

## **TRADITIONAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN INDONESIAN AND ENGLISH FOLKTALES**

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### ***Abstract:***

*In Toraja, Indonesian and England folktales bring important impact to the community. In Indonesia, a folktale is used as a medium of entertainment as well as a teaching tool for children. These folktales are told by grandparents, mother, father, or uncles to their children or grandchildren with the aims to educate, tell the histories, and give the information about the origin of the names and places. This study aims to understand how the similarity and differences between the main characters in Torajanese and English folktales. Furthermore, the research also studies how the traditional representation of women in Indonesia and English folktales. This study uses a qualitative method that refers more to narrative. With regard to data, this research, which is an area of literary study, refers to narrative events in a story that contain events that are described by words, phrases, sentences, and involve characters and settings. Based on the results of our research, we argue that many female characters in Eastern Indonesian folktales and English folktales are subject to objectification. The objectification of female figures is carried out in the form of women as objects of sexuality, women as a medium of exchange of power, and women being passive and working in the domestic sphere. This finding shows that the folktale of Eastern Indonesia cannot be separated from patriarchal ideology. These stories show that women in the imagination of the Indonesian people still occupy an inferior position compared to men. Furthermore, the female characters also experience objectification and inequality as in folktales from Western Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** *Traditional representation of Women; Torajanese folktales; English folktales*

### **Abstrak:**

Di Toraja, cerita rakyat Indonesia dan Inggris membawa dampak penting bagi masyarakat. Di Indonesia, cerita rakyat digunakan sebagai media hiburan sekaligus alat pengajaran bagi anak-anak. Cerita rakyat ini diceritakan oleh kakek nenek, ibu, bapak, atau paman kepada anak atau cucunya dengan tujuan untuk mendidik, menceritakan sejarah, dan memberikan informasi tentang asal usul nama dan tempat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana persamaan dan perbedaan tokoh utama dalam cerita rakyat Toraja dan Inggris. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga mengkaji bagaimana representasi tradisional perempuan di Indonesia dan cerita rakyat Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif yang lebih mengacu pada narasi. Berkaitan dengan data, penelitian ini, yang merupakan bidang studi sastra, mengacu pada peristiwa naratif dalam sebuah cerita yang mengandung peristiwa yang dijelaskan oleh kata, frase, kalimat, dan melibatkan karakter dan latar. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian kami, kami berpendapat bahwa banyak tokoh perempuan dalam cerita rakyat Indonesia

Timur dan cerita rakyat Inggris yang mengalami obyektifikasi. Obyektifikasi figur perempuan dilakukan dalam bentuk perempuan sebagai objek seksualitas, perempuan sebagai media pertukaran kekuasaan, dan perempuan yang pasif dan bekerja di ranah domestik. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa cerita rakyat Indonesia Timur tidak lepas dari ideologi patriarki. Kisah-kisah tersebut menunjukkan bahwa perempuan dalam imajinasi masyarakat Indonesia masih menempati posisi inferior dibandingkan dengan laki-laki. Selain itu, tokoh perempuan juga mengalami obyektifikasi dan ketidaksetaraan seperti dalam cerita rakyat Indonesia Barat.

**Kata Kunci:** *Representasi tradisional perempuan, cerita rakyat Toraja, cerita rakyat Inggris*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Folktale plays crucial roles in a community. According to Dundes (1984) folktale is an ethnographic description of the community that owns the story both oral and text because it carries the values and worldview. As cultural treasures, Bar Zaken (2020) mentions folktales have been passed down from generations that bring the cultural essence or cultural DNA. These diverse cultural treasures perceived as shared cultural truths. Following the previous statement, it can be said that these folktales serve as perfect examples how particular society produce their own "treasure" since this creation are the works of the whole of group.

Communities who produce these traditional folk tales were mostly people living and adoring the nature because they simple live close to it. Birkhauser – oeri, a Jungian psychologist confirmed that the stories are not a result of conscious construction but it affiliated spontaneously and then develop to their present form through countless repetitions by numerous storytellers. Therefore, the story themes more universal and the language used to express them is composed of symbolic images typical of the unconscious. The universality of the plots of the story because we share the same vision, will, dream and as humans, regardless of the place, time, believe, customs, and culture. Furthermore, there is similarity of knowledge or common experience spiritually enriches the stories.

