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Representations of Parting in Children's Stories: A Comparative Literary Study of *The Pair of Dragons and the Formation of Lake Sarangan* and *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to describe the representation of parting between parents and children in the Indonesian legend Sepasang Naga dan Terbentuknya Telaga Sarangan and the Japanese tale The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter, and to analyze their similarities and differences in light of Indonesian and Japanese cultural backgrounds. The study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-comparative method through library research, without field data collection, conducted from September 2026 to November 2026. The data sources were two story texts selected purposively: the Indonesian legend and the Indonesian translation of Yei Theodora Ozaki's adaptation of The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter. The main instrument was the researchers themselves as human instruments, supported by a data recording sheet, and data were collected using reading and note-taking techniques. The data were analyzed manually using the Miles and Huberman model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The results show that parting in both stories is triggered by magical elements but differs in cause and direction. In the Indonesian story, the parents transform into dragons as a result of a human choice to pursue immortality, leaving their son behind, and the parting leaves a lake, a dragon statue, and an offering ritual. In the Japanese story, the adopted daughter is taken back to the moon by an unavoidable fate, leaving her adoptive parents grieving, and the parting leaves keepsakes and the origin of Mount Fuji. These differences are related to each culture's background, namely Javanese spiritual practice and ancestor veneration versus the Japanese view of impermanence (mujō).

Keywords: representations of parting, children's stories, comparative literature study

Representasi Perpisahan dalam Cerita Anak: Kajian Sastra Bandingan *Sepasang Naga dan Terbentuknya Telaga Sarangan* dan *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*

ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan representasi perpisahan anatar orang tua dan anak dalam legenda Indonesia Sepasang Naga dan Terbentuknya Telaga Sarangan dam verita Jepang The Tale of The Bamboo Cutter, serta menganalisis persamaan dan perbedaannya berdasarkan latar budaya Indonesia dan Jepang, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif komparatif melalui studi Pustaka, tanpa pengumpulan data lapangan, yang dilaksanakan pada September 2026 hingga November 2026. Sumber data berupa dua teks cerita yang dipilih secara purposive, yakni legenda Sepasang Naga dan Terbentuknya Telaga Sarangan serta The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter dalam terjemahan bahasa Indonesia dari adaptasi Yei Theodora Ozaki. Instrumen utama adalah peneliti sebagai human instrument dengan lembar pencatatan data, dan data dikumpulkan dengan teknik baca dan catat. Data dianalisis secara manual menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman, yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perpisahan dalam kedua cerita dipicu unsur ajaib, tetapi berbeda penyebab dan arahnya. Dalam cerita Indonesia, orang tua berubah wujud menjadi naga akibat pilihan mengejar keabadian sehingga anak ditinggalkan, dan perpisahan itu meninggalkan telaga, patung naga, serta ritual larung sesaji. Dalam cerita Jepang, anak angkat dijemput kembali ke bulan karena takdir yang tidak dapat ditolak sehingga orang tua angkat berduka, dan perpisahan itu meninggalkan benda kenangan serta asal-usul Gunung Fuji. Perbedaan tersebut berkaitan dengan latar budaya masing-masing, yaitu laku spiritual dan tradisi leluhur Jawa serta pandangan ketidakkekalan (mujô) Jepang.

Kata kunci: representasi perpisahan, cerita anak, sastra bandingan

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INTRODUCTION

Children's literature is a form of imaginative creation that presents specific understandings and experiences and contains aesthetic value (Huck, 1987, in Krissandi, 2020). Children's stories are adapted to the child's level of intellectual, emotional, and social development, and serve as entertainment as well as a means of instilling moral values and fostering empathy (Masie et al., 2023, in Larasati et al., 2025). These emotional experiences can also be presented through loss and separation, which are commonly found in several children's literary stories. Separation appears in various children's stories, whether due to death, transformation, or departure to another world. As a form of literature that develops in society, folklore contains the outlook on life, beliefs, and cultural values of the supporting community. Danandjaja (1994) explains that folklore is part of a collective culture that is passed down from generation to generation. In the context of children's literature, folklore can be one of the reading materials that presents experiences, life values, and moral messages through stories close to the reader's world. Therefore, depictions of separation in folktales can be studied to understand the characters' emotional experiences as well as the cultural values conveyed through the stories. One interesting experience to study is the separation between parents and children. This event can be depicted through different causes, forms, and impacts depending on the story's setting and the surrounding culture. These differences in depiction can be examined through a comparison of folktales from two countries with different cultural backgrounds.

