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# The Secret Life of the Cross-Cultural Fairy Tale: A Comparative Study of the Indonesian Folktale "Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih" and Three European Fairy Tales

Sarah Nicole Donaldson  
*Portland State University*

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<https://doi.org/10.15760/honors.1051>

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The Secret Life of the Cross-Cultural Fairy Tale:  
A Comparative Study of the Indonesian Folktale “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih”  
and Three European Fairy Tales

by

Sarah Nicole Donaldson

An undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

in

University Honors

and

English

Thesis Adviser

Dr. Amanda Smith Byron

Portland State University

2014

## **I. Abstract**

Folklore was one of the earliest developed forms of story telling, and fairy tales especially remain influentially pervasive in society today. In this paper, I seek to deconstruct five versions of the Indonesian folktale “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih,” through comparisons with the European fairy tales “One-Eye, Two-Eyes, and Three-Eyes,” “The Fairies,” and “Mother Holle,” using an interdisciplinary approach incorporating psychoanalytic and feminist theories in a close reading of the tales. Through tracking the transfer of money in the tales, I establish that heroines rarely keep their money as young, marriageable girls are considered commodities themselves within the fairy tale world. While scholars acknowledge the existence of “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih,” no definitive research has been conducted on the tale. Thus, through this paper I attempt to introduce the tale into the folkloric academic discussion, providing an additional avenue for the study of Indonesian folklore.

## **II. Dedication**

Skripsi ini di dedasikan untuk engkong ambek emak.

### III. Acknowledgements

I would like to wholeheartedly thank my thesis adviser, Dr. Amanda Smith Byron, for her support, constructive criticism, and handholding. Thank you, specially, for putting up with my floundering impulse to read everything published under the sun because “it might help me think about my thesis.”

I would like to thank Drs. Christine M. Rose and Ann Marie Fallon for their support of my education at large. Of course, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Dorothee Ostmeier, who played a pivotal role in the shaping of this paper.

I am entirely indebted to those relatives who permitted me to videotape them telling their versions of “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih.” Does cajoling count as a research method?

Lastly, I would like to thank my great great grandmother for hiring a professional storyteller to tell my great grandmother the “Bawang Merah” tale, which she then passed on to my mother.

Thank you. *Terima kasih. Matur nuwun. Xièxie.*

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#### IV. Introduction

As a child, my mother – who immigrated to the U.S. from Indonesia in the late-1980's – told me the story of “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih” (“Shallot, Garlic”) as she had heard it from her grandmother. Of the Indonesian fairy tales she told me over the course of my childhood, I remember with clarity only two, the other being “Malin Kundang,” the tale of an ungrateful son who is cursed by his mother, turning into the boulder known today as Batu Malin Kundang.

To explain why I chose to analyze the folktale “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih” for my undergraduate thesis, I have to illuminate a certain Indonesian expression I have become fascinated with of late: “makan orang.” This phrase literally translates to “eating a person,” but may be used figuratively in two circumstances. First, if one states that a certain location, such as a road, “makan orang,” then they are warning travelers to avoid that road, or else be captured by the road's supernatural forces – perhaps a demon lives below. Second, and most pertinent for my paper, “makan orang” can refer to the act of cadging for aid, money, and resources such as food. The plot of “my” version of the tale revolves around the motif of food (*makanan*) and the act of eating (*makan*). Even the two named characters of the story, Bawang Merah (shallot) and Bawang Putih (garlic), possess food-related names. One of the other main characters, the anthropomorphic belanak fish, may only transform into the gold bush, freeing Bawang Putih from her life of servitude, by being eaten.

In the summer of 2013, when I travelled to Indonesia and videotaped family members telling their versions of “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih” (no standardized version exists), I quickly realized that food only plays a major role in my version of the tale. Other versions feature washing clothes in a river, performing housework for a giant, and uncovering jewels and snakes! To begin to deconstruct this complicated tale, which on the surface appears to be many



vastly different stories blanketed together under the title of “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih,” I compare and contrast this tale with the European fairy tales “The Fairies” (Perrault 127-129), “One-Eye, Two-Eyes, and Three-Eyes” (Grimm and Grimm 424-429), and “Mother Holle” (Grimm and Grimm 88-91). I examine these tales in the context of economics, tracking the exchange of money within each tale. Of course, it is impossible to skirt the fact that fairy tales today are created and retold for children’s consumption. In light of this, I draw conclusions from my analysis to provide one reading of how these folktales may affect their children-audience. Specifically, I discuss the dual nature of folktales as a means of societal teaching, on both the surface (morals) and psychological (subconscious) levels, and draw connections between these two modes of teachings in each of the four tales I examine.

Few studies of Indonesian folklore have been conducted in the U.S., and the majority of these works have been published in the Netherlands and Indonesia. Through this paper, I attempt to introduce six versions of “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih” into the academic discussion, to offer another entry point into the study of Indonesian folklore. Considering Indonesia’s role as a major trade region throughout much of history, and the country’s role today as “a regional and global leader” (“Indonesia: Democracy and Governance”), Indonesian folklore provides an interesting window for examining the effects of globalization through its traces in “traditional” folktales.

## V. Methods

During the summer of 2013, I travelled to the city of Surabaya in East Java, Indonesia to videotape native Indonesians relaying their versions of “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih.” I intended to film a minimum of four individuals, consisting of family members, friends, and neighbors. I also intended to interview each individual on the origins of their version of the tale, asking questions such as: How old were you when you first heard this tale? Who told it to you? How many times have you listened to this tale, approximately? Do you know anything of the origins of this tale?

After filming five relatives, I realized that “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih” is no more one single, cohesive story than perhaps a collection of disparate stories blanketed under the “Bawang Merah” title – even considering its origins as an oral tale. I decided to end the collection process of my project at this point, and forgo interviewing storytellers, because I wanted to focus on the literary qualities of the tale.

The five participants of the study were: Suzie Walujo, Liliek Harahap, Lanny Wardojo, Janti Supadma, and Liandrawati Kurniawan. Two of the participants – Suzie Walujo and Janti Supadma – pre-wrote their versions of the tale. Janti Supadma read aloud her version, while Suzie Walujo memorized and recited her version. Except in the case of Suzie Walujo’s version, for which I examine her written version in this paper, I transcribed and translated each video, and collaborated with my mother, Jacqueline Donaldson, to write “my” own version of the tale. She also reviewed my translational work. Due to the comparative brevity of Liandrawati Kurniawan’s version as juxtaposed with the other versions, I do not consider it in the analysis section of this paper.

Transcriptions of the tale in Bahasa Indonesia and my English language translations, including my version of the tale, can be found in Appendices A-F of this paper. Throughout this paper, I identify each “Bawang Merah” version by its assigned appendix letter (e.g. the “Bawang Merah” version located in Appendix A is referred to as “Bawang Merah” A, and so on). In the table located in Appendix G, I outline the differences in select tale motifs, some of which I consider within the analysis chapter of my paper.

Lastly, I concede here that I take liberties in my analysis work by referencing Eurocentric fairy tale materials in my analysis work of “Bawang Merah,” in part due to the comparative nature of my paper, but also because little scholarship has been published on Indonesian folkloric motifs in the English language.

#### *Statement Regarding the Transcriptions and Translations*

I attempt to provide predominately direct translations of the “Bawang Merah” tale versions in this paper to maintain the integrity of the participants’ versions of the tale. However, I believe some content of the transcriptions, if literally translated, would prove confusing to those unfamiliar with the tale, due to the non-linear manner in which the plot is relayed in many of the retellings. I address this problem by taking minimal liberties in diverging from the original Bahasa Indonesia versions in a restructuring of the translations, such as inserting dialogue tags beside dialogue lines unattributed to any specific character. Because I do not feel these surface changes compromise the integrity of the versions, I do not explicitly disclose the extent of these changes in this paper. My mother and I implemented few and minor grammatical changes to the original Bahasa Indonesia versions where necessary, uninfluencing plot.

## VI. Literature Review

### *Folklore and Psychology*

According to Rainer Wehse, in “Past and Present Folkloristic Narrator Research,” over time folklorists have moved away from examining the content and storyteller of folktales to “the *telling* in terms of performance, situation, and relationship to vital processes” (250). In this vein of folklore scholarship, in the late 1960’s, a trend emerged involving the use of psychologist Carl Jung’s theory on the ‘collective unconscious’ to examine folktales as a product of a storyteller’s unconscious mind, much in the same way as dreams (von Franz vii). According to Jung, members of a species are linked by their unconscious minds, shown in the way human beings all seem to equate certain symbols with invariable meanings (archetypes). In *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, published in 1970, Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz argues that folktales develop from “individual experiences of an invasion by some unconscious content, either in a dream or in a waking hallucination,” and then spread via oral communication “just as rumors do” (24). von Franz considers fairy tales to be sterile products of the collective unconscious, “a relatively closed system compounding one essential psychological meaning, which is expressed in a series of symbolic pictures and events and is discoverable in these” (2). She calls for Jungian analysts, of both dreams and fairy tales, to examine these products “as objectively as possible” (16).

As folktales are not transmitted and received within a vacuum, and therefore analyzing folktales with any degree of objectivity would prove to be impossible, successive scholarship has focused on the complex interactions between folktales and their children-audience: Do these tales influence children’s psychological functions? Is this influence beneficial (Bettelheim; Cashdan; Mitchell; Thomas), harmful (Donlan; Lieberman), or do these tales bestow upon their

consumers neutral psychological insight (Dieckmann, “The Favourite Fairy-Tale”; Jones; Zipes, “On the Use and Abuse of Folk and Fairy Tales with Children: Bruno Bettelheim's Moralistic Magic Wand”)? Do children project themselves onto these tales, to live vicariously through their fantasy plots (Cashdan; Hohr; Zipes, “On the Use and Abuse of Folk and Fairy Tales with Children: Bruno Bettelheim's Moralistic Magic Wand”)? Do adults use these tales to acclimate children to their societal roles in impending adulthood (Bakery-Sperry and Grauerholz; Bascom; Bettelheim; Dieckmann, “The Favourite Fairy-Tale”; Lieberman; Tatar)?

While many scholars theorize how children respond to folktales, there is an inherent danger in presuming children interpret folktales in any particular way. Maria Tatar, in *‘Off With Their Heads!’: Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood*, argues that adults read fairy tales “from a victim's point of view and promote the lesson gleaned from that reading, but children are probably more likely to identify with the predator” (206), a representation of the child’s id. Therefore, close readings of fairy tales more often than not “document [adults’] shifting attitudes toward the child” (20). Jack Zipes, too, admonishes the “static” way in which scholars tend to analyze the psychological potency of fairy tales, suggesting instead that the “value [of folktales] depends on how we actively produce and receive them in forms of social interaction ... [o]nly by grasping and changing the forms of social interaction and work shall we be able to make full use of the utopian and fantastic projections of folk and fairy tales” (“On the Use and Abuse of Folk and Fairy Tales with Children: Bruno Bettelheim's Moralistic Magic Wand” 177). Zipes frames the next focus of folklore scholarship as an exploration of “how to make the artistic forms conceived by the imagination operative *in society*. In other words, how can the imagination and imaginative literature transcend compensation?” (“On the Use and Abuse of Folk and Fairy Tales with Children: Bruno Bettelheim's Moralistic Magic Wand” 174).