According to Thompson (1946: 408 - 409), all cultures in the world have folktales. In fact, there is no known culture in the world where folktales are not present. Folktales that span many countries, however, are rare and unique. Those that are found have similarities and differences depending on the country.

Women figure is very essential in the narrative of folktales. We can see countless numbers of women in the stories, we think of figures such as Snow White, Rapunzel, Red Riding Hood, Cinderella as well as countless evil stepmothers and witches. The stories depicted the story of women who players as evil stepmothers and witches who usually die in the end; on the other they are innocent, beautiful and virtuous. Generally, the good maiden rides off with a prince, who finds and saves her for dangerous situation. Then, the maiden will marry him and became the princess in his castle with

the joyful consensus of the King and Queen. In folktales, we will meet with diverse female characters.

In Indonesia, a folktale is used as a medium of entertainment as well as material for teaching children. Numbers of ethnic groups have passed on their collection of folktales through various ways such as in bed time or while keeping their rice in the field from pests. In Toraja, one of the region in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, people familiars folktales with with *ulelean pare or puama* that bring significant role for Torajanese in raising awareness and understanding to their ancestors, cultures, histories in the past and entertaining. Torajanese folktales encounter many stories involve women characters such as *Datukalindidi' sola Pudukbalengkare* and *Pia Biung sola nene' Pakande Tau*. These female characters bring significant roles in developing the plots of the stories.

As in Indonesia, Jacobs who a well – known collector and publisher of English Folklore, was keen in collecting stories and improving recording and publishing technologies of his day in order to share what he discovered. He produced *The Earliest English Version of the fabled of Bed* and one year later an edition of Caxton's Fables of Aesop. One of his notable works, *English Fairy Tales and More English Fairy Tales* became the foremost collection from the golden age of folktale collecting. One of the stories has similarities with *Datukalindidi' sola Pudukbalengkare* in Toraja called *Binnorie*.

Studies on gender issues especially the women image in folktales have been conducted by numerous researchers especially in Indonesia, as in Java (Ariani, 2016; Hapsarani, 2017; Iswara, 2019; Juansah et al., 2021; Rochman, 2015; Sari, 2015; Setiawan et al., 2016; Wulansari, 2020), folktales from Sunda (Fauzar, 2019), folktales from North Sumatra (Baiduri, 2015; Paramita, 2020; Syahrul, 2020), and folktales from Southeast Sulawesi (Putra, 2018) among others, have been brought out. Instead of the research works of a large quantity done on the folktales originating in the Western parts of Indonesia like Java and Sumatra Island and the folktales of Eastern Indonesia, the study of two folktales from Indonesia especially from Toraja and England have not been observed from scholarly perspectives. Therefore, as women was born and raised in Toraja and study English Literature, it will be very mandatory to carry these well-known folktales to be analyzed.

This objective of this study is to throw light on the folktales from Indonesia especially in Toraja and England. Besides, this research aims to understand and depict the traditional representation of women in folktales. Having comprehended about this study can complement the results of previous studies.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method that refers more to narrative. With regard to data, this research, which is an area of literary study, refers to narrative events in a story that contain events that are described by words, phrases, sentences, and involve characters and settings. The research focuses on the form of physical images, behavior,

social mental and spiritual which are expressed through folktales in its relevance to the gender context. The selected two stories are from Toraja, Indonesia and England. The stories will be analyzed by Dundes approach. These stories already fulfilled three criteria, they have female characters in the story and there is a depiction of the role of female characters in it. Feminist perspective will be applied in analyzing how women are depicted in those folktales. Each folktales consists of two female characters as major characters

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Related to this research, the following researcher shows table below about the analysis of character functions in the story of *Dutakalindidi' sola Pudukbalengkare* and *Binnorie* as follow:

Table 1.

The functions of the Characters in *Dutakalindidi' sola Pudukbalengkare* Folktale