This study examines two stories: the Indonesian legend of A Pair of Dragons and the Formation of Lake Sarangan and the Japanese story of The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter or Taketori Monogatari. In the legend of A Pair of Dragons and the Formation of Lake Sarangan, Ki Pasir and Nyai Pasir are said to have eaten a large egg believed to bring immortality. After eating it, they transformed into dragons and disappeared into the water, separating them from their son, Joko Lelung (Indonesia Kaya, 2025). Meanwhile, in The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter, Kaguya-hime is a child raised by a bamboo cutter and his wife. She then has to leave her adoptive parents because a messenger from the moon comes to retrieve her (Keene, 1956). Both stories present magical elements and depict separation between parents and children. However, the causes, forms, and impacts of separation experienced by the characters show differences. This serves as the basis for examining how separation is represented in both stories.

To examine these similarities and differences, this study uses a comparative literature approach as its primary foundation. Remak (1961) explains that comparative literature is a study that compares literary works from one country with those from another country, as well as literary works with other fields of knowledge and belief. Similarly, Damono (2011) views comparative literature as an effort to understand the similarities and differences between literary works. This approach is used to compare the representation of separation in Indonesian and Japanese stories, particularly in relation to the causes, forms, and impacts experienced by the characters. Furthermore, this study uses Hall's (1997) concept of representation to understand how texts depict an experience and construct meaning through language. The analysis also pays attention to the intrinsic elements of the story, including characters, plot, setting, and moral, as discussed by Nurgiyantoro (2013). Thus, comparative literature serves as the primary approach, while the concepts of representation and intrinsic elements are used to support the analysis of the depiction of separation in both stories.

Research on the legend of the Pair of Dragons and the Formation of Lake Sarangan was conducted by Ani (2019) through an examination of the function of the legend for the community in Sarangan Village, Plaosan District, Magetan Regency, East Java. The study discussed the existence of the legend and its function in the lives of its supporters. Meanwhile, Walansendow et al.

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(2021) examined the cultural values in the story of Kaguya Hime no Monogatari. Both studies provide an overview of the function of folklore and the cultural values contained within it. However, neither study specifically addressed the representation of separation between parents and children as the focus of the study.

Based on previous research, there is scope for further research, namely a comparison of the representation of separation between parents and children in the legends of the Pair of Dragons and the Formation of Lake Sarangan and The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter. Previous research has examined both stories through aspects of the function of the legend, cultural values, and the image and role of women. However, based on the sources reviewed in this study, no studies have been found that specifically place separation as the focus of comparison between the two stories. Therefore, this research aims to examine the causes of separation, the forms of its depiction, the characters' emotional responses, and the resulting impact. This comparison is expected to reveal similarities and differences in how the two stories depict the experience of separation in Indonesian and Japanese cultural settings.

Based on this description, the research questions include: (1) How is separation between parents and children represented in the legends of the Pair of Dragons and the Formation of Lake Sarangan? (2) How is separation between parents and children represented in The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter? and (3) What are the similarities and differences in the representation of separation in the two stories based on Indonesian and Japanese cultural settings?

In line with the formulation of the problem, this study aims to describe the representation of separation in the legend of a Pair of Dragons and the Formation of Lake Sarangan, describe the representation of separation in the story of The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter, and analyze the similarities and differences in the depiction of separation in both stories based on Indonesian and Japanese cultural backgrounds. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of comparative literary studies, especially regarding the representation of the theme of separation in stories from different cultural backgrounds. Practically, this study is expected to be a reference for students, researchers, and readers in understanding the depiction of separation, relationships between characters, and cultural values contained in Indonesian and Japanese folk tales.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-comparative method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand and interpret meaning based on non-numerical data and the surrounding context (Busetto et al., 2020). The research data consist of words, sentences, dialogue, character actions, and events in the stories related to separation. The descriptive method was used to describe the representation of separation in each story, while the comparative method was used to identify similarities and differences. Comparisons were made based on the causes, forms, characteristics, emotional responses of the characters, efforts to prevent separation, things left behind, impacts, values, and cultural elements related to separation. Thus, this study focuses on interpreting meaning based on textual evidence and the story context.