Numerous studies have been carried out on individuals', and especially children's, responses to fairy tales (e.g. Applebee; Kiesel; Rice; Stone; Trousdale and McMillan). For example, in "Things Walt Disney Never Told Us," Kay Stone presents the opinions of forty women on Disney's and Grimms' fairy tales (48). Stone notes that while some of the women in her study did internalize fairy tales as instructional guides within their own lives, many found the passive heroines of these tales "boring," and some even "performed a fascinating feat of selective memory by transforming relatively passive heroines into active ones" (49). Similarly, demonstrating a young girl's rejection of fairy tales in "'Cinderella Was a Wuss': A Young Girl's Responses to Feminist and Patriarchal Folktales," Ann Trousdale and Sally McMillan document subject Nikki's, at the age of twelve, disdain for Cinderella:

... Nikki suddenly exclaimed, "Cinderella was a wuss!" How so? "She could have run away, you know. I mean, like she had the weakest spirit. It's like, 'Do something about your life! You're rotting away here!' She's obviously not stupid, you know. Cinderella." How did Cinderella come to be such a wuss? "Her dad probably was. Weak-willed. She had already resolved to live her whole life as a maid in service. So there's no chance. Now *me*, I'd fight it. I'd run away. Back in those times, you know, you just grab one of the best horses and everything, and they can't track you down." (14)

In contrast, the participants of Corrie Kiesel's study, Melissa and Julia (both 11.5 years old), appeared to "rewrit[e] sections of the tales to make them conform to their lives" (33).

Nevertheless, in both Trousdale and McMillan and Kiesel's studies, the girls related the fairy

tales back to their own lives. Arthur Applebee, in *The Child's Concept of Story: Ages Two to Seventeen*, draws upon the work of Jean Piaget to explain this phenomenon. Applebee reasons that as children move towards adolescence, their objective responses to fairy tales shifts from summarization to analysis, and their subjective responses from categorization to identification. Apple contends that by adolescence, developmentally healthy children *theoretically* should begin to explore “the structure of the work or the motives of characters” in stories they consume, and personally identify with these stories (123-125). Here, I want to emphasize my use of the word *theoretical*, as Piaget’s work is highly reductive and “no one can know a child’s learning ability or mental maturity simply from knowing how old the child is” (Glazer and Williams 13).

In *Child and Tale: The Origins of Interest*, F. André Favat argues that “the hero of the fairy tale exists at the center of his world, the events of which, however initially adverse, consistently conjoin in myriad ways to enable him to fulfill his desires,” as children, too, “live with the impression that their thoughts, aims, and desires are known and shared by those around them” (37). Favat hypothesizes that when children – preoccupied with their burgeoning ego – come to the realization that the world does not operate solely to fulfill their own needs, they seek instant gratification in living vicariously through the heroes of fairy tales and comics which reaffirm their original worldview, if only for a short period of time (48-54). Yet, as I have established earlier in this paper, children do not necessarily identify with the heroes and heroines of fairy tales. Instead, I argue that the mutable nature of fairy tales draws children to consume them. Beyond commonalities in their brevity, repetitive narration, and simplicity of plot, all of which Favat considers in his book (50-54), most fairy tales begin with some variant of ‘once upon a time,’ indicating “timelessness and spacelessness” (von Franz 39). Fairy tales exist outside of any fixed reality and are therefore able to encompass all realities, including that of the

child's. Also, the characters in these tales are rarely described in terms of physical appearance and disposition, beyond the general descriptors “beautiful” or “handsome” versus “ugly,” “kind” versus “mean,” etc. These characters are essentially blank slates unto which children may graft themselves. Likewise, Favat notes, “the basic actions and the types of characters do not [vary between tales]” (53). In this way, fairy tales can be compared to comics and cartoons in terms of mutability of form as, when an individual experiences these mediums, “... [Y]ou see *yourself* ... this is the *primary cause* of our childhood fascination with cartoons. Though other factors such as *universal identification*, *simplicity* and the *childlike features* of many cartoon characters also play a part. The cartoon is a *vacuum* into which our *identity and awareness are pulled* ... an *empty shell* that we inhabit which *enables* us to travel in *another realm*. We don't just *observe* the cartoon, we *become* it!” (McCloud 36). To apply this concept to real world psychoanalysis, Carina Coulacoglou developed the Fairy Tale Test (FTT), a standardized psychoanalytic tool that uses children's projections of self in familiar fairy tales to “analy[ze] defense mechanisms, the integration of ego functioning, and the quality of family dynamics” (45).

As I established through this literature review, the meanings children derive from fairy tales depend upon their individual readings of the tales, meanings influenced by their psyches and are theoretically indicative of underlying psychological problems. Therefore, in my analysis of “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih” and the comparative tales, I cannot claim to be able to conjecture how this tale may affect the children who consume it. However, I attempt to explore the messages – on the surface and psychological levels – that the participants of my study may impart to younger generations through their versions of the “Bawang Merah” tale.



Few studies of Indonesian folklore have been conducted in the U.S., with the majority of such literature being published in the Netherlands and Indonesia. James Danandjaja, who taught at the University of Indonesia (Junaidi), was the leading contemporary scholar of Indonesian folklore, his work having even been republished by Alan Dundes in *Cinderella: A Folklore Casebook* (“A Javanese Cinderella Tale and Its Pedagogical Value”). *Folklor Indonesia: Ilmu Gosip, Dongèng, dan Lain Lain* is one of his more prominent books.

Jane de Vries’s *Volksverhalen uit Oost-Indië: Sprookjes en Fabels*, published in 1928, was the first printed “corpus of Indonesian tales of all kinds” (Thompson 80). Although it is not accessible to me because I do not read Dutch, Stith Thompson notes in his book review, “[De Vrie’s] comparative notes on each of the tales and on many of the separate motifs show an unusual acquaintance with folk-tales in all parts of the world. The influence of India on this body of folk-lore becomes very clear in the light of his studies. A convenient summary of the tales is given, with references, where appropriate, to Aarne’s classification of folk-tale types” (80).

Initially compiled by Gabriel Bernardo, *A Critical and Annotated Bibliography of Philippine, Indonesian and other Malayan Folklore* was published by its editor Francisco Radaza Demetrio in 1972. Bernardo began the project as his master’s thesis, a collection of “all the materials on Philippine, Indonesian, Malayan and allied folklore available in the three major public libraries in Manila in 1923,” but Demetrio presumes “[Bernardo] did not intend to write *finis* [‘the end’] to his work with 1923,” as index cards containing additional entries were found among his notes (i). Unfortunately, many of the works cited in this bibliography are considered orientalist today, such as 251) John Arnott Macculloch’s *The Childhood of Fiction: A Study of Folk Tales and Primitive Thought*. Therefore, while this bibliography remains an informative historical document on Philippine, Indonesian, and Malayan folklore research of the early

twentieth century, it is not a relevant tool considering the modern folklorist's approach to indigenous folklore research, which in contrast emphasizes the sophistication of all cultures' folklore.

In 1972, Danandjaja published *An Annotated Bibliography of Javanese Folklore*. Of the entries on Javanese folktales, most concern the *Kantjil* cycle, tales of a mouse-deer trickster figure. The two entries in reference to “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih” – 168) A. B. H.'s “Een Inlandsch sprookje” [An Indigenous Folktale] and 200) S. Luinenburg's “Javaansche verhalen” [Javanese Folktales] – are only Dutch translations of the tale. Interestingly, within this bibliography, Danandjaja refers to “Bawang Merah” as a “Javanese Cinderella folktale ... (Type 510A)” (38).

In fact, no definitive studies have been conducted on “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih,” beyond those which assert the general pedagogical value of the tale in the emotional and intellectual development of the child (e.g. Aritonang; Purwanti; Sukaningsih; Widiastuti). However, in *Problematika Penulisan Cerita Rakyat Untuk Anak di Indonesia*, Murti Bunanta provides some background information on the twenty-nine written versions of the tale she collects in her research. Notably, she mentions that the first known documented version of “Bawang Merah” was written in the Dutch language in 1904 (95).

### *The Brothers Grimm and Perrault*

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and Charles Perrault are widely recognized even outside of the folkloric academic community for their contributions to fairy tale research. While many scholars write on the biographies, methodologies, and influences of these scholars as pertaining

to their folklore collection work, here I want to singularly and briefly address the ambiguities surrounding the origins of their respective fairy tale collections.

The Grimms' tales derive mainly from the "oral and literary tales from educated members of the middle and aristocratic classes." Additionally, the Grimms did not travel themselves to obtain their tales, but instead "established a vast international network of scholars, friends, and acquaintances who did research for them and provided them with materials that were relevant to all fields of their work" (Zipes, "The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm" 831). Preparing their tales for dissemination, the Grimms "altered the[ir collected] oral tales in a misguided effort to 'improve' them," creating composite texts now referred to as "fakelore"<sup>1</sup> by folklorists (Dundes 260).

Perrault originally published his tales under his son's name, Pierre Perrault Darmancour (Zipes, "The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm" 839). However, Pierre may have aided his father in the writing of the tales in some undefined manner (Perrault xv). Zipes summarizes the intent of Perrault's work as a "[transformation of] several popular folktales with all their superstitious beliefs and magic into moralistic tales that would appeal largely to adults and demonstrate a modern approach to literature" (Zipes, "The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm" 839). Perrault prescribes specific morals for his tales in the form of rhymed verse, though I will not consider these verses within my paper.

### *The Aarne-Thompson Tale-Type Index*

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<sup>1</sup> Dundes defines "fakelore" as "an item which the collector claims is genuine oral tradition but which has been doctored or in some cases entirely fabricated by the purported collector" (260).

Tale-type and motif indexes are some of the most fundamental tools in the discipline of folkloristics, and are especially crucial to folklorists conducting comparative studies of tales. Written by Antti Aarne and later translated by Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography* (more commonly referred to as the Aarne-Thompson tale-type index) organizes folktales in consideration of their similar plot patterns. Its broad categories include Animal Tales, Ordinary Folk-tales, Jokes and Anecdotes, Formula Tales, and Unclassified Tales. Within these categories are additional divisions that increase with specificity. For example, within the category Jokes and Anecdotes fall the subcategories of: Numskull Stories, Stories about Married Couples, Stories about a Women (Girl), Stories about a Man (Boy) (subdivided into The Clever Man, Lucky Accidents, The Stupid Man, Jokes about Parsons and Religious Orders, and Anecdotes about Other Groups of People), and Tales of Lying. “AT” numbers are assigned to each tale-type, allowing for facile identification of similar tales.

Alan Dundes advises scholars writing about folktales to take a “comparative treatment of any particular tale, using the resources of numerous publications and the holdings of folklore archives, as indicated in the standard tale-type indexes” (“Fairy Tales from a Folkloristic Perspective” 266). Hence, I note that “The Fairies” and “Mother Holle” fall under the Aarne-Thompson tale type 480 (within the category “Kind and unkind”) and “One-Eye, Two-Eyes, and Three-Eyes” falls under the tale type 511. Based on my collected versions of “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih,” due to striking similarities with the plots and motifs of these European fairy tales, I would categorize this tale under both types 480 and 511. However, as previously mentioned, James Danandjaja considers “Bawang Merah” to be a type 510A tale. Because of the radical variability in plot between versions of the tale, “Bawang Merah” effectively evades any definite categorization within tale-type and motif indexes. Therefore, I will not utilize tale-type

and motif indexes in my analysis of these tales, as these resources are reductive for the purpose of my study.