Character	Figure	Function in the story
Bravery	Dutakalindidi'	<i>Dutakalindidi'</i> is the main character of the folktale. Her bravery to struggle in order to show herself to the <i>Pia Muane Maganta'</i> who is the male character that will help her.
Honesty	Dutakalindidi'	<i>Dutakalindidi'</i> is not only having beautiful appearance but she is also have amazing personalities such as honesty and
Love	Dutakalindidi'	<i>Dutakalindidi</i> is the lovely girl who is always willing to show her love to her sister even though her sister always betrays her.
Peace - Loving	Kaduaya	<i>Kaduaya</i> is peace - loving helper for <i>Dutakalindidi'</i> . <i>Kaduaya</i> is the character not only peace loving but also he always be there to provide support to <i>Dutakalindidi'</i> in order to get he love.
Loyal	Dutakalindidi'	<i>Dutakalindidi'</i> keeps her loyalty to the man called <i>Pia Muane Maganta'</i>
Strong belief	Pudukbalengkare	<i>Pudukbalengkare</i> has strong belief that she will replace her sister to marry the man that she loved. Unfortunately, she could not do that because <i>Kaduaya</i> comes to rescue her sister, <i>Dutakalindidi'</i>

False Hero	Pudukbalengkare	<i>Pudukbalengkare</i> pretends to replace her sister position, unfortunately she cannot do it for long time because her sister, <i>Datukalindidi'</i> got help from <i>Kaduaya</i> .
Hero	<i>Pia Muane Maganta'</i>	<i>Pia Muane Maganta'</i> is described as the richest young man from the village who is falling love to <i>Datukalindidi'</i> . He is the character who save <i>Datukalindidi'</i> from <i>Pudukbalengkare</i> , her sister.

Table 2.  
The functions of the Characters in *Binnorie*

Character	Figure	Function in the story
Bravery	The Youngest Sister	The younger sister is brave to tell in from of her family that her elder sister has pushed her.
Honesty/ Innocent	The Youngest Sister	The younger sister looks very innocent. She even does not realized that her elder sister plans to push her.
Love	The Youngest Sister	The younger sister is not only has beautiful appearances but also she has beautiful heart. She always loves her family especially her elder sister. She does not have any thought that her elder sister will push her.
Peace – Loving	The harper	The harper is peace – loving. Because him, the truth is uncovered through harp he made.
Loyal/ Innocent	The Youngest Sister	Based on the story, the Younger Sister looks very loyal and innocent. She even does not realize that her elder sister will push her.
Strong belief	The Elder Sister	<i>The Elder Sister</i> has strong belief that she will replace her sister to marry the man that she loved. Unfortunately, she could not do that because <i>the Harper</i> comes to her house and tell the family what happens to the younger sister.
False Hero	The Elder Sister	<i>Elder Sister</i> pretends to replace her sister position, unfortunately she cannot do it

		for long time because her sister got help from <i>Harper</i> .
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### Women are Passive and Work in Domestic Areas

According to Langton (2009), one of the methods of objection of women is identifying a person based on his body or body parts. Generally the female characters in Eastern Indonesia folktales are pictured based on identifying their physical condition. The stories illustrate the women in the story only being a passive role and obey the male characters. Furthermore, in most of the stories female characters are only described as having access to the domestic sphere. This phenomenon is only happened in Eastern Indonesia not also in England. Based on the quotations from two books in two different countries, Indonesia and England, the stories still refers the domestic work to women. It can be seen below :

*Kendekmi langngan banua tu Pudukbalingkare anna Datukalindidi' mengkalao rokko sulluk undaka'i. Iatonna diongmo sulluk nabolloimo uai pa'basean pollo' kurin tu Datukalindidi' nauranganni memmalotongmo tu kalena ( Lebang, 2010 : 167).*

Then, Pudukbalingkare came into the house where in the same time Datukalindidi' went down to find her needle. When she was looking for her needle, Pudukbalingkate threw the rest of water toward her so that Datukalindidi' s skin turn dark. Based on the statement above, it is clearly said that the characters are working are sewing that has strong relations to the domestic activities. Commonly, in the past women in the village spent their time sew or knit. In addition, it also stated that ***nabolloimo uai pa'basean pollo' kurin tu Datukalindidi'*** means *Pudukblanegkare* throw the water waste from washing black pot. Consequently, whole *Datukalindidi's* body turns black.

