

## Protagonist Conflict in *Tsuru no Ongaeshi* and *Yuki Onna*: Comparative Literature Study

Eva Amalijah<sup>1</sup>, Novi Andari<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of 17 Agustus 1945, Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>University of 17 Agustus 1945, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: <sup>1</sup>evaamalijah@untag-sby.ac.id, <sup>2</sup>noviandari@untag-sby.ac.id

### Abstract

*This paper discuss the conflict narrated in Japanese folklore called Mukashibanashi. Through the stories of Tsuru no Ongaeshi and Yuki Onna, the process, atmosphere, and dynamics between the protagonists will be revealed which describe the cultural processes, people's thoughts, and even ideologies within a certain period of time. In this context, Japan is an example of a society undergoing social transformation. The method will be used qualitative with comparative study of literary works. The analysis will center on the intrinsic elements of the protagonist. The results of the analysis will be read with the concepts of intrinsic study of literary works and comparison between it. The result is a contribution of knowledge related to the dynamics of conflict between the protagonists personally and socially, whose existence can be in the form of knowledge of behavior patterns and symbols that describe Japanese people at that time.*

**Keywords:** *Mukashibanashi, Conflict, Protagonist, Comparative Literature Study*

### A. Introduction

This paper analyzes the conflict of protagonists in *Tsuru no Ongaeshi* and *Yuki Onna* in the framework of comparative literary studies. One of the titles of this collection of folklore by Kawauchi Ayumi, takes the location of the story setting in the countryside, Japan. The time setting is around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the Kodai period of farming in Japan. The dynamics of character expression in folklore narratives show that there is an

identity struggle between characters with different professions and statuses. With the background of the start of rice cultivation and the use of metal tools, the issue of village and community culture in this folklore is a special attraction because the author sees that the problem of conflict in the narrative of the story is not only related to the expression of the characters in the story. More than that, it can relate to their identity and thoughts which can represent the attitude especially for Japanese

people in seeing themselves. In this case, literary works can be an important element in historical testimony that reveals the ideology of Japanese identity.

Literature as a work that reflects the state of society has various aspects that can be reviewed in depth. Every literary work contains intrinsic and extrinsic elements in it. Within these intrinsic elements, we find several elements, including themes, plots, depictions of characters, settings, and others (Nurgiyanto, 1998).

One of the elements in fiction that gets attention to be studied using a comparative literature approach is conflict. This is because conflict has an important role in fiction. Without conflict, a work of fiction is not interesting to read, because conflict is the main element that arouses the curiosity of readers (Keraf, 2007). The level of complexity of the conflict presented in a work of fiction, in many ways, determines the quality, intensity, and attractiveness of the work.

Conflict is something dramatic, referring to the fight between two

balanced forces, implying action and countermeasures (Nurgiyantoro, 1998). New life events become stories (plots) if they cause conflicts, problems that are sensational, dramatic, and therefore interesting to tell. Events and conflicts are usually closely related, can cause each other to occur with one another, even conflict is essentially an event.

Conflict is the result of interaction between characters or characters. The conflict experienced by the character and its unpleasant nature, is a battle between two balanced forces. Events and conflicts are usually closely related, can cause each other to occur, even conflict is essentially an event. There are certain events that can lead to conflict. On the other hand, due to conflict, other events can arise. Conflict after conflict followed by event after event will cause conflict to increase. Conflicts that have become so tapered, say that they have reached that called climaxes (Nurgiyantoro, 1998).

Episode of the stories that arise due to conflict, in a literary work can be complicated, because by the

author the conflict is complicated, contradicted, and ultimately resolved or not resolved or left alone. The conflicts contained in the event cause a story that has a beginning and a culmination of completion. There are two types of conflict resolution in a story, namely closed and open resolution.

This paper will compare the conflicts that occur in the two folklores to find out the similarities and differences in the conflicts that occur and befall the main protagonist. As in other Japanese folklore, the story of Tsuru no Ongaeshi and Yuki Onna is also very well known by the Japanese. If you look closely, the two folk tales have similarities to the conflicts that are being experienced by the main characters. Tsuru no Ongaeshi is a folk tale that tells of a crane who transforms into a beautiful girl and lives with a young man who has saved her from danger. He wanted to repay the kindness of the young man by making a very beautiful woven cloth. If the woven is sold in the city, surely many people will like it and dare to buy it at a high price. But there was one

thing the girl asked for, namely that the young man should not see her while working on the weave. The young man broke his promise and the girl's secret (identity) was revealed. The girl turned back into a crane and left him for good.