The material objects of this research are two story texts: (1) the Indonesian legend "A Pair of Dragons and the Formation of Lake Sarangan" and (2) "The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter" in its Indonesian translation from Yei Theodora Ozaki's adaptation. Both texts were chosen purposively because they both depict separation between parents and children, involve magical elements, and come from different cultural backgrounds. The formal object of this research is the representation of separation which includes causes, forms, characteristics, character responses, efforts to prevent separation, legacy, impacts, values, and cultural elements.

This research was conducted through a literature review, utilizing both narrative texts as data sources. Data collection and analysis took place from September 2026 to November 2026. The research did not involve direct field data collection, as all data was obtained through reading and reviewing written documents.

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher (human instrument), assisted by a data recording sheet compiled based on the research focus. The recording included the characters experiencing separation, the causes, forms and nature of the separation, efforts to prevent the separation, the characters' emotional responses, what was left behind, the impact, values or messages, cultural elements, and quotes or evidence supporting the interpretation. Data collection was conducted using a reading and note-taking technique. This technique involved systematically examining the contents of both texts to find and record information relevant to the research focus, in line with document analysis described by Bowen (2009).

The research procedure involved several stages: determining and selecting the two narrative texts as research objects, reading both texts thoroughly, identifying and recording parts of the stories related to the representation of separation, categorizing the data based on research categories, comparing the two narratives, and drawing conclusions based on the analysis. The three researchers first agreed on the text version and analysis categories to be used. The first and second researchers read and recorded data from each story using the same analysis sheet. Next, the third researcher compiled the comparative results based on these categories. The reading and recording results were then discussed together to agree on interpretations and conclusions for the study.

Data validity was maintained by checking the consistency between interpretations and textual evidence. Any findings regarding the representation of separation must be supported by quotations, dialogue, character actions, or sequences of events contained in the text. Furthermore, the use of the same analytical categories for both stories aims to maintain consistency in the reading and comparison process. The results of each researcher's reading were also discussed together so that differences in interpretation could be examined and agreed upon based on the available textual evidence.

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman qualitative data analysis model (Sugiyono, 2022), which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. The first stage is data reduction, which involves selecting and focusing on parts of the story related to the representation of separation, then grouping them according to research categories. The second stage is data presentation, which involves organizing the recorded results into tables based on predetermined categories so that the findings from both stories can be systematically read and compared. The third stage is drawing conclusions or verification, which involves interpreting the data, identifying similarities and differences between the two stories, and re-examining the conclusions based on textual evidence and the cultural context of each story. The entire analysis process is done manually without using special software.

RESULT

The analysis shows that separation in both stories appears as a central event caused by magical elements, but differs in its cause, direction, and impact. The presentation follows a research procedure: an Indonesian story, a Japanese story, then a comparison of the two.

1. Representation of Separation in "A Pair of Dragons and the Formation of Lake Sarangan"

The separation occurs between Ki Pasir and Nyai Pasir and their son, Joko Lelung. The cause is a large egg promised to bring immortality. After consuming it, both transform into dragons and eventually disappear into the water. Prior to the physical separation, there was already a distance

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between parent and child: Joko Lelung was rarely home, and his parents' wishes were never expressed. related to the beauty of language use through diction and the arrangement of expressions.