## VII. Analysis

In which Direction Does the Money Flow?: Economics in the Tales

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution*, elucidates of the plastic socioeconomic status of Western women in the late nineteenth century:

The comfort, the luxury, the necessities of life itself, which the woman receives, are obtained by the husband, and given her by him. And, when the woman, left alone with no man to ‘support’ her, tries to meet her own economic necessities, the difficulties which confront her prove conclusively what the general economic status of the woman is. (5)

The clichéd phrase “fairy tale ending” aptly proves the persistence of this patriarchal-centric pattern illustrated in fairy tales, as often the beautiful and good but victimized heroine receives her ‘happily ever after’ when a socially high-ranking man grants her a marriage proposal. Rarely does one get a glimpse into this heroine’s life ever after, but it is implied that the young girl blossoms into the epitome princess or noble lady, living an idyllic life in contrast to her previous hardships. This complete transformation of her socioeconomic status may be considered miraculous, and yet largely well deserved by the hardworking and humble girl. Though, beyond this net gain in worldly comfort, what should we make of the transformative events that allow the heroine to transcend her life’s station? Moreover, how is this status change justified within the sphere of the fairy tale world? In this paper, I will break down the commodity exchanges between characters in my collected versions of “Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih” and the

comparative fairy tales. I will discuss the significance of these exchanges in terms of the identities of the helper-figures, the circumstances in which the heroine either receives money as a gift, reward, or payment for services rendered to the helper-figure, consider the form in which the money is given, and analyze the significance of the helper-figures' deaths in "Bawang Merah" A and "One-Eye." I argue that the main purpose of the heroines' presence in the tales is to facilitate the exchange of money between the other characters, as heroines are considered commodities themselves, except in the case of Bawang Putih in "Bawang Merah" C, who retains her money by the end of the tale.

For the purpose of this paper, I broadly define money as commodities with which an individual may satisfy one or more of their physiological needs as outlined in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow). This includes forms of currency such as precious metals and gems, or consumable goods such as food – as Tatar succinctly states, "[i]n the world of folktales, a full stomach can become the signature of success" (206). In this sense, every considered tale adheres to the following pattern: An evil mother or stepmother favors her unattractive and unpleasant daughter(s) and persecutes her beautiful and kind daughter, the heroine of the tale.<sup>2</sup> A helper-figure gives the heroine a valuable commodity, and in four of the eight tales, the heroine uses her ownership of this commodity to attract a socially high-ranking man's attentions. Thus transpires the heroine's 'happily ever after,' as her virtuous behavior is finally recompensed. However, critical differences between the tales complicate the seemingly transparent message behind this basic tale paradigm. One of these differences lies in the physical forms the helper-figures assume in each tale.

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<sup>2</sup> According to Marcia Lieberman, within the fairy tale world "[g]ood-temper and meekness are so regularly associated with beauty" (385), suggestive of the halo effect at work in fairy tales.

### *Helper Figures*

Although the fairy godmother of “Cinderella” remains one of modern society’s quintessential fairy figures, the fairies of folktales may take any animate form, including supernatural beings such as the giants in “Bawang Merah” B, D, and E, and anthropomorphic animals such as the fish in “Bawang Merah” A and C. Yet, overlooking their variations in physical form, fairies share a common purpose of existence. According to Diane Purkiss in *At the Bottom of the Garden: A Dark History of Fairies, Hobgoblins, and Other Troublesome Things*, fairies were born out of fear of the unknown: “What do you see in the blackness? The mind of man, child or adult, abhors a vacuum. Darkness is blank, and must be peopled, must be filled with terrible *things* that symbolize fearful power” (13). Fairies of the Middle Ages officiated over life-creating and life-taking events, including births, conceptions, and deaths, “and [they were] the ones who made all three go wrong” (52). However, over time fairies came to represent guardian angels to otherwise helpless heroines. In these roles, fairies supplement their heroines’ agency, as heroines rarely hold any power of their own within folktales. In addition to their political potency, Purkiss argues, fairies carry the secrets of the human world: “... fairies live in a world underground, an underearth; this means they know things – they know where buried treasure lies, where it can be found, where the dead are – for the dead too are in the ground” (119). Given the fundamental role fairies play in the plots of many folktales, I would go so far as to state that these characters hold the most vital role in any given folktale. When a fairy appears in a tale, one can expect an imminent upheaval of social order – in the case of the considered tales, an inversion of the socioeconomic statuses of the heroines – to occur. As fairies represent a liminal state of being, at once part of the fairy tale world yet not quite part of



normative human society, they tend to interfere in the lives of pitiable young girls, who reside too at the margins of society.

In contrast to the largely faceless human characters in folktales, fairies often take distinctive physical forms. Of the considered tales, the fairies of “Bawang Merah” A and C are fish; of “Bawang Merah” B, D, and E are giants; of “One-Eye” an old woman and a goat<sup>3</sup>; of “The Fairies” an old woman and then a princess, and of “Mother Holle” an old woman. Most of these fairies assume female forms, though the fish in “Bawang Merah” C is not gendered. Interestingly, “Bawang Merah” C is the only tale in which the heroine, Bawang Putih, keeps her money by the end. In the other tales, the heroine’s money reverts to her husband (“Bawang Merah” A and E; “One-Eye”; “The Fairies”), family (“Mother Holle”), or the money ambiguously disappears from the tale altogether (“Bawang Merah” B and D). Though, before discussing the significance of the neutral fairy in this outlier tale, I must first deduce the significance of the other fairies assuming female forms.

The gendered fairies of the tales embody very specific females; namely, they stand in as grandmother-like figures to the heroines of the tales. Bawang Putih explicitly refers to the fish in “Bawang Merah” A and the giant in “Bawang Merah” B as grandmothers. Moreover, the giants in “Bawang Merah” B, D, and E demonstrate their maternal instincts towards Bawang Putih by protecting her from their husbands with a taste for human flesh. The old women in “One-Eye,” “The Fairies,” and “Mother Holle” even take the physical form of old women, suggestive of grandmothers.

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<sup>3</sup> I consider the old woman and goat of “One-Eye” to be two embodiments of the fairy character in this tale. Although my treatment of this fairy figure is highly reductive, due to the time constraints of this project, I will not address the complexities of the “One-Eye” fairy within this paper.

Why is the grandmother-fairy figure so prevalent in the tales? The answer may lie in the heroines' need for nurturance. While their fathers are absent, the heroines forced to live at the mercy of their abusive mothers and stepmothers, the grandmother-fairies may be compensating for their respective heroines' lack of parental support. A more strategic analysis of this power dynamic can be derived through an assessment of character agency, employing Ruth Bottigheimer's speech spectrum theory. According to Bottigheimer, the agencies of female characters in fairy tales can be evaluated in terms of speech frequency: "At one end of the speech scale are biological mothers – good but dead – and their marriageable daughters. Both are silent. ...At the other end of the speech scale appear both evil witches and witchlike figures and authority figures" (125). As the heroines may only escape their abusive households by entering into other households through marriage, they are required to keep silent to maintain their prospects for marriage. Hence, their fairies – powerful "women" who dwell at the other end of the speech spectrum – take it upon themselves to propel these heroines into the bonds of marriage, or at least bestow upon their heroines dowries with which they may secure for themselves marriages. Whether or not the heroines retain this money is irrelevant; after the fairies perform their benefactor duties, having done their part in providing the best circumstances for the heroines to attract future husbands, they markedly disappear from the tales, and from the lives of the heroines.

One may beg the question: Why can these fairies not accomplish the same task while donning the guise of mothers? In short, mother figures are complicated. Besides the predominant negative connotation of stepmother figures in fairy tales, Tatar supposes that children retain underlying resentments towards their mothers. Tatar notes that "[f]or Freud, the mother who nourishes the child, but who also imposes 'manifold restrictions' on it in the course of its

development, becomes the target of the child's hostility and of a projected form of oral aggression" (203). Consciously avoiding their heroines' resentments, the grandmother-fairies are able to accomplish their charitable acts while maintaining relative detachment from their heroines, outside of their economic-based interactions – for in the end, the relationship between a giver fairy and recipient heroine hinges upon their exchange of money and nothing more.

The neutral fish in "Bawang Merah" C, in contrast, does not attempt to establish a relationship with Bawang Putih. In fact, their interaction in the tale is rather brief. Without appointing itself as Bawang Putih's fairy godmother, the fish seems to plainly reward Bawang Putih for telling the truth, possessing no ulterior motives for the exchange, and afterwards divorces itself from the plot of the tale. This pure economic interaction, uncomplicated by relational-social roles, translates into Bawang Putih being able to retain the money, as she is not required to invest it into her dowry.

More investigation into the history of the "Bawang Merah" tale, and especially a more extensive folklore collection project of oral and literary versions of the tale, is necessary to deduce the message of the "Bawang Merah" C tale. Specifically, future scholarship must begin to decipher the socio-historical relationships between versions of the tale. For instance, the helper figures of "Bawang Merah" A and C take the form of fish. Is the fish in "Bawang Merah" C a vestige left from a proto-Bawang Merah version from which "Bawang Merah" A also arose? Did "Bawang Merah" A and C develop independently or convergently from each other? Do fish regularly appear as motifs in Indonesian folktales, or are the fish helper-figures in "Bawang Merah" A and C unique to the tale?

*Conditions under which Money is Received*

Having established the role of the fairies in the tale, I will now address the conditions under which the heroines receive their money. Broadly speaking, the heroines receive their money in one of the three following ways: 1) as a *gift* unconditionally given, 2) as a *reward* conditionally given to acknowledge their good character (e.g. Bawang Putih's honesty in "Bawang Merah" C), or 3) as a *payment* for services rendered to the fairy. The heroine of "One-Eye," Two-Eyes, is the only one to obtain her money as a gift, possibly due to the pity of her fairy. In "Bawang Merah" A, the fairy appears to reward Bawang Putih for charitably sharing her rice with the fish. Bawang Putih in "Bawang Merah" C is rewarded by the fish for her honesty in correctly identifying her stepmother's lost shawl, while in "The Fairies," the fairy rewards the heroine for giving her a drink of water from the well. In "Bawang Merah" B, D, and E, as well as "Mother Holle," the fairies reward their heroines with money in exchange for physical labor, although the fairies do not promise the heroines money for their housework beforehand.

Each heroine's means of attaining their money largely determine the moral underlying each tale, in part contingent upon each heroine's deservedness for their money. An evaluation of each heroine's deservedness may provide insight into these morals. What does each tale attempt to teach children?

Obey without question.

In four of the eight tales, in which the heroines perform housework for their fairies without question or promise of pay, the heroines' subservience is championed. These heroines are rewarded for obeying authority figures blindly. Three tales extol the heroines' honesty and other good traits, educating children that by *acting* as a good person – as the heroines are tested for their honesty, etc. – they will be rewarded. One tale illustrates the heroine's innate goodness and pitiable life's circumstances as the reason for her monetary attainment, sending the message

that the heroine deserved her money as recompense for her abuse. In order, these tales commend a young girl's 1) complete surrendering of self to authority figures, 2) unfailing display of honesty and charity towards the weak (the fish in "Bawang Merah" A and the old woman in "The Fairies"), and 3) surrendering of her fate to the whims of those who may either help or harm her being. These tales attempt to teach young girls that, to obtain their 'happily ever after,' they must stifle their agency and submit to others. To once again reference Gilman's *Women and Economics*, these tales reaffirm the message that "whatever the economic value of the domestic industry of women is, they do not get it ... [t]heir labor is neither given nor taken as a factor in economic exchange" (8). Ironically, the heroine only receives her money when she does not purposely strive for it.

However, considering their behavior using Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development, the heroines may be just operating as developmentally mature members of society. In *The Psychology of Moral Development: The Nature and Validity of Moral Stages*, Kohlberg asserts that "universal and regular age trends of development may be found in moral judgment, and these have a formal-cognitive base." Through his research collecting "free responses to ten hypothetical moral dilemmas," he identifies six stages based on potential moral reasons defining individuals' actions beyond their outcomes (43). In order, individuals operating at: stage one act to avoid punishment; stage two act to satisfy their needs; stage three conform to social order; stage four regard authority; stage five conform to laws; and stage six with regard to their conscience (44).

The heroines of the tales seem to operate at either stage three or four:

Stage 3: Good-boy orientation. Orientation to approval and to pleasing and helping others. Conformity to stereotypical images of majority or natural role, behavior, and judgment by intentions. (44)

Stage 4: Authority and social-order maintaining orientation. Orientation to ‘doing duty’ and to showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order for its own sake. Regard for earned expectations of others. (44)

Although the motivations of the heroines are not explicitly stated within the tales, their actions reflect a tendency towards total subservience to authority figures they encounter within the tales. Whether or not their actions necessarily imply an “orientation to approval” or “orientation to ‘doing duty’” is ambiguous, and therefore arguably unimportant. These tales emphasize the heroines’ good behavior on the surface level, regardless of the underlying motivations that guide their actions. The tales argue that a person’s concrete actions, rather than innate kindness, precede societal conformation and therefore social advancement. What is below the surface may be ignored, disregarded in favor of the outer, or what is visible to others.