Similar to the story, the folklore about Yuki Onna tells of a ghost figure from a snow mountain who transforms into a very beautiful and young-looking woman. She lives with a lonely young man, named Minokichi and marries him. They live happily and have two children. But at one point Minokichi remembered his past and told his wife, which actually shouldn't be told to anyone. The secret (identity) of the snow woman was revealed. The woman finally left Minokichi for good. From the two stories, there are similarities in the conflict that is being experienced by the main character so that the author will analyze the two stories in terms of conflict until its resolution.

## **B. Research Method**

This paper uses a qualitative research with descriptive method to

analyze the conflict between the protagonists in *mukashibanashi* (folklore) *Tsuru no Ongaesi* and *Yuki Onna*. The steps that the author takes to collect data are; 1) Search and select the story of Tsuru no Ongaesi and Yuki Onna. In the collection of *Nihon Mukashibanashi Manga* 2. 2) Reading data sources in *mukashibanashi* (folklore) *Tsuru no Ongaesi* and *Yuki Onna*, 3) Literalizing how to read Japanese letters into alphabet letters, 4) Translating into Indonesian, 5) Categorizing data based on topics. In this case, it is related to conflicts between protagonists in Tsuru no Ongaesi and Yuki Onna stories, 6) Grouping data based on sub-chapters, namely conflicts narrated between protagonists in both stories and their resolutions. Then the writer analyzes the data in the following way; 1) The author displays the analyzed data. The data is in the form of a narrative snippet of the story that shows the conflict between the protagonists, 2) Describing the data according to the narrative of the story, 3) Interpreting the data on the comparison of the conflict between the characters in the

two stories, 4) Making conclusions based on the analyzed data.

## **C. Result and Discuss**

### **1. The Conflict of Main Characters in Japanese Folklore *Tsuru no Ongaeshi* and *Yuki Onna***

Conflict is something dramatic, refers to a fight between two balanced forces, implying action and retaliation. (Nurgiyantoro, 1998). Conflict is the result of interaction between characters or characters. The conflict experienced by the character and its unpleasant nature, is a battle between two balanced forces. Conflict can be divided into two, namely external conflict and internal conflict. External conflicts can still be divided into physical or elemental conflicts and social conflicts. The main cause of the conflict experienced by the main character in these two Japanese folk tales is almost the same, namely the main character breaks a promise that has been agreed upon with the female character.

In the Tsuru no Ongaesi story, the young man broke his promise because there was so much curiosity

about what was going on in the room where the woman was weaving that he could make such a good weave, thus making many people amazed, interested, and willing to buy it with very high price. Driven by that feeling, the young man finally broke his promise by entering the room to see what was going on. As in the following quote:

おんなのこはいいました。「わたくしが、はたをおっているあいだは、けして、なかへはいって来たり、のぞいたりしないでください。」

*Sebelum mengerjakannya, wanita tersebut berkata, "Selama saya mengerjakan dan membuat tenunan, Anda jangan sekali-kali masuk, mengintip, apa yang terjadi di dalamnya."*

「では、みないでくださいね。」  
「ああ、みないとも。」

*"Saya mohon Anda tidak melihat, apapun yang terjadi!" . "Ya, saya tidak akan melihatnya."*

みつかめになりました。「もうじき、おりあがるな。それにしても、あんなにりっぱにどうやっておるのか、ふしぎだなあ。」わかものは、みたくて、たまらなくなりました。

やくそくもわすれて、はたおりばへみにいきました。そっとのぞくとどうでしょう。はたをおっているのは、おんなのこではありません。いちわのつるでした。(日本の民話 Vol.8:17).  
*Tiga hari telah berlalu. "Sudah waktunya, tetapi masih menenun saja. Lalu, bagaimana cara ia menenun sampai hasilnya bagus itu ya? Aku jadi penasaran." Rasa penasaran yang tak tertahankan membuat pemuda tersebut ingin untuk melihatnya. Ia akhirnya masuk ke dalam ruangan tersebut dan ia telah lupa akan janjinya. Dengan perlahan-lahan ia mengintip apa yang sedang terjadi di dalam ruangan itu. Ternyata yang ada di dalam ruangan itu bukanlah wanita itu, melainkan seekor burung bangau.*

In the end the woman revealed her true identity. He is the incarnation of the crane that the young man once helped. Because of his kindness, he was eager to repay the kindness. And for that reason the woman came back to see him. However, because he had broken his promise and knew the woman's true figure, he felt ashamed, sad, and finally decided to leave her. As in the following quote:

「わたくしは、いつかたすけていただいたつるで

す。ごおんがえしがしたくて、すがたをかえてまいりました。けれど、ほんとうのすがたをおいせてしまったので、もうおいとましなければなりません。」そういって、おりあがったぬのをわかものにわたすと、なきながら、いえからでていきました。(日本の民話 Vol.8:19).