*"Now the miller's daughter was cooking that day, and needed water for her cooking. And as she went to draw it from the stream, she saw something floating towards the mill-dam, and she called out, "Father! father! draw your dam. There's something white—a merry maid or a milk-white swan—coming down the stream." ( Jacobs, 2005 : 32)*

Working in the domestic is not only happens in the story of Torajanese folktale but also in England. Based on the quotation from the story, it illustrates how the miller daughter was busy with the cooking stuffs which refers to domestic works as mentioned

*"Now the miller's daughter was cooking that day, and needed water for her cooking."*

The data shows that in the folktale of Eastern Indonesia, especially in Toraja women are also describes as being more dominant in the domestic sector. This image is in line with the research findings conducted by Sugiarti et. Al ( 2022), which mentions

that in Indonesian folktales, female characters tend to maximize their potential in the domestic sector. These illustrations above depict that the image of women in both of stories tend to represent women's roles in the domestic area. This situation is closely related to how men perceive women's strength physically. As the consequences, this situation influence how men view women's position as not strong enough that only suitable working at home and wait for the results of men's hard work. It can be concluded that men become patrons for women who nurture and protect

### Women as an Exchange of Power

In the folktales of Toraja, Indonesia and England, these two stories how female characters as a medium of exchange of power. Both *Datukalindidi'* and younger sister do not have any power to ignore *Pia Muane Maganta'* and Sir William who are falling in love these women characters. In the stories these male characters are depicted from rich and noble family so that when they are having special interest to the female characters, they only accept it without any rejections.

The objection of women as a medium of exchange of power in both of the stories happens because women do not have the power to make decisions. Toha – Sarumpaet (2010) said that women in the past are depicted as passive being who do not have the power to have opinions or make decisions. Therefore, the depiction in folktale almost entirely depicts decisions made by men. This situation brings women that a good woman is women who obeys the decisions from men or family.

*Den Sangallo den misa' anak to sugi' male sumalong – malong tama pangala'. I ate pia iate misa' pia muane maganta'. Tonna saemo tama pangala'' natiromi misa' banua naniitorro da'dua pia baine, misa' disanga Datukalindidi' mabuksa sia me'lok rupanna, na iatu Pudukbalingkare malotong tu pa'kaleanna ( Lebang, 2010 :169).*

One day *Pia Muane Maganta'*, a boy is from rich family, walking through the forest. He reached a house where there were two sisters. *Datukalindidi*, a white skinned girl with beautiful soul, and good looks. The other, *Pudukbalingkare*, was dark skinned and had bad behavior. After meeting *Datukalindidi'*, a *Pia Muane Maganta'* felt in love and intended to propose her. When the news spread, *Pudukbalingkare* tried to find the opportunity to get rid of her sister.

*And Sir William came wooing the eldest and won her love and plighted troth with glove and with ring. But after a time he looked upon the youngest, with her cherry cheeks and golden hair, and his love grew towards her till he cared no for the eldest one. So she hated her sister for taking away Sir William's love, and day by day her hate grew upon her, and she plotted and she planned how to get rid of her. ( Jacob, 2015 : 32)*

The early stage begins with the narrator opening and introducing the characters. In addition, he revealed the setting near the bonny mill – dams of Binnorie. In the opening story, we can see how the narrator describe how male character, *Sir William*

change his opinion in falling in love to the Younger Sister based on her look. This story conveys that the power of female character is very impactful to the female characters, Older sister and the younger one because of his action the younger sister killed by her own sister due to jealousy. Hence, women become commodities for men's interests in perpetuating their power.

## **CONCLUSION**

It comes up into conclusion that the researcher got some results from research questions which include the similar characters in selected English Fairy Tales and Ulelean Parena Toraya that have in common on similarities and differences on fairy tales ( English fairytales and Torajanse Folktales). It is showed that Binnorie and Datukalindidi' sola Pudukbalengkare have similar characters that were depicted in the characterizations especially of the main characters, the youngest and Datukalindidi' such as calmness, honesty, weakness, respectful, braveness, patience. In another part, the characterizations of the eldest sister in Binnorie and Pudukbalengkare in Datukalindidi' sola Pudukbalengkare are wicked, envy, and greedy.

In addition, it is found that many female characters in Eastern Indonesian and England folktales are subject to objectification. The objectification of female images brought out in the form as a medium of exchange of power, and as being passive and working in the domestic sphere. This finding shows that these folktales cannot be separated from patriarchal ideology. In the stories show that women in the imagination of the Indonesian and English people still occupy an inferior position compared to men. Furthermore, the female characters also experience objectification and inequality as found in the folktales of England. Thus, the research proves that the ideology of folktale is not always in harmony with the ideal values that exist in society. It is crucial to select the stories that will be conveyed to the children.

Based on the study conducted by the researcher, this research is limited to the analyzing of intrinsic elements. Therefore, the researcher strongly suggests analyzing more traditional tale to be compared with western tale not only in literature, but also in education and linguistic discipline.

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