Conversely, the stepmothers and stepsisters (and in the case of “The Fairies” and “One-Eye,” the mothers and sisters) of the heroines decidedly operate at stage two:

Stage 2: Naively egoistic orientation. Right action is that instrumentally satisfying the self’s needs and occasionally others’. Awareness of relativism of value to each actor’s needs and perspective. Naive egalitarianism and orientation to exchange and reciprocity. (44)

The stepmothers and stepsisters are largely motivated to act in the manner that provides them with the most profit in any given instance, as they try to accumulate for themselves the resources to meet and exceed their physiological needs. These characters' pronounced hunger and ensuing gluttonous consumption of money might be justified as, "for the poor desire for food outweighs and drives out other desires" (Purkiss 145). As the stepmothers, socially obligated to care for and feed their stepchildren, find themselves entrenched in poverty with no conceivable means of escape, their hunger drives their regression into infantile behavior. In a sense, they mentally revert back to the time in life when they relied on their id for survival.

This juvenile characterization of the poor also serves to highlight the *perfect* transcendent heroines, carrying within themselves the innate ability to overcome poverty. Hence, considering the dynamics of the monetary exchanges within the context of the tales, these tales effectively reduce the complexity of social issues involving disparities between the socio-economic classes, especially that concerning poverty. These tales justify the skirting of the basic social responsibility of a society to provide for its impoverished members, arguing instead that social mobility is an individual's responsibility. If an individual cannot ascend beyond their inborn socio-economic status, according to the tales, it is because of their lack of ability, rather than the circumstances society has placed upon them. Poverty here is framed as a fault, or an obstacle, rather than the inevitable product of a profit-driven, meritocratic society. The idea of deserved money is emphasized too, in the manner that the heroines obtain their money through their socially conformist behavior rather than labor (highly ironic in this context), as I have established earlier in this paper. After proving themselves to be sufficiently mentally matured, the heroines may advance into their next episode in life: marriage.

“Bawang Merah” A is interesting to examine in light of this argument, as the stepmother’s greed ultimately leads her to intentionally eliminate her money source. In “Bawang Merah” A, Bawang Putih is noted to share her rice with the fish, whereas the stepmother and Bawang Merah fixate on food; they can consume entire feasts in single days, although their hunger is never satiated. Their actions are entirely induced by their hunger drive, and when they locate their indirect benefactor, the fish, they are driven to entirely consume the very being that provided for their sustenance. There is no logic behind their killing and subsequent consumption of the fish, nor is explicit jealousy apparent as the reason behind the killing. No explanation at all is given for their actions to rationalize their behavior. Consequently, we are left only with the gruesome image of the destruction that the poor, ruled by their uncontrolled – and uncontrollable – hunger, may inflict upon possessors of money. The poor are portrayed as mechanical consumers, as even the suggestion of money may lead them to impulsively “makan orang,” to consume their benefactor’s resources until nothing is left. In this tale, the benefactor-receptor relationship between the stepmother, Bawang Merah, and fish easily lapses into a parasitic interaction. The stepmother and Bawang Merah, portrayed are caricaturized as blind-devouring monsters, for which enough is never enough. Only the “good girl,” the heroine, can act as a conduit for the transfer of money, creating distance between the benefactors and final recipients of the money. Good girls, the tale edifies, never consume but only transmit.

Furthermore, in “Dietary Taboos in Java: Myths, Mysteries, and Methodology,” Valerie Hull alludes to a fish taboo for children, so perhaps it is implicitly “bad luck” for the stepmother and Bawang Merah to literally consume the fish. Although, Hull concedes that with this particular taboo, there are also “a number of possible explanatory factors, including regional variation based on ecological or other conditions, age patterns, and economic constraints” (252).



Thus, additional research into the nature of the fish taboo is warranted before it can be seriously considered in a discussion of the significance of the consumption of the fish in “Bawang Merah” A.

In “Bawang Merah” A’s European counterpart, “One-Eye,” it is explicitly stated that the mother feels jealously towards her daughter Two-Eyes for her newfound personal access to money, through the goat that provides her food daily. When the mother learns of the goat:

Then the jealous mother yelled at Two-Eyes, ‘Do you think you can live better than we do? Well, I’ll soon put an end to your taste for the good life.’ She fetched a butcher knife and stabbed the goat in the heart so that it fell down dead.”

(Grimm and Grimm 427)

This display of oral aggression on the part of the mother is pronounced in this tale. It distinguishes the actions of the mother, adding a layer of depth to her character. Less so is the mother of the tale portrayed as a caricature of the all-consuming poor, but a thinking character in her own right.

Conversely, Tatar affirms that the motif of a parental oral aggression may actually derive from the child’s fear of their own aggression towards their mother. Tatar argues that “...we can draw on the language of psychoanalysis to state that oral deprivation leads to a desire for retaliation in the form of oral aggression, which in turn is projected in fantasy onto the agent responsible for the original state of deprivation” (196). Within the context of mother-child relationship dynamics, Tatar argues, “[f]or Freud, the mother who nourishes the child, but who also imposes ‘manifold restrictions’ on it in the course of its development, becomes the target of

the child's hostility and of a projected form of oral aggression" (203). What can be said of the projected oral aggressive behavior of the stepmother in "Bawang Merah" A and "One-Eye"?

The characterization of the stepmother of "Bawang Merah" A is simpler to understand in this context. While the stepmother is figured as a young child, a being driven completely by her id, her oral aggression "fits" her character. She acts upon her oral aggression and consumes her mother<sup>4</sup> in an attempt to satiate both hunger and aggression through the consumption and internalization of the "agent responsible for [her] original state of deprivation." While the stepmother attempts to thwart the cycle of aggression through the destruction of her mother, she in fact perpetuates the aggression through her figurative pseudo-pregnancy (Kawash)<sup>5</sup> – as the resulting child would inherit the stepmother's aggression.

Here, I want to again emphasize the function of *seeming* in "Bawang Merah" A. As I have previously argued, "Bawang Merah" A is a tale of outward appearances. In this way, there is a peculiar hollowness to the story and its "morals" that is entirely disconcerting. The story itself appears to act as a black hole, in which what is internal disappears in favor of the external, especially in terms of value. The commoditization of characters is not limited to the heroine of the tale, Bawang Putih, but even the fish must function within the parameters of the capitalist system of the "Bawang Merah" A world. The fish's true potential is realized in its death and subsequent transformation into the gold bush, which literally represents the fish's value to the story. Perhaps the "Bawang Merah" A tale is, in its true nature, a satire commenting on the

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<sup>4</sup> As Bawang Putih refers to the magic belanak fish as "grandmother," this relationship makes sense.

<sup>5</sup> Samira Kawash, in her *New York Times* article "Sex and Candy," touches upon the idea of chocolate as a "sexual surrogate," which, when gluttonously consumed, "shows" much in the same way as pregnancy. I take her argument a step further to suggest that gluttony (no matter what food tempts one to overeat, for whatever reason) is intrinsically intertwined with the image of pregnancy, both representing a state of oral aggression that, outwardly, are indistinguishable in form.

superficiality of a society driven by consumption in every sense of the word, as commodities take a life of their own beyond the static characters of the tale.

### *Forms of Money Received*

To catalogue the forms of rewards<sup>6</sup> each heroine receives in the tales: In “Bawang Merah” A, Bawang Putih receives food and a gold bush; in “Bawang Merah” B, Bawang Putih receives a squash filled with jewelry; in “Bawang Merah” C, D, and E, Bawang Putih receives a box filled with jewelry; in “One-Eye” the heroine receives food and a tree made of silver leaves and gold fruit; in “The Fairies” the heroine receives the ability to produce jewels, diamonds, and flowers through her speech; in “Mother Holle,” the heroine is covered in gold. Undoubtedly, many of the rewards are impractical yet fantastical in form, and in the following paragraphs I will discuss the symbolic significance of each reward form.

I will postpone my discussion of the reward forms in “Bawang Merah” A until the “Death of the Fairies” component of my analysis chapter, as a discussion of the reward form of this tale may be more relevant in consideration of the events surrounding the fish’s death.

Pregnancy appears to be a prevalent feature of the considered tales. As “[a] stone or core fruit bearing seeds of new life within a swollen exterior is an obvious metaphor for a pregnant woman’s belly” (Purkiss 122), I conjecture that the fruit rewards of “Bawang Merah” B and “One-Eye” evoke the image of pregnancy.<sup>7</sup> In the case of “Bawang Merah” B, a direct link can be drawn between Bawang Putih’s “seed money” reward and the potential implications of the

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<sup>6</sup> I ignore here the distinctions I made between the gift, rewards, and payment forms of the money the fairies bestow upon their respective heroines, for the purpose of simplifying my argument.

<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, in “*And They Are Still Living Happily Ever After*”: *Anthropology, Cultural History, and Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, Lutz Röhrich argues, “golden apples grant immortality and eternal youth” (168).

reward – a dowry with which Bawang Putih may secure for herself a marriage with the clear end goal of producing children. In “One-Eye,” on the other hand, Two-Eyes retains her basic character agency by instigating her marriage with the knight. According to Lenore Manderson in her introduction to *Shared Wealth and Symbol: Food, Culture, and Society in Oceania and Southeast Asia*, “[b]ecause food is closely associated with sexuality, commensality is frequently a public statement of a sexual relationship and, in effect, the consummation of marriage” (12). While the knight explicitly proposes marriage to Two-Eyes, she symbolically instigates the marriage through the act of bestowing upon him the tree branch. In particular, the phallic form of the gift cannot be overlooked (Freud, “A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis” 127), because with this gift exchange Two-Eyes voluntarily relinquishes her agency at the symbolic consummation of the marriage. While on the surface appearing quite misogynistic – for Two-Eyes must submit to the knight, as society requires of her – she makes this choice in order to advance socially. Two-Eyes, rather than allowing her physiological needs to drive her actions, chooses instead to relinquish her agency here to secure the necessary resources for her survival – available to her through marriage. It is at once her best and most repressive option, to give up her autonomy to sustain her physical self. Also significant is the presence of silver leaves and gold fruit on the tree’s branches. Considering the symbolic association of gold as representative of the masculine, and silver of the feminine (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 882), I argue that the motif of the gift branch emphasizes the importance of their marriage in terms of sexual reproduction, rather than as a social institution.

In contrast, the boxes containing jewelry rewarded to Bawang Putih in “Bawang Merah” C, D, and E are sterile and practical. The economic exchanges in these tales are, as a result, mainly straightforward upon closer inspection. Again separating themselves from the

consequences of their actions, the fairies bestow their respective heroines opaque boxes containing their “just desserts” so that they may further detach themselves from the heroines. While a fairy handing Bawang Putih the jewelry in full view (or worse – handing her malicious stepsister a poisonous snake) may reflect upon the fairy’s close involvement with the story, by hiding their gifts in the boxes the fairies evade their social functions and responsibilities within their worlds. Instead, Bawang Putih’s goodness is attributed to her finding gold in her box, while Bawang Merah’s wicked disposition (rather than the fairy) is found to be the source of her untimely death. Attention is reflected back to the behaviors of the characters rather than the judgments of the fairies, to once again spotlight the consequences of good and evil behavior by ‘the end.’ The jewelry contained in the boxes (and in the case of “Bawang Merah” B, squash), itself, evokes the themes liminality and sexuality, the former of which I will explore in the “Death of the Fairies” component of this analysis chapter. Addressing the latter theme, jewelry may symbolize “the drive of the libido” and also “immortality which does not come from the gods but from the bowels of the Earth” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 554). Within the “Bawang Merah” B, C, D, and E tales, Bawang Putih receives jewelry as a dowry promising her imminent attainment of immortality through her marriage and resulting children.