Table 1
The Results of the Analysis Data

Aspect	Finding	Textual Evidence
Character who are separated	Ki Pasir and Nyai Pasir with their son, Joko Lelung (main farewell). Apart from that, Ki Pasir and Nyai Pasir were separated from each other before meeting again in the form of a dragon.	"Nyai Pasir gave birth to a son who was later named Joko Lelung." / "she could not find her husband in the fields"
Cause of separation	Eating a large egg promised to bring immortality. Ki Pasir received a guidance while meditating, then found the egg and shared it with his wife. The effect turned them into dragons.	"Praying that his weakened body would regain strength, health, and a lifespan longer than ordinary humans" / "telling Ki Pasir to eat it to achieve immortality"
Parting form	Changes form, then disappears into the water. After that they did not return to human form.	"Nyai Pasir's body also changed into a dragon"
The nature of separation	Unintentional and unwanted. They did not know the consequences of the egg, and did not accept his new form. Ki Pasir felt that the universe had cursed him.	"Ki Pasir felt that the universe had cursed him."
Efforts to prevent division	Joko Lelung prayed that nature would subdue the two dragons to prevent the disaster from spreading. His prayer was answered: they calmed down and disappeared into the water.	"Joko Lelung immediately crossed his legs and offered a prayer to the Creator."
Character Feelings	Parents: panicked, angry, in disbelief, and lost their minds. Joko Lelung: deeply saddened and regretful over his parents' passing.	"Ki Pasir was increasingly panicked and confused" / "He vented his anger" / "Joko Lelung was overcome with sadness over the departure of his parents." / "Deep regret enveloped his heart"
Things left behind	A lake with a small island in the middle, the site of a dragon's rampage, named Telaga Pasir "in memory of the kindness of its parents." Also present are dragon statues, tombstones, and ritual offerings.	"The remains of the rage of the two giant dragons then formed a lake with a small island in the middle." / "To commemorate the kindness of both parents, the place was finally named Telaga Pasir"
Impact	A disaster nearly submerged Mount Lawu, leading to the formation of a lake. The separation resulted in a changing landscape and enduring traditions.	"If it is not stopped immediately, Mount Lawu is threatened with sinking." / "Until now, the two dragons are believed to still occupy Lake Sarangan."
Values and mandate Cultural elements	According to the text, loyalty and sacrifice in marriage, steadfastness in prayer, and awareness of the impact of actions on others and the environment.	"teaches us about loyalty and sacrifice in marriage relationships" / "awareness of the impact of our actions on others and the surrounding environment""
Cultural element	The foot of Mount Lawu, meditation and spiritual knowledge, the Creator, ancestral spirits, rituals of offerings and village cleansing, dragon statues and gravestones as a form of respect.	"meditate in a cave to ask for strength from the Almighty" / "respect the spirits of ancestors who are said to be the origins of Sarangan Village" / "village cleaning ceremony and throwing out offerings"

2. Representation of Farewell in The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter

A farewell occurs between Kaguya-hime (in the translated text, called Princess Moonlight) and the bamboo cutter and his wife. Kaguya-hime is from the moon, and the lunar messenger describes her

presence on earth as a temporary punishment. She is picked up by a flying chariot despite the presence of two thousand of the Emperor's soldiers. A second farewell occurs with the Emperor, who receives a letter and the Elixir of Life. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Representation of Farewell in The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter

Aspect	Finding	Texts Evidence
Characters who part	Kaguya-hime departs. Those left behind are Taketori no Okina (the bamboo cutter), his wife, and the Emperor, who grew close to Kaguya through letters and poems. The noble suitors had already parted from Kaguya earlier, when they failed to meet the conditions of their proposals.	The old man finds a tiny baby inside a glowing bamboo stalk and raises her. Kaguya later confesses that she comes from a city on the Moon. At the end of the story, only the old man, the old woman, and the Emperor remain to grieve.
Cause of parting	Fate tied to her origin. Kaguya is a being from the Moon who lives on earth for a limited time, and her time has run out. No conflict between characters triggers the parting. Her presence on earth is linked to a bond of destiny from a previous circumstance.	Kaguya grows melancholy and gazes at the moon from spring onward. She then confesses that she must return on the night of the full moon in the eighth month, and that the length of her stay has been fixed and she cannot change it.
Form of parting	Heavenly envoys descend with a retinue from the Moon and take Kaguya away. She does not leave alone. Before departing, she puts on a feathered robe (hagoromo) and leaves behind keepsakes: clothing for her adoptive parents, and a letter and an elixir of immortality for the Emperor. The Emperor orders the letter and the elixir to be burned on the highest mountain.	Bright light envelops the courtyard, a celestial figure descends, and Kaguya ascends with them. She writes a farewell letter and hands over the elixir of immortality. In the closing section, the Emperor orders the burning on the mountain closest to the heavens.
Nature of the parting	Permanent and irreversible. Kaguya knew about it beforehand, and a force beyond humanity imposes it. The parting occurs between two worlds, the human world and the Moon. Kaguya does not die biologically, but for those left behind the impact is the same as loss.	Kaguya states that she cannot stay. The Moon envoys arrive exactly at the promised time, and no one manages to delay them.
Attempts to prevent the parting	The old man, the old woman, and the Emperor all try, and all fail. The old man posts many soldiers to surround the house and the roof. The old woman embraces Kaguya in a locked inner room. The Emperor sends a guard force. Kaguya herself begs for her departure to be postponed, but the request is not granted.	The soldiers lose their strength and ability to fight when the Moon envoys arrive. The locked doors open by themselves. The old woman's embrace does not hold Kaguya back, and her plea does not change the envoys' decision.
Characters' feelings	Kaguya feels sad and regretful because she must leave her adoptive parents. After putting on the feathered robe, her human feelings disappear and she becomes cold. The old man and woman are devastated, grieve, and then fall ill. The Emperor loses his bearings and feels that eternal life without Kaguya is meaningless.	Kaguya weeps and gazes sorrowfully at the moon. She writes a letter lamenting that she cannot care for her parents to the end. Once the robe is on, their tears no longer touch her. The old man and woman lie weak and refuse to eat. The Emperor declares that a long life without Kaguya is useless.
What is left behind	Kaguya leaves behind her adoptive parents, the Emperor, and her life in the human world, including the wealth that came with her to the old man's house. She also leaves clothing, a letter, and the elixir of immortality as keepsakes.	The old man's wealth comes from the gold he found inside the bamboo. Kaguya gives the clothing to her adoptive parents, and the letter and elixir of immortality to the Emperor. Her farewell letter affirms her bond with them.

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Impact	The old man and woman fall ill and lose their will to live. The Emperor rejects immortality. The burning of the elixir and letter on the mountaintop is later made the origin of the name Mount Fuji and of the smoke said to still rise from it.	The old man and woman are despondent without Kaguya. The Emperor orders the elixir and letter to be burned. The explanation of the name Mount Fuji (linked to the words for "immortal" and "many soldiers") appears at the end of the story, together with the tale of the smoke that keeps rising.
Values or moral message	(1) Human relationships and life are impermanent. (2) The love between parent and child does not depend on blood. (3) Human power is limited, whether wealth, armies, or the throne. (4) Greed and arrogance are criticized through the suitors' failure. (5) Eternal life without loved ones feels empty.	The suitors fail to bring impossible objects and are caught cheating. The old man and the Emperor are equally helpless before the Moon envoys. The Emperor rejects immortality after Kaguya leaves.
Cultural elements	(1) The Buddhist view of impermanence (mujō) and attachment. (2) The moon as a sacred realm and a source of sorrow (tsukimi). (3) Collection by celestial beings, resembling the concept of raigō. (4) The feathered robe (hagoromo) as a marker of a change in nature. (5) The order of the Heian court, seen in the hierarchy of Emperor and nobles. (6) The tradition of proposals and the exchange of waka poems. (7) Bamboo as a symbol of purity and a source of prosperity. (8) A myth of place origin, namely the etymology of Mount Fuji. (9) Features of the early monogatari genre: fairy tale, satire, and lyrical tone within a single text.	Kaguya emerges from a glowing bamboo stalk. The Emperor and nobles communicate through poetry. The feathered robe changes Kaguya's feelings. The story closes with an explanation of the origin of Mount Fuji.

3. Comparison of Representations of Farewell in the Two Stories

The comparison shows similarities in the role of magical elements and the presence of something left behind after a farewell, but contrasts in the direction of the departure and the nature of its cause (Table 3).

Table 3
Comparison of Representations of Farewell in the Two Stories

Aspect	Sepasang Naga	The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter
Who departs	Parent	(Adoptive) child
Who is left behind	Child	(Adoptive) parents
Cause	A human choice to pursue immortality	Fate and punishment from the world of the Moon
Form	Transformation of form and merging with nature	Separation into another world
Dominant emotions	Panic, anger, regret	Sadness, poignancy, helplessness
Legacy	Takes the form of a lake, statues, and rituals	Keepsakes, a letter, and the smoke over Mount Fuji
Nature of the parting	Unintentional and unwanted, originating from human action	Permanent and irreversible, imposed by a force beyond humanity
Attempts to prevent the parting	Joko Lelung's prayer succeeds in calming the dragon, keeping the disaster from spreading	Soldiers, an embrace, and pleas fail to hold back the departure
Impact	The disaster nearly submerges Mount Lawu, after which the lake and a tradition come into being	The adoptive parents fall ill, the Emperor rejects immortality, and the origin of the name Mount Fuji is explained

Values and moral message	Loyalty, sacrifice, steadfastness in prayer, awareness of the impact of one's actions	Impermanence, love that does not depend on blood, the limits of human power, criticism of greed
Cultural elements	Meditation (semedi), ancestral spirits, offerings set adrift (larung sesaji), the foot of Mount Lawu	Impermanence (mujō), tsukimi, raigō, hagoromo, the Heian court, waka poetry

DISCUSSION

The discussion is structured based on the aspects compared in Table 3 and addresses three research questions. Each finding is presented from two perspectives: the intrinsic elements of the text (Nurgiyantoro, 2013) and the cultural context as a background for representation (Hall, 1997).

Source of Separation

The most fundamental difference lies in the source of separation. In Indonesian stories, separation begins with human desires, namely the desire for strength and longevity, so that the consequences feel like consequences of the choices made. In Japanese stories, separation comes from beyond human control, namely the predetermined time on earth, so the characters can only fight fruitlessly. Interestingly, both stories contain the motif of immortality. For example, Ki Pasir loses his human form, while the Elixir of Life is not used by the emperor and is burned. Thus, immortality in both stories is not presented as happiness, but rather as something closely related to loss.

From a plot perspective, according to Susanti et al. (2025), plot, as one of the main elements in a story, functions as the main driving force that directs the narrative. Thus, the differences in these two sources form different causal patterns. In the story of a Pair of Dragons, the sequence of events moves from a request, an egg, a transformation, to a disaster, so that the separation appears to be the result of the character's actions. In the story of The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter, separation has been ingrained since Kaguya arrived on earth, and her melancholy since spring is a sign that her time is almost up. From a cultural perspective, folklore contains the perspectives of its supporting communities (Danandjaja, 1994). This perspective is seen in Javanese Indonesian legends that depict immortality as something sought through spiritual practice, and in Japanese stories that place immortality as something rejected after the loss of a loved one.

Direction of Departure and Form of Farewell

The direction of departure in these two sources differs or contrasts. In the Indonesian story, the departure is described as the parents transforming into dragons and becoming one with nature, while the child remains. In the Japanese story, the adopted child is taken back to the other world, while the parents remain. This difference in direction shifts the parties who bear the loss. Joko Lelung, as the abandoned child, still acts, praying for the disaster to stop and then naming a lake in memory of his parents. In contrast, the grandfather and grandmother, as the abandoned parents, are in a weak position, falling ill, refusing to eat, and losing their will to live.

From the perspective of the characters and plot (Samudra, 2026), the child in the Indonesian story plays the role of concluding the conflict and preserving memories, while the parents in the Japanese story play the role of bearers of grief without the power to change the situation. From a representational perspective, according to Hall (1997), the meaning of farewell is constructed by how the text shows who is empowered and who is powerless.

Characters' Emotions and Efforts to Prevent Separation

The dominant emotions in the two stories tend to differ depending on the nature of the separation.

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In the Indonesian story, the parents feel panic and anger, while Joko Lelung experiences sadness and regret due to the unintentional transformation. Meanwhile, in the Japanese story, the dominant emotions depict the sadness and helplessness of Kaguya's family due to her permanent departure. According to Minderop (2010), literary psychology can be used to understand the emotions and behavior of characters in a story or literary work. This is evident in the characters' reactions, which demonstrate the strong emotional bonds between families.

Efforts to cope with the separation also show differences in the two stories. Joko Lelung's prayer in the Indonesian story successfully calms the two dragons and prevents the disaster from spreading, but cannot prevent the separation. In contrast, the various efforts of the family and soldiers in the Japanese story fail to prevent Kaguya's departure. According to Endraswara (2008), literary psychology helps understand the characters' actions in dealing with life's events. Both stories thus demonstrate the limitations of human resilience in dealing with separation. This finding is also related to Adharani & Pasaribu's (2019) research regarding the depiction of Kaguya as a foreign figure and distanced from society, while this research highlights its connection to the experience of separation.

Legacy and Impact of Separation

Legacies of separation in Indonesian stories manifest and persist in the real world, including lakes, dragon statues, tombstones, and the ritual of offerings in the water. These separations ultimately become the origins of both places and traditions. This finding supports Ani (2019), who concluded that the legend of Telaga Sarangan serves as entertainment, education, a social control, and a reinforcement of group solidarity. This finding also complements Saputra and Rustiati (2021) and Kusuma et al. (2025), who view the story and dragon statue as the basis for tourism and cultural identity. This study adds that these rituals and markers are rooted in the separation of parents and children, transforming loss into a form of remembrance in the story.

In Japanese stories, legacies are more symbolic: clothing, letters, elixirs of immortality, and the smoke that supposedly still rises from Mount Fuji. The impact is felt primarily spiritually by the characters left behind, and the study concludes with an explanation of the origin of the mountain's name. Walansendow et al. (2021) concluded that this story contains cultural values such as the reality of life, simplicity, and an attitude of never giving up. While this unyielding attitude is evident in the efforts of the grandfather, grandmother, and the Emperor, the analysis shows that these efforts ultimately fail. Therefore, the more prominent value from the perspective of separation is the impermanence of relationships and human life.

Influence of Cultural Background

These differences cannot be separated from the cultural backgrounds of each story, which influence them. Comparative literature does not simply focus on noting the similarities and differences between the two stories but also explores the underlying factors (Remak, 1961; Damono, 2011). Prominent cultural elements in Indonesian stories include spiritual knowledge, meditation, prayer to the Creator, reverence for ancestors, and rituals such as the floating offerings and cleansing of the village. These elements position separation as an event resolved through prayer and remembered through ongoing rituals, thus maintaining the connection with departed parents in the community.

In Japanese stories, cultural elements that appear are the Buddhist view of impermanence (Mujo), the moon as a sacred realm and source of sadness (Tsukimi), the reception by celestial beings similar to the concept of Raigo, the feather robe (hagoromo) as a sign of the transition of nature, and the Heian court order. These elements place separation as an inevitability that is accepted with

emotion, in line with the emperor's rejection of immortality after Kaguya's departure. Thus, separation in Indonesian stories tends to result in traditions that are carried out, while in Japanese stories it tends to result in reflections on impermanence.

CONCLUSION

First, in the legend of the Dragon Pair and the Formation of Lake Sarangan, the separation of parents and children is caused by humanity's choice to pursue immortality. The parents transform into dragons and abandon their children, who respond with prayer and grief. This separation results in the formation of the lake and a tradition that continues to be carried out.

Second, in The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter, the separation is caused by the fate of the characters' origins. The adopted child is taken back to the moon, and all attempts by the adoptive parents to restrain him fail, so the separation is permanent and leaves behind grief and reflection.

Third, both stories share similarities: the separation is triggered by magical elements, eternity is presented as related to loss, and the separation leaves a trace. The differences lie in the source of the separation, the direction of the departure, and the person who bears the loss. These differences are influenced by cultural background: Javanese-Indonesian culture resolves separation through prayer and commemorates it through tradition, while Japanese culture accepts it as an inevitability, giving rise to reflections on impermanence.

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