ijo is the one who makes Timun Mas leaves her home and her parents because he wants to eat her. In the Javanese culture and tradition, Buto is always refers to bad guys, who always makes any destructions.

In *Beauty and the Beast*, the Beast is described as a figure haunted by what he did in the past. His mistakes that he did in the past changed him into a monster that is described as an animal.

Beast is displayed as a character with his quick temper and prone to anger. He is angry at himself for what he did in the past but takes it out on others. But the Beast is different from Buto Ijo, the Beast has an inner beauty that Buto Ijo does not have. It can be understood since he was used to be a prince, therefore he is noble.

Similarities of the two stories are both main characters have problem to face a monster. In Asian culture, the main character, Timun Mas has to leave her village and parents to avoid of being eaten by Buto Ijo. Her mother gives her some seasonings from her kitchen and asks her to throw away one by one when Buto Ijo is about to catch her. With the traditional tools and seasonings given by her mother such as cucumber seeds, needles, bamboo trees, sharp and thorny salt, shrimp paste. Every time Timun Mas throws one of things given by her mother, it can turn the place where she throws the thing into something else that can block Buto Ijo from catching her. When she throws the salt, it turns the ground into a deep sea that almost makes Buto Ijo drown and has to swim to save his life. This is that makes Timun Mas can face and save her life from Buto Ijo. Timun Mas can come back to her village and live happily with her parents after Buto Ijo is drown in the mud and died. And it is believed by the Javanese up till now that salt can be used to protect us from the evil power.

Timun Mas then reached the third bag and spilled the salt inside. The ground which the salt touched turned into a deep sea. The giant almost drown and had to swim to cross the sea. After some time, he managed to get out from the water. Timun Mas saw the giant coming, so she reached for the last bag. She took the shrimp paste and threw it. The

shrimp paste became a big swamp of boiling mud. The giant was trapped in the middle of the swamp. The mud slowly but surely drowned him. Helpless, he roared out, "Help! Heeeeelp...!" Then the giant drown and died. Timun Mas then immediately went home. Since then, Timun Emas and Mbok Sirni live happily ever after (Dananjaya, 1992).

In European culture, in its folktale, *Beauty and the Beast*, salt and shrimp paste are not as weapons to face the monster but in that culture it is believed that love can solve problem. *Beauty and the Beast* shows the readers that true love can change anything. True love changes the beast into a prince. *Beauty and the Beast* has a happy ending in which both the characters live happily ever after. They love each other as husband and wife.

She ran to him and held him in her arms " No! please! I love you!" Suddenly, the rain began to shimmer. Slowly the Beast opened his eyes and astonished, he watched his paws transform into hands. He held them out to Belle, "Belle, it's me! True love had finally broken the spell and everyone danced for joy (Disney, 1991, p.24)

## CONCLUSION

This study is a comparative literature that focuses on the differences of two literary works, namely *Timun Mas* and *Beauty and the Beast*. The study analyses the similarities and differences in two different cultures; Asian and Western cultures. 1) Both have similarities in facing the monster;(2) Both have differences in the way how the monster is described, and how the stories end; in *Timun Mas*, the monster is a green huge male, and in *Beauty and The Beast*, the monster is described as a huge animal. In *Timun Mas*, the story ends when the main character kills the monster, while in *Beauty and*

The Beast, the main character marries to the monster.

Problem is universal that can experienced by people around the world who have way to solve their problem. An obligation for everyone in the world to fight to solve their problem that they bear on the world in order to make a better world wherever their lives. The main characters in Indonesian Folktale's *Timun Mas* and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* fight a monster to solve their problem.

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