*“Saya adalah burung bangau yang pernah Anda tolong dahulu. Saya ingin sekali membalas budi baik Anda. Karena itu, Saya datang kembali untukmu. Namun, karena Anda sekarang telah mengetahui wujud asli saya, Saya harus pergi dari sini.” Setelah mengatakan hal tersebut, ia menyerahkan hasil tenunannya kepada pemuda tersebut lalu pergi meninggalkannya dengan berlinang air mata.*

From the description above, it can be concluded that the conflict experienced by the main character in the Japanese folklore Reply to the Stork Bird has two conflicts. The first conflict is an internal conflict, namely a conflict that arises from within the young man. The curiosity was so great about what was going on in the room where the woman was

weaving that the young man broke his promise and ventured into the room to see what was going on in it.

The second conflict is social conflict, namely the conflict between the young man and the woman. The woman confessed her true identity in front of the young man. He felt disappointed, ashamed, and sad. Finally with a heavy heart he had to leave.

Meanwhile, in Yuki Onna's story, it tells that the main character (Minokichi) is reminded of his past, namely when he met a snow woman in a small hut when a snowstorm was blowing. With his own volition he told Oyuki, his own wife about all that he had experienced in the past. He tells this because he thinks that his wife is the only person he loves and can trust, but for whatever reason, even though there is a husband-wife relationship, a promise is still a promise, so that it will not be disseminated to others because of its confidentiality. But Minokichi told Oyuki that she was actually the snow woman he had met before. As in the following quote:

「のう、お雪。おまえはここにきたときと、すこしもかわらん。いつまでも若くて美しい...。だがな、わしは以前に一度だけおまえのように美しい女子を見たことがある。そうじゃ、おまえとそっくりじゃった。」巳之吉のまぶたには、あのふぶきの夜のことがうかんできました。（日本昔話 Vol.3:18-19）

*“Hey, Oyuki. Sejak pertama kau datang ke tempat ini sampai sekarang, sedikitpun kau tidak berubah. Selamanya tetap terlihat muda dan cantik. Dulu aku pernah, namun hanya sekali melihat wanita yang cantik secantik dirimu. Minokichi terbayang akan peristiwa yang telah ia alami pada malam itu.”*

Finally, Oyuki reveals his true identity in front of Minokichi and admits that she is a snow woman whom he had met before in a small hut during a snowstorm. Oyuki was disappointed because Minokichi was not able to keep secrets well. With a heavy heart, Oyuki left Minokichi and his cute children for good. As in the following quote:

お雪が、針仕事の手をとめてたずねます。「どう

いう人ですの、その人は.....。」「運、わしが二十歳のころじゃった。やまでふぶいての。そのときじゃ、その女子にあったのは。うん、たしかにあれは、雪女...、..じゃった。」ここまでいったときでした。「あなた.....、とうとう話してしまったのね。あれほどやくそくしていたのに。」お雪がかなしそうにいいました。（日本昔話 Vol.3:18-19）

*Seketika itu, Oyuki berhenti menjahit. “Orang itu, orang itu adalah.....” “Ya, itu adalah saya yang waktu itu baru berumur 20 tahun. Pada waktu itu di gunung salju. Waktu itu ada seorang wanita bukan? Ya, itulah saya, wanita salju.” Sampai akhirnya ia berada disini. “Kamu sudah terlanjur menceritakannya. Padahal kamu sudah berjanji untuk tidak menceritakannya kepada siapapun. Oyuki terlihat sangat sedih.”*

お雪の目には、なみだがうかんでいます。「あなたのことは、いつまでもわすれないわ。あなたと暮らしたしあわせな毎日のことも、けっしてわすれないわ。あなたも元気でいてくださいね。いつまでも、いつまでも.....」そのとき、戸が

ばたんと開いて、外から  
冷たい風が吹き込んで  
きました。そして、お雪の  
すがたは消えたのです。

(日本昔話 Vol.3:19)

*Oyuki menitikkan air mata.  
"Semua hal mengenai  
dirimu, sampai kapanpun  
takkan kulupa.  
Kebahagiaan yang telah  
kita bina bersama, takkan  
pernah terhapus dari  
ingatanku. Selamanya,  
selamanya...." Seketika itu  
pintu terbuka, angin yang  
dingin berhembus dari luar  
masuk ke dalam. Kemudian  
sosok Oyuki sudah tak ada  
lagi dimanapun.*

The results of the analysis in two stories above, the authors found the location of the similarities and differences. The similarity is that the main characters in the two stories above both experience two conflicts, namely internal conflicts that come from within the main character himself and external conflicts that lead to social conflicts, namely conflicts between the main character and his female character. The difference is in the internal conflict: In the Tsuru no Ongaeshi story, the main character (a young man) breaks a promise due to an emotional turmoil and a great curiosity to find

out something he doesn't know and is hidden from him. However, in Yuki Onna's story, the main character (Minokichi) breaks his promise because of his trust in the only person he loves and trusts, namely his wife, Oyuki. Therefore he believed and shared what he knew. What happen is the contrary. While on external conflict: In the Tsuru no Ongaeshi story, there is a social conflict between the main character (a young man) and the female character who have no ties to each other. Meanwhile, in Yuki Onna's story, the social conflict that occurs is the conflict between husband and wife.

## **2. Main Character Conflict Resolution**

The two Japanese folk stories that the author analyzes, each of which has two conflicts that the main character explores, namely internal conflicts (which occur in the mind and soul of the main character) and social conflicts (which occur due to social contact between actors).

The resolution of the conflict experienced by the main character in the two stories above leads to a



closed resolution, namely at the end of the story the reader gains certainty that the conflict has been resolved. In Tsuru no Ongaeshi the story ends with the main character (a young man) regretting that he had broken the promise he had made. As a result of his actions, the main character is left by his female character by reincarnating back into his original form, namely a crane. As in the following quote:

.....そういつて、おりあがったぬのをわかものにわたすと、なきながらでていきました。わかものもおいかけて、そとにでました。もう、おんなのこのすがたはありません。いちわのつるが、おつきさまののぼっていくそらへ、まいあがっていきました。わかものは、やくそくをやぶったことをこうかいしました。  
(日本の民話 Vol.8:20).

...Setelah mengatakan itu, wanita tersebut menyerahkan hasil tenunannya kepada pemuda itu, lalu pergi meninggalkannya. Pemuda itu keluar dan mengejar wanita itu, namun sosoknya sudah tidak ada lagi. Seekor burung bangau tinggi dan lebih tinggi lagi menuju langit. Pemuda

*tersebut menyesal karena telah mengingkari janjinya.*

Meanwhile, in Japanese folklore, Yuki Onna, the story also ends with the main character (Minokichi) regretting that he couldn't keep the secret well. He tells something to other people that really shouldn't be told even though it's the closest person, namely his wife, Oyuki. As a result of his actions, the main character and his children are left by the female character for ever.

As in the following quote:

そのとき、戸がぱたと開いて、外から冷たい風が吹き込んできました。そして、お雪のすがたは消えたのです。巳之吉はあわてて戸口にでてみましたが、もう、お雪のすがたはどこにもありませんでした。「お雪！....お雪一つ！」（日本昔話 Vol.3:19)

Seketika itu pintu terbuka, angin yang dingin berhembus dari luar masuk ke dalam. Kemudian sosok Oyukipun menghilang. Minokichi berusaha untuk mengejarnya sampai keluar pintu, namun sosok Oyuki sudah tidak ada dimanapun. “Oyuki! ....Oyukiiiiiiiiiiii !!!”

#### D. Conclusion

The conclusion after examining the comparison of conflicts between protagonists in *Tsuru no Ongaeshi* and *Yuki Onna* is as follows: **First**, the main characters of these two Japanese folk tales are male. In the *Tsuru no Ongaeshi* story, the main character is a young man, who likes to work every day, is diligent, tenacious, and kind to anyone. His kindness brought him to meet a woman who was a crane he had once helped from a hunter. He wanted to repay the young man's kindness by making him happy and prosperous. Meanwhile, in *Yuki Onna's* story, the main character is Minokichi, a child who obeys his father and helps meet his daily needs by hunting in the snow mountain. Until one day he met a snow woman in a small hut and finally married her, but Minokichi did not know. **Second**, the main characters in the two stories above both experience two conflicts, namely internal conflicts (conflicts that occur in the mind / soul of the characters), where the main characters in the two folk stories above both violate a promise he has

made. with the female character for some reason. And external conflicts that lead to social conflicts (conflicts that arise due to social contact between humans), where the female characters in both stories reveal their true identities in front of the main characters. Disappointed and sad, the female character finally leaves the main character for good. **Finally**, the form of conflict resolution in the two stories above ends with Sad End, where the main character must receive a reward for breaking his own promise that has been made and agreed upon by the female character. The main character is left forever, and the main character feels regret because he will never be able to meet and get a gift again. Conflict resolution leads to closed resolution (at the end of the story the reader gains certainty that the conflict has been resolved).

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