The rewards given to the heroines of “The Fairies” and “Mother Holle” are especially impractical to the heroines. Perhaps these reward forms can be read as a literal commoditization of the heroines, already commodities considering the prescribed social duties of their sex. Especially in the case of the “Mother Holle” heroine, there is very little market liquidity associated with being literally covered in gold. In fact, no information of this heroine’s life is given after she is bestowed her reward; she could have simply lived the rest of her life serving her mother and sister. The implications of the reward in her life are not of concern within the

tale, which focuses on her outward value. She embodies an object in both a metaphorical and literal sense.

### *Death of the Fairies*

While I previously argued that successful sexual reproduction is presented as the foremost concern for the heroines of fairy tales, what role does death – the ending rather than creation of life – play in these tales? In seven of the eight considered tales, with the exception of “Mother Holle,” at least one of the characters die. In “Bawang Merah” A and “One-Eye,” the fairies die. In “Bawang Merah” B, C, D, and E, the Bawang Putih’s stepmother and stepsister die. In “The Fairies,” the heroine’s biological sister dies. Considering Klaus Antoni’s principle of the afterlife as “[t]he fundamental idea ... that the other world absorbs the dead but at the same time it also releases new life” (149), in this paper I will consider how the deaths of the fairies and impact the heroines’ ‘happily ever after.’ I argue that the tales in which the fairies die emphasize a young girl’s compulsory divorcement from the childhood magic of the fairy tale world in order to thrive in the “real” world.

In both Indonesian and English cultures, death is intrinsically linked with the underground. According to Robert Wessing in “Symbolic Animals in the Land between the Waters: Markers of Place and Transition,” Indonesian people traditionally understand life to be organized in spatial stages, a lifespan consisting of “movements [that] take place along two dimensions: along a vertical axis from the pre-natal stage through life into death, and on a horizontal plane, earth but more immediately the community, where people participate in social life” (207). Purkiss similarly argues, “the dead ... are in the ground” (119). As such, literally it makes sense that Bawang Putih of “Bawang Merah” A and Two-Eyes of “One-Eye” bury the

remains of their fairies into their gardens, proper to the funeral rite customs of both cultures. However, the fairy tale world operates on different standards of natural law, as inanimate objects may take on lives of their own – in “Bawang Merah” A and “One-Eye,” animal remains spontaneously transform into foliage and pomes of precious metals. Therefore, I believe treating the ground as a dynamic character of the fairy tale world – and moreover, considering nature to be a consciously participating force in the fairy tale world – may prove useful in understanding the complex power dynamics at work within the worlds of “Bawang Merah” A and “One-Eye.” Hence, in this component of my analysis, I will focus on these burial places as both feminine and liminal spaces capable of performing self-initiated action.<sup>8</sup>

Due to its penetrable quality, I consider the underground to be a feminine space. Purkiss warns that this feminized space may become “[sullied] and [broken] by the violently phallic plough” (136), a metaphor for the loss of virginity upon sexual intercourse. The word “[violent]” additionally carries the connotation of rape. Ironically, this metaphoric breaking of the ground is entirely female-driven in both tales, as the *heroines* Bawang Putih and Two-Eyes dig through the ground to bury their *female* fairies. Therefore, even though the physical actions of these heroines in the burial rites can be identified as masculine, all entities involved in the interaction are female. These conditions complicate the metaphoric aspect of the burial scenes. The tales are ambiguous in this sense; we cannot specifically determine whether or not these burials can be considered a “valid” metaphor for socially normative sexual intercourse, as there is no participating male entity in the scenes. Do the tales suggest feminine agency through these

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<sup>8</sup> As “Bawang Merah” is attributed as a Javanese tale by Danandjaja (*An Annotated Bibliography of Javanese Folklore* 38), my treatment of the ground as an active character of the “Bawang Merah” tale may be particularly relevant, as the Javanese people traditionally believe in animism, that “[e]verything in nature has a soul which can leave its habitat to roam at will and influence men’s lives” (van der Kroef 27).

interactions, and what do we make of the blatant connotation of rape in the burial scenes?

Likewise, what does it mean for the heroines to instigate these metaphoric rapes?

To begin to answer these questions, it may be beneficial first to explain the idea of the garden as a liminal space between civilization and the wilderness, “a site and an occasion for a labor with nature” (West 1). This liminality is expressed in multiple axes, most visibly spatially via the heroines’ ascending socio-economic classes, and chronologically via the passage of life. The gardens in “Bawang Merah” A and “One-Eye” provide Bawang Putih and Two-Eyes a space in which to transform their normative realities into the fantastical ‘happily ever after’-type conclusions many fairy tales exhibit, through the heroines’ gain of material wealth. This kinesthetic energy manifesting as the “liminal” is mirrored in many other motifs of the tales, including:

- The helper figures, who can neither be categorized as strictly human nor animals in form and behavior.
- The gold bush of “Bawang Merah” A and tree of silver leaves and gold fruit of “One-Eye.” Additionally, the image of the gold bush evokes a burning bush, symbolic of “a woman’s sexual organs” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 138).
- The jewelry reward forms of “Bawang Merah” B, C, D, and E. The making of jewelry is a liminal practice in which elements of nature, precious metals and gems, are wrought and worn by mankind as an art form. Jewelry symbolizes nature controlled.



- Allusions to pregnancy, as established in the “Forms of Money Received” component of this analysis chapter. Purkiss also argues that pregnancy “is a liminal state” (121).<sup>9</sup>

In this way, fairy tales function as proto-Bildungsroman tales, in which heroines are forced to leave their childhood to accomplish their purpose of existence as mothers in adulthood. I would argue that most – if not all – metaphors and motivic elements present in fairy tales allude to a heroine’s compulsory destiny of marriage and procreation, even the action of death. Portrayed as rape, the passage to adulthood for these heroines is justified as necessarily physically and mentally excruciating, dehumanizing, and debilitating of agency. As Bawang Putih in “Bawang Merah” A and Two-Eyes in “One-Eye” bury their fairies, they passively partake in the building of their futures as mothers. By burying their fairies, they acknowledge their loss of self-agency, succumbing to their transitory existences because women in the tales are only considered valuable in their ability to procreate.

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<sup>9</sup> Specific to “Bawang Merah” A, the symbol of the fish closely relates to the motivic linking of birth and death in the tales. According to Wessing, “...fish, an integral part of the underworld, are an essential symbolic marker, if not an anchor point, while the fetus remains in the amniotic waters of the underworld” (221). Water being “parallel with the amniotic fluid in which fetuses mature” (Wessing 208), Bawang Putih’s act of burying the fish’s remains underground foreshadows her future pregnancy.

## VIII. Conclusion

Through my analysis, I have established that the main way in which heroines are differentiated from evil stepmothers and stepsisters or sisters is by their lack of financial aspirations, as they work only to transmit money between the other characters of the tales. This distinction reveals one of the ways that fairy tales validate misogyny. While at first glance the tales appear to promote a young girls' good behavior, at second glance they reveal the sexist limitations of the society in which she lives. Through this comparative study of the Indonesian folktale "Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih" and the European fairy tales "One-Eye, Two-Eyes, and Three-Eyes," "Mother Holle," and "The Fairies," I find that misogyny prevails across cultures. In light of recent events, including Eliott Rodger's mass shooting and the suicide of Alyssa Funke, as well as many other unfortunate instances of violence against women publicized or not in mass media, it is vital to shed more light on the many ways that cultures perpetuate misogyny.

Apparent is the pivotal role fairy tales play in the lives of children, as they are consistently referenced in popular culture, utilized in elementary school classrooms as tools of instruction, placed on nightstands after bedtime, etc. Fairy tales are often a child's first encounter with not only literature but also society, introducing children to lessons of societal conditioning they must commit to function normatively within their community. Seemingly innocuous playthings of childhood, a closer investigation of fairy tales may reveal a means by which adults perhaps inadvertently perpetuate misogyny. Close readings of fairy tales may reveal one way in which misogyny is perpetuated through generations.

Is there hope for change? "Bawang Merah" C is my singular example of a "Bawang Merah" version that works to subvert the misogyny present in the other "Bawang Merah" versions as an emerging/transforming story. Fairy and folktales can indeed change with time to

“enable imagination of new possibilities for inclusive human community” (Bell and Roberts 2312). However, the presence of a few progressive stories amongst thousands romanticizing and validating misogyny does not reflect positive growth of society’s views on women. Until a majority of fairy tales (especially ones made readily available to children such as Disney films) shift towards portraying strong, independent female characters as a standard, fairy tales will ever remain one of the mediums by which misogyny freely “makan orang.”

Addressing my positionality to the “Bawang Merah” tale, I concede that while I have been familiar with the tale since the time of my childhood, and also have been taught to uphold Indonesian traditional beliefs and customs as handed down to me by my mother’s family, I study mainly western literature from western-born professors in my educational career. Therefore, my intentions in performing this research and analytical work are neither to gain insight into what Indonesian people may teach their children through the “Bawang Merah” tale, nor to investigate similarities between Indonesian and western morals as recorded and abstracted in fairy tales. I am too far removed from Indonesian literature in my educational background to possess any authority to make sweeping generalizations about the Indonesian people, which would prove a disservice to modern folkloric research attempts to dispel the concept of the “other.”

Additionally, folklorists often commit the fallacy of “assum[ing] that the presentation of the folklorist’s object of study remains entirely consistent with the individual performer’s self-presentation” (Ritchie 367). Thus, I emphasize here that my analysis work is not representative of what the participants of the study might *intend* to convey through their retellings of the “Bawang Merah” tale, but instead represents what I found to be notable in the tales from my own perspective as a scholar.

Through this study, I attempt to provide an avenue by which future scholars may begin to examine the “Bawang Merah” tale through a western analytical perspective, as a gateway into understanding how folklores of different cultures may portray similar themes. I also focus on this tale in my research because it is all too often reduced as a “Cinderella”-type tale, even in non-academic discourses of the tale (“Bawang Merah Bawang Putih”; “SWF Fringe – Red Onion White Garlic (Bawang Merah Bawang Putih)”; Xa Story), although my considered versions of this tale are largely divergent from “Cinderella” in terms of plot, themes, and morals. Furthermore, I wonder about the extent to which this tale has been conflated with western tales in its contemporary retellings, due to western influence in Indonesia. I believe a larger scale collection of versions of this tale, and subsequent analyses of these versions in juxtaposition to analyses of western fairy tales, could begin to address the predominance of potential conflation issues with the tale.

Further research must be done on “Bawang Merah” for scholars to holistically comprehend the significance of this tale. Some questions of potential interest to future scholars of the tale include its origins, plot differences between versions collected from different geographic areas of Indonesia, cultural significance and relevance, thematic and motivic relationships to other Indonesian and world fairy tales unconsidered in this paper, and the significance of its motivic elements considered within or outside the context of Indonesian culture.

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## X. Appendices

### *Appendices A-F: Transcriptions and Translations of “Bawang Merah” Versions*

#### Appendix A: My Version of “Bawang Merah”

Once upon a time, in a small village in Indonesia, there lived a father, his daughter, his wife, and her daughter, his stepdaughter. The daughter’s name was Bawang Putih, and the stepdaughter’s name was Bawang Merah. After her father died, Bawang Putih was forced by her stepmother and stepsister into servitude. They made her to clean, cook, wash their clothes, and perform many other chores for them. Meanwhile, the stepmother spoiled Bawang Merah, and Bawang Merah never had to do any work at all. Sometimes, Bawang Merah even made up stories about Bawang Putih to her mother to get her in trouble.

Every day, Bawang Putih would cook breakfast, lunch, and dinner for her stepmother and Bawang Merah, and she would not be allowed to eat until they were finished eating themselves. However, Bawang Putih remained generous; every day, she would save up some of the rice from her breakfast and, on her way to the market, sprinkle the grains into the river to feed the belanak fish. Approaching the river, she would say to the belanak fish, “Grandmother, grandmother, belanak fish. Bawang Putih, grandmother, has come to bring you food.”

One day, the stepmother decided to punish Bawang Putih by sending her to the market to buy all sorts of party foods, but only gave her one cent’s spending money. She warned Bawang Putih, “If you don’t bring home all the foods that I’ve asked for, you’ll be punished.”

Bawang Putih cried for her misfortune. Once she arrived at the river, she once again fed the belanak fish. Noticing Bawang Putih crying, the belanak fish asked her, “Why are you crying, Bawang Putih?”

Bawang Putih said to the belanak fish, “Grandmother, grandmother, belanak fish.

Bawang Putih, grandmother, will be punished if Bawang Putih can’t buy foods for stepmother.

Stepmother only gave Bawang Putih one cent and Bawang Putih can’t buy anything with that.”

“Don’t worry, Bawang Putih. Just pluck off one of my scales,” said the belanak fish.

Bawang Putih did as she was told, but when she opened her hand to examine the belanak fish’s scale, she found a gold coin in its place!

Bawang Putih was overjoyed. At the market, she bought all the foods her stepmother had asked for, and when she came home, she prepared a grand feast for her stepmother and Bawang Merah.

The next day, the stepmother told Bawang Putih to buy all the foods she had asked for the day prior. Again, she gave Bawang Putih only one cent, and told her that she would be punished if she did not come home with everything.

Bawang Putih cried all the way to the river. Once she arrived at the river, the belanak fish swam up to Bawang Putih and asked her, “Why are you crying, Bawang Putih?”

Bawang Putih explained to the belanak fish what her stepmother told her.

“Don’t worry, Bawang Putih. Just pluck off another one of my scales,” said the belanak fish.

Once again, Bawang Putih found that the belanak fish’s scale had turned into a gold coin in her very hand, and off she went to do her shopping. Only this time, when Bawang Putih presented to her stepmother and Bawang Merah a feast just as lavish as the day before, her stepmother grew suspicious. The next morning, she ordered that Bawang Putih buy more foods with another cent, but told Bawang Merah to follow her in secret.

Once Bawang Merah saw the belanak fish, and saw how Bawang Putih had managed to purchase so much food while given so little spending money, she ran to her mother and told her of what she had discovered.

The stepmother was furious. Right away, she and Bawang Merah went to the river, captured the belanak fish, brought it back to their house, cooked it, and ate it. All that was left of the belanak fish were its bones.

When Bawang Putih arrived back home, she saw the fish bones on the table and realized that her stepmother and Bawang Merah had killed her belanak fish. She cried, and then gathered together the belanak fish's bones, wrapping them in a handkerchief before burying them in the garden.

The next day, when Bawang Putih stepped into the garden, she saw that where she had buried the belanak fish's bones grew a small bush made entirely of pure gold. Everyone in the village was amazed with this plant, and although many tried to pluck it out, no one could do so. News of this strange gold bush spread throughout the area, until it reached even the king. Eventually, the king travelled to Bawang Putih's garden to see this gold bush for himself. When he arrived at the garden and caught sight of the gold bush, he instantly desired for it.

"I must have this marvelous plant growing in my palace," said the king. "Whoever can pluck out this bush for me shall be given a high honor. If a man is able to pluck it out, I shall make him my brother. If a woman is able to pluck it out, I shall make her my wife."

Everyone in the village tried, even the stepmother and Bawang Merah, but no one could uproot the gold bush from the ground.

The king began to lose hope, but then noticed Bawang Putih working by the house.

"Who is that girl?" the king asked.

“Oh, she can’t do it, she’s just a servant,” said the stepmother scornfully.

“Servant or not, everyone has to try,” commanded the king, and urged Bawang Putih towards the gold bush. To everyone’s surprise, she plucked it out with ease.

And so the king transferred the gold bush to the royal garden, and took Bawang Putih to his palace and married her. They lived happily ever after. The End.

#### Appendix B: Suzie Walujo’s Version

Pada jaman dahulu kala, hiduplah seorang gadis yang bernama Bawang Putih. Ia tinggal bersama ibu dan saudara tirinya, yang bernama Bawang Merah. Si ibu tiri sangat memanjakan Bawang Merah. Setiap hari ia hidupnya bersenang-senang saja, sedangkan terhadap Bawang Putih, ibu tiri bersikap jahat. Setiap hari Bawang Putih harus memberishkan rumah, menyapu, mengepel lantai, mencuci baju di sungai, dan memasak untuk mereka.

Pada suatu hari ketika Bawang Putih sedangkan mencuci baju di sungai, sambil melamun merenungi nasibnya yang malang, tiba-tiba baju yang dicucinya terlepas, bersama bakul berisi pakaian yang dibawanya.

Setelah Bawang Putih tersadar dari lamunannya, ternyata baju bersama bakul yang berisi pakaiannya telah lanyap terbawa arus sungai. Bawang Putih bergegas berjalan menyusuri sungai untuk mencari baju bersama bakul yang dibawanya, namun tidak ditemukan.

Sekian lama berjalan menyusuri sungai, akhirnya Bawang Putih bertemu dengan seorang nenek. Dia bertanya kepada nenek tersebut, “Nenek, apakah engkau melihat baju beserta bakul berisi pakaian milikku?”

Sang nenek menjawab, “Tadi, aku melihat seorang perempuan tinggi besar yang memungut sebuah bakul di sungai, tetapi aku tidak tahu apakah bakul itu milikmu.”

Kemudian Bawang Putih bertanya kepada nenek itu, “Apakah engkau tahu di mana tempat tinggal perempuan itu?”

Sang nenek menjawab, “Jika engkau berjalan lurus terus dari sini, maka engkau akan sampai di tepi hutan. Disanalah perempuan itu tinggal.”

Setelah mengucapkan terima kasih kepada nenek, Bawang Putih kemudian berjalan, meninggalkan nenek tersebut.

Setelah berjalan cukup jauh, Bawang Putih akhirnya menemukan sebuah gubuk di tepi hutan. Dia segera menghampiri gubuk tersebut dan mengetuk pintunya. Setelah beberapa saat mengetuk pintu, tiba-tiba pintu terbuka dan keluarlah seorang raksasa perempuan. Bawang Putih sangat terkejut dan merasa takut, tetapi karena takut terhadap ibu tirinya dia terpaksa memberanikan diri bertanya kepada raksasa perempuan tersebut, “Nenek, apakah engkau melihat baju beserta bakul berisi pakaian milikku?”

Raksasa perempuan tersebut menjawab, “Tadi aku memang memungut sebuah bakul berisi pakaian yang tersangkut batu disungai dan aku membawanya pulang.”

Kemudian Bawang Putih bertanya kepada raksasa tersebut, “Nenek bolehkah aku meminta kembali bakul berisi pakaian milikku?”

Raksasa perempuan itu menjawab, “Boleh, tapi dengan satu syarat.”

“Syarat apakah itu, nenek?”

“Aku akan mengembalikan bakul milikmu, tapi engkau harus tinggal di sini selama seminggu untuk membantuku memasak dan membersihkan rumah.”

Bawang Putih segera menyetujui syarat yang diajukan raksasa tersebut. Dia membantu raksasa perempuan itu memasak makanan.



Tiba-tiba terdengar langkah kaki yang sangat berat. Ternyata suara itu berasal dari kakek raksasa yang pulang ke rumahnya. Raksasa perempuan bergegas menyembunyikan Bawang Putih dirumahnya.

Setelah tiba dirumah, kakek raksasa terkejut, berkata kepada istrinya, “Hhmmm, nenek, aku mencium bau manusia. Apakah ada manusia di rumah kita?”

Sang nenek raksasa tersebut menjawab, “Bukan itu bukan bau manusia. Itu bau gulai kambing yang kumasak untukmu.”

Kemudian kakek raksasa tersebut makan dengan lahapnya dan tidak lama setelah itu, sang kakek raksasapun jatuh tertidur. Sang nenek segera mengeluarkan Bawang Putih dari tempat persembunyiannya dan memberikan Bawang Putih sisa makanan yang dimakan sang kakek.

Setiap hari Bawang Putih bekerja membantu nenek raksasa tersebut memasak dan membersihkan rumah. Dia sangat rajin bekerja. Sang nenek raksasapun senang dengan Bawang Putih. Setelah genap seminggu dirumahnya, raksasa perempuan itu memanggil Bawang Putih. Dia berkata kepada Bawang Putih, “Aku akan mengembalikan bakul yang berisi pakaian milikmu, tetapi sebelum itu pergilah ke kebun dan petiklah sebuah labu yang engkau suka. Setelah tiba di rumah, belahlah labu itu dan engkau akan menemukan sejumlah perhiasan emas permata di dalamnya.”

Kemudian Bawang Putih berjalan menuju kebun dan memetik sebuah labu yang paling kecil dan nenek raksasa itupun mengembalikan bakul berisi pakaian miliknya. Bawang Putih segera mengucapkan terima kasih kepada nenek raksasa itu dan bergegas pulang ke rumahnya.

Setelah tiba di rumah, si ibu tiri dan Bawang Merah memarahi Bawang Putih. “Kemana saja engkau selama ini. Engkau enak-enakan saja diluar rumah, sedangkan kami harus bekerja keras dirumah untuk memasak dan membersihkan rumah.”

Kemudian Bawang Putih menceritakan apa yang dialaminya kepada Bawang Merah dan ibu tirinya. Si ibu tiri segera menyuruh Bawang Putih mengambil pisau dan segera membelah labu tersebut. Alangkah terkejutnya Bawang Merah dan ibu tirinya melihat perhiasan emas permata di dalam labu tersebut. Mereka sangat gembira.

Kemudian siibu tiri menoleh kepada Bawang Putih dan berkata, “Bodoh engkau, mengapa engkau tidak mengambil buah labu yang paling besar? Jika engkau mengambil labu yang paling besar, tentu lebih banyak lagi emas permata yang kita dapatkan.”

Bawang Putih hanya menundukkan kepalanya.

Kemudian timbullah niat jahat ibu tiri dan dia berkata kepada Bawang Merah, “Besok pagi pergilah engkau mencuci baju di sungai dan hanyutkan pakaian tersebut dan setelah sampai di rumah raksasa itu, petiklah buah labu yang paling besar. Tentu kita akan mendapatkan perhiasan yang lebih banyak lagi.”

Keesokan harinya Bawang Merah mencuci baju dan dengan sengaja menghanyutkannya di sungai. Setelah lama berjalan menyusuri sungai, akhirnya Bawang Merah tiba di tepi hutan. Dia segera mengetuk pintu gubuk itu dan setelah pintu terbuka dia bertanya kepada raksasa perempuan itu, “Nenek, apakah engkau menemukan baju dan bakul berisi pakaian milikku?”

Sang nenek raksasa itupun menjawab, “Ya aku menemukan baju dan bakul berisi pakaian milikmu di sungai dan aku membawanya pulang.”

Bawang Merah berkata kepada nenek raksasa tersebut, “Nenek bolehkah aku meminta kembali bakul yang berisi pakaian milikku?”

Sang nenek menjawab, “Boleh, tapi dengan satu syarat. Engkau boleh mengambil kembali bakul berisi pakaian milikmu, tetapi engkau harus membantuku memasak dan membersihkan rumah selama satu minggu.”

Bawang Merah menyetujui usul tersebut, tetapi dia hanya bermalas-malasan di rumah raksasa perempuan tersebut. Perempuan raksasa itu pun marah dan berkata kepada Bawang Merah, “Mengapa engkau hanya bermalas-malasan saja dan tidak membantu memasak dan membersihkan rumah?”

Bawang Merah menjawab, “Aku bukan budakmu.”

Raksasa perempuan itu pun sangat marah, tetapi dia hanya diam saja.

Setelah genap seminggu, Bawang Merah berkata kepada raksasa perempuan itu, “Nenek aku sudah seminggu disini dan aku akan pulang. Aku juga minta buah labu seperti Bawang Putih.”

Raksasa perempuan itu pun menjawab, “Pergilah ke kebun dan petiklah buah labu yang engkau mau.”

Bawang Merah segera pergi ke kebun dan dia memetik buah labu yang paling besar. Kemudian raksasa perempuan itu pun memberikan bakul yang berisi pakaian milik Bawang Merah dan dia pun berlalu meninggalkan raksasa perempuan itu.

Setelah lama berjalan kaki, tibalah Bawang Merah di rumahnya. Dia segera memanggil ibunya dan mereka pun membelah buah labu itu. Betapa terkejutnya mereka. Di dalam buah labu tersebut, terdapat ular kecil-kecil yang sangat ganas. Si ular yang merasa sangat terganggu dengan kehadiran mereka segera mematuk Bawang Merah dan ibunya hingga mati.

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Bawang Putih. She lived with her stepmother and stepsister, named Bawang Merah. The stepmother spoiled Bawang Merah. Every day, Bawang Merah lived as she pleased. Toward Bawang Putih, the stepmother was mean. Every day, Bawang Putih had to clean the house, sweep, mop the floor, wash the clothes in the river, and cook for them.

One day, while Bawang Putih was washing clothes in the river, dreamingly lamenting over her unfortunate life, suddenly the clothes she was washing went loose, along with the basket containing the clothes she had brought.

After Bawang Putih roused from her daydreaming, the clothes and basket were gone, having drifted away down the swift river. Bawang Putih quickly walked along the river to find the clothes and basket, but she could not find them.

After walking along the river for a little while, Bawang Putih finally met an old granny. She asked the granny, “Granny, have you seen the clothes and basket that belong to me?”

The granny answered, “Just now I saw a big, tall woman grab the basket from the river, but I did not know that the basket belongs to you.”

Then Bawang Putih asked the granny, “Do you know where that woman lives?”

The granny answered, “If you walk straight from here, then you will arrive at the edge of the forest. That’s where the woman lives.”

After thanking the granny, Bawang Putih then started walking, leaving the granny.

After walking far enough, Bawang Putih finally stumbled upon a hut at the edge of the forest. She quickly went to the hut and knocked on the door. After knocking for a while, suddenly the door swung open and a giant woman appeared. Bawang Putih startled and felt

afraid, but out of fear for her stepmother, she forced herself to ask the giant woman, “Granny, did you see my clothes and basket?”

The giant woman answered, “I did grab one basket full of clothes that was stuck on a rock in the river, and I took them home.”

Then Bawang Putih asked the giant, “Granny, may I get back the basket filled with my clothes?”

The giant woman answered, “You may, but on one condition.”

“What condition is that, granny?”

“I will return your basket, but first you must stay here for a week to help me cook and clean the house.”

Bawang Putih quickly agreed to the request. She helped the giant woman cook meals.

Suddenly, there arose loud thumping sounds. The sounds came from the grandpa giant who was coming home. The giant woman quickly hid Bawang Putih inside the hut.

Upon arriving home, the grandpa giant startled, and said to his wife, “Ahem, granny, I smell human. Are there any humans in the hut?”

The woman giant answered, “No, there is no human smell. The smell is coming from the goat stew I cooked for you.”

Then the grandpa giant ate eagerly, and soon after fell asleep. The giant woman took Bawang Putih out from her hiding place and fed her leftovers from the grandpa giant.

Every day, Bawang Putih worked hard to help the giant woman cook and clean the house. She worked very diligently. The giant woman was pleased with Bawang Putih. After exactly a week’s time, the giant woman called for Bawang Putih. She told Bawang Putih, “I will return the

basket with your clothes to you, but before you leave, go to the garden and select any squash you'd like. After you arrive home, cut open the squash and you will find jewelry inside of it."

Then Bawang Putih walked to the garden and plucked the smallest squash, and the giant woman returned the basket to her. Bawang Putih thanked the giant woman and went home quickly.

Once Bawang Putih arrived home, the stepmother and Bawang Merah scolded her. "Where did you go to for so long? You had a jolly time outside of the house while we had to work hard, cooking and cleaning the house."

Then Bawang Putih told Bawang Merah and her stepmother about her adventures. The stepmother told Bawang Putih to fetch a knife and cut up the squash. Surprised were Bawang Merah and the stepmother to find the jewelry inside the squash. They were so happy.

Then the stepmother looked at Bawang Putih and said, "You are stupid. Why didn't you choose the biggest squash? If you had chosen the biggest squash, we could have gotten more jewels."

Bawang Putih only lowered her head.

Then an evil thought entered the stepmother's mind. She said to Bawang Merah, "Tomorrow, you will go wash the clothes in the river and let the clothes go loose. When you arrive at the giant's hut, pluck the biggest squash. Certainly we will get more jewels."

The next morning, Bawang Merah went to wash the clothes, but intentionally let the clothes drift. After walking along the river for a while, Bawang Merah arrived at the edge of the forest. She knocked on the hut door, and when the door swung open, she asked the giant woman, "Granny, have you seen my clothes and basket?"

The giant woman answered, “Yes, I found your basket with the clothes inside it, and I took it home.”

Bawang Merah said to the giant woman, “May I have my basket with the clothes?”

“You may get back your basket and clothes, but you have to help me cook and clean the house for a week.”

Bawang Merah agreed to the request, but she acted lazy while living in the giant woman’s hut. The giant woman was angry and said to Bawang Merah, “Why are you so lazy, and why won’t you help me cook and clean the house?”

Bawang Merah answered, “I am not your slave.”

The giant woman was angry, but did not say anything more.

After a week, Bawang Merah said to the giant woman, “Granny, I have been here for a week, so I will go home. I want a squash like Bawang Putih.”

The giant woman told her, “Go to the garden and pick the one you want.”

Bawang Merah went to the garden and plucked the biggest squash. The giant woman returned to Bawang Merah the basket and clothes, and then Bawang Merah left the giant woman.

After a long walk, Bawang Merah arrived home. She called for her mother, and together they opened the squash. How horrified they were. Inside the squash were vicious little snakes. The snakes were disturbed by Bawang Merah and her mother, and the snakes bit them until they died.

#### Appendix C: Liliek Harahap’s Version

Pada jaman dahulu, ada seorang bapak yang tidak mempunyai istri. Istrinya meninggal. Bapak ini mempunyai seorang anak bernama Bawang Putih. Nah, kemudian setiap hari bapak ini merawat sendiri Bawang Putih. Bawang Putih dirawat sendiri.

Lalu pada suatu hari bapak ini bertemu dengan seorang ibu. Nah, bapak ini kemudian jatuh cinta kepada ibu ini. Kemudian bapak ini menikah dengan ibu ini. Ibu ini mempunyai seorang anak juga, namanya Bawang Merah. Dengan hadirnya ibu tiri ini Bawang Putih sekarang tidak sendiri lagi, dia bersama dengan bapak, ibu tiri dan saudaranya, saudaranya, Bawang Merah.

Nah, kemudian hidup Bawang Putih setelah hadirnya ibu tiri ini Bawang Putih tidak menjadi senang, tapi menjadi sengsara karena setiap hari Bawang Putih harus bekerja berat mengerjakan seluruh pekerjaan rumah, dikerjakan, harus dikerjakan, kalau tidak ibu tiri marah kepada Bawang Putih, sedangkan anak dari ibu tiri itu, Bawang Merah, dia tidak usah bekerja, dia boleh bersenang-senang, bermain-main sendiri, sedangkan Bawang Putih tidak boleh, dia harus membersihkan rumah, harus memasak, harus mencuci baju.

Nah pada saat dia mencuci baju di sebuah sungai, kemudian selendang ibu tiri ini terhanyut, terbawa oleh arus sungai. Kemudian Bawang Putih menangis merasa sedih, dia tidak berani pulang, dia takut sekali pulang karena kalau dia pulang pasti ibu tirinya marah, jadi dia takut sekali.

Kemudian dia menangis sambil berdoa, “Ya Tuhan, tolonglah selendang ibu tiriku supaya bisa kembali.”

Tiba-tiba dengan ajaib muncul seekor ikan. “Apa yang kau perlukan, nak?” kata ikan itu.

Si Bawang Putih menjawab, “Selendang ibu tiriku terhanyut terbawa arus sungai.”

“Sebentar, kamu tunggu sebentar, ya?” Kemudian si ikan masuk menyelam.



Tak berapa lama si ikan keluar. Dia menunjukkan sebuah selendang yang bersulamkan benang emas. Kemudian si ikan bertanya, “Apakah ini selendang ibumu?”

Bawang Putih menjawab, “Bukan, bukan yang itu selendang ibuku.”

“Tunggulah sesaat,” kata si ikan. Si ikan masuk kembali. Tak berapa lama muncul lagi si ikan membawa lagi selendang.

“Apa ini selendang ibumu?” Selendang ini bersulamkan benang perak.

Bawang Putih menjawab, “Bukan, bukan itu ... bukan itu.”

“Baiklah kalau begitu, kamu tunggu lagi ya sebentar.”

Kemudian si ikan masuk lagi, kemudian tak berapa lama ikan muncul kembali dengan membawa selendang ibu tiri. “Apakah ini selendang ibu tirimu?”

“Oh ya, ya, betul. Terima kasih ikan, terima kasih.” Betapa gembira hati Bawang Putih setelah menemukan selendang ibu tirinya.

Lalu si ikan menyuruh Bawang Putih menunggu sebentar, “Baiklah kalau begitu, kamu tunggu sebentar, ya?”

Ikan masuk kembali, dia kemudian membawa sebuah kotak. Nah ikan ini berpesan, “Bawalah kotak ini pulang. Nanti bila sudah sampai di rumah, bukalah kotak ini.”

Nah setelah itu, Bawang Putih dengan hati yang gembira dia membawa hadiah, dia kemudian pulang ke rumah. Setelah itu apa yang terjadi, kotak dibuka ternyata ada perhiasan, ada kalung, ada gelang, ada cincin. Wah betapa senang hati Bawang Putih. Nah melihat demikian ibu tiri bertanya, “Darimana kau dapat ini? Darimana kau dapat ini?” kata ibu tiri itu.

Kemudian si Bawang Putih menceritakan semua apa yang terjadi.

Nah keesokan harinya ibu tiri menyuruh Bawang Merah untuk melakukan hal yang sama dengan Bawang Putih. Dia pergi mencuci baju di sungai, kemudian dengan sengaja selendang

ibu dihanyutkan. Nah setelah itu dia juga sedih menangis. Kemudian ikan itupun muncul. Dia mengatakan, “Ada apa nak, kok kamu sedih?”

“Iya, selendang ibuku hanyut”.

“Oh, baiklah nanti tunggulah sebentar,” si ikan mengatakan.

Kemudian ikan masuk ke dalam. Tak lama kemudian muncul kembali ikan dengan membawa selendang bersulamkan benang emas. Lalu si ikan tanya, “Apakah ini selendang ibumu?”

“Oh ya, ya, betul, ini selendang ibuku.”

“Baiklah, kamu ambil.” Setelah itu si ikan masuk kembali.

Lalu ikan muncul kembali membawa kotak. “Ini kotak hadiahmu, nanti sampai di rumah kamu boleh buka kotak ini, kamu boleh buka.”

Setelah itu dia pulang dengan gembira, memberitahukan kepada ibunya. “Ibu, aku mendapat hadiah.”

Nah, ibunya sangat gembira, kemudian dengan hati-hati dibuka kotaknya. Wah kotak itu berisi ular, kelabang, kalajengking. Kemudian hewan-hewan itu menggigit ibu tiri dan Bawang Merah sehingga ibu tiri dan Bawang Merah mati sekarang. Bawang Putih hidup sendiri dengan kekayaan yang dia dapatkan dari ikan itu. Kemudian ibu tiri dan Bawang Merah sudah tiada. Bawang Putih hidup bahagia.

### *Version C Translation*

Once upon a time, there was a father who didn't have a wife. His wife died. This father had a child named Bawang Putih. Every day this father took care of Bawang Putih by himself.

Then, one day this father met a woman. This father then fell in love with this woman, and eventually married her. This woman also had a child, who was named Bawang Merah. In the presence of this stepmother, Bawang Putih was now no longer alone anymore. She lived with her father, stepmother, and Bawang Merah.

In the presence of this stepmother, Bawang Putih was not happy, but miserable, because every day Bawang Putih had to work hard to perform chores. If she did not work hard, this stepmother would be angry. Meanwhile, Bawang Merah did not have to work. She could enjoy life and play by herself, while Bawang Putih could not. Bawang Putih had to clean the house, cook, and wash clothes.

While Bawang Putih was washing clothes in a river, the stepmother's shawl drifted, taken away by the river. Bawang Putih cried and felt sad. She did not dare to go home. She was very afraid to go home because if she went home, certainly the stepmother would be upset, so she was very scared.

Bawang Putih cried while praying, "God, please help so that my stepmother's shawl would come back."

Suddenly a magic fish appeared. "What do you need, child?" asked the fish.

Bawang Putih answered, "My stepmother's shawl drifted by the flow of the river."

"Wait one moment, okay?" The fish dived down into the water.

Not long after, the fish surfaced. The fish displayed a shawl of gold thread and asked, "Is this your mother's shawl?"

Bawang Putih answered, "No, that is not my mother's shawl."

"Wait a moment," said the fish. The fish went down again. A moment later, it surfaced with another shawl.

“Is this your mother’s shawl?” This shawl was made of silver thread.

Bawang Putih answered, “Not, not that one ... not that one.”

“Alright then, wait again for a moment.”

Then the fish dove in again. A moment later, it appeared with the stepmother’s shawl. “Is this your stepmother’s shawl?”

“Oh yes, yes, that’s correct. Thank you fish, thank you.” How happy was Bawang Putih to find her stepmother’s shawl.

Then the fish said, “Alright then, wait for a moment, okay?”

The fish dove in, and then surfaced carrying with it a box. The fish instructed, “Bring this box home. When you arrive home, open the box.”

Bawang Putih happily received the gift and went home. Then, when the box was opened, there were jewelries, necklaces, bracelets and rings found inside it. How happy Bawang Putih was. Watching all of this, the stepmother asked, “Where did you get this? Where did you get this?”

Bawang Putih told her of what had happened.

The next day, the stepmother told Bawang Merah to do the same thing as Bawang Putih did. Bawang Merah went to wash clothes in the river, and then intentionally let the shawl drift away. Then she cried sadly. The fish appeared. It said, “Why are you sad?”

“My mother’s shawl has drifted.”

“Oh, well then, wait a moment,” the fish said.

Then the fish dove into the water. A moment later, it surfaced carrying a shawl of golden thread. The fish asked, “Is this your mother’s shawl?”

“Oh yes, yes, correct, this is my mother’s shawl.”

“Well, take it.” The fish dove in again, and then appeared with a box. “This is your gift box. Later, after arriving home, you can open this box.”

Then Bawang Merah went home happily, telling her mother, “Mother, I received a gift.”

Well, her mother was very happy, and then carefully the box was opened. Wow, the box was filled with snakes, poison bugs, and scorpions. The animals bit the stepmother and Bawang Merah until they died. Bawang Putih lived alone with the riches from the fish. The stepmother and Bawang Merah were gone. Bawang Putih lived happily after.

#### Appendix D: Lanny Wardojo's Version

Pada jaman dahulu kala di sebuah desa ada seorang ayah dengan seorang anaknya. Anaknya itu bernama Bawang Putih. Kemudian karena tidak mempunyai ibu si Bawang Putih meminta seorang ibu pada ayahnya. Kemudian ibu itu mempunyai seorang anak perempuan bernama Bawang Merah. Lalu mereka menikah.

Suatu hari si ayah pergi keluar kota, anaknya ditinggal dengan ibu tirinya.

Waktu ayahnya tidak dirumah, Bawang Putih disuruh bekerja oleh ibunya, disuruh mencuci piring, mencuci pakaian di kali.

Kemudian suatu hari ada sebuah pakaian yang hanyut, waktu hanyut itu karena bekerja keras papanya.

Tidak berapa lama kemudian setelah menikah tidak berapa lama kemudian ayah Bawang Putih meninggal. Setelah ayahnya meninggal Bawang Putih disuruh bekerja oleh ibu tirinya, mencuci piring, mencuci pakaian, membersihkan rumah.

Suatu kali Bawang Putih menghilangkan baju ibunya, kemudian oleh ibu tirinya disuruh kembali lagi untuk mencari baju itu. Mencari baju, Bawang Putih mencari baju sepanjang sungai. Lalu bertemu dengan seorang raksasa perempuan.

Kemudian dia bertanya, “Bu, apakah ada baju yang jatuh sampai kesini?”

“Oh, ya mari mari masuk, nak.”

Si Bawang Putih pagi-pagi sudah bangun waktu itu disuruh tidur di situ. Dia terus pagi-pagi dia bangun, rajin sekali dia mengerjakan seluruh pekerjaan rumahnya. Lalu bapak raksasa datang.

“Wah ini kok ada bau enak. Ini ada makanan enak ini, bu, mana bu?” katanya.

“Oh ya, iya, itu saya tangkap sudahan.”

“Iya besok kita makan ya, bu ya.”

“Oh ya, ya.”

Keesokan harinya ibu raksasa bilang, “Nak, pulanglah nak, kamu nanti dimakan sama bapak. Ini saya sanguhi, ini pakaianmu, ini kotak kalau sampai di rumah boleh kamu bawa pulang, tapi kalau sekarang jangan, tidak boleh dibuka kalau tidak sampai rumah.”

“Oh ya, makasih ya, bu.”

Kemudian dibawa pulang sama dia. Sampai di rumah dia buka.

Ibunya, “Mana itu baju.”

“Ini bu bajunya.”

“Oke, terus itu apa itu.”

“Saya buka dapat emas berlian, dapat kemasan, dapat gelang, kalung.”

“Lalu oh ya besok dihanyutkan lagi ya.”

Keesokan harinya Bawang Putih disuruh lagi sampai tiga kali. Kemudian wah pikirnya, *Kok Bawang Putih saja yang dapat? Sudah Bawang Merah saja sekarang suruh pergi mencari baju.*

“Bawang Merah, kamu pergi ya, cari baju.”

“Iya Bu, oke.”

Sampai di raksasa itu, “Bu, ada baju?”

“Ada, oke, masuk dulu ya nak, bermalam di sini.”

Bawang Merah tidak serajin Bawang Putih. Bawang Merah kerjanya hanya tidur saja sepanjang hari, tidak mau membersihkan rumah, tidak rajin. Sesudah tiga hari kemudian Bawang Merah juga disuruh pulang.

“Mana bu raksasa pakaian saya?”

“Ini pakaianmu, ini kotak, pesannya sama: nanti kalau kamu sampai di rumah kamu boleh buka kotak ini ya, kalau belum sampai jangan.”

“Makasih, bu.”

Kemudian dia pulang. Sesampai di rumah ibunya menyambut dengan gembira, dikiranya itu sebuah perhiasan. Lalu dibukanya kotak itu. Ternyata isinya ular, kemudian ular itu mematuk Bawang Merah dan ibunya sehingga meninggal mereka. Bawang Putih akhirnya bisa hidup berbahagia.

#### *Version D Translation*

Once upon a time, in a village there lived a father with his daughter. The daughter's name was Bawang Putih. Then, because Bawang Putih did not have a mother, she asked her father for a mother. The father married a woman who had a daughter named Bawang Merah.

One day, the father went to another town and left his daughter with her stepmother.

While the father was not home, Bawang Putih was told to perform chores by her stepmother, to wash dishes and clothes in the river.

One day, an article of clothing drifted in the river, drifted because the father had to work hard.<sup>10</sup>

Not long after the wedding, the father died. After the father died, Bawang Putih was told to work by the stepmother, to wash dishes, wash clothes, and clean the house.

One day, Bawang Putih lost her stepmother's clothes. She was told to find the clothes. While searching for the clothes, Bawang Putih looked along the river. There she arrived at a female giant's house.

She asked the giant, "Ma'am, did any clothes fall here?"

"Oh yes, please, please come in, child."

When Bawang Putih woke up, the female giant asked her to stay there. She thereafter woke up early to diligently perform household chores. Then the male giant arrived.

"Wow, there is a good smell here. There is delicious food here, ma'am. Where is it, ma'am?" he said.

"Oh yes, it was captured by me."

"Tomorrow we will eat it, okay ma'am."

"Oh, yes, yes."

The next morning, the female giant said to Bawang Putih, "Child, go home, child, before sir eats you. These are for you: here are your clothes, and here is a box you can bring home, but you cannot open the box until you are home."

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<sup>10</sup> The storyteller seems to backtrack in plot in the subsequent sentence.



“Oh yes, thank you, ma’am.”

Then the box and clothes were taken home by Bawang Putih. Upon arriving home, she opened the box.

The stepmother said, “Where is the clothes?”

“Here are the clothes.”

“Then what is this?”

“I opened the box and found gold and diamonds, jewelry, bracelets, and necklaces.”

“Tomorrow, let the clothes drift again.”

The next morning, Bawang Putih was told to repeat this action three times. Then, the stepmother thought, *Why should only Bawang Putih receive the gems? Now Bawang Merah should go to find the clothes.*

The stepmother said, “Bawang Merah, you go find the clothes.”

Bawang Merah said, “Yes, mother, okay.”

Meeting the giant, Bawang Merah said, “Ma’am, have you found any clothes?”

“Yes, come in child. Spend the night here.”

Bawang Merah was not as diligent as Bawang Putih. Bawang Merah slept all day long and did not clean the house, being lazy. Three days later, Bawang Merah was told to go home.

“Where are my clothes, Miss Giant?”

“Here is your clothes, here is the box, and the message is the same: when you arrive home, you may open the box, but don’t open the box before you arrive home.”

“Thank you, ma’am.”

Then Bawang Merah went home. Upon arriving home, her mother welcomed her happily, thinking about the jewelry. Then she opened the box. In fact, it was filled with snakes. The

snakes bit Bawang Merah and her mother until they died. Finally Bawang Putih could have a happy life.

#### Appendix E: Janti Supadma's Version

Pada dulu kala, ada sebuah kisah, ada seorang ayah punya seorang anak perempuan namanya Bawang Putih. Tidak punya ibu, ayahnya mengasuh sendiri.

Pada suatu hari ayahnya menikah dengan seorang perempuan dengan satu anak namanya Bawang Merah, yang malesnya dan yang males atau, Bawang Merah suka males dan suka marah. Bawang Putih yang suka disuruh bekerja sama ibu tirinya dan selalu masih disalahkan dan dipukuli dan tidak diberi makan yang layak.

Pada suatu hari ayahnya melihat Bawang Putih diperlakukan sewenang-wenang sama istrinya, tetapi ayahnya tidak berdaya. Ayahnya sedih dan sakit sampai meninggal.

Pada waktu cuci baju di sungai, salah satu bajunya hanyut, tetapi Bawang Putih tidak mengetahui. Dia pulang dari cuci pakaian lantas ibu tirinya kehilangan satu baju. Ibu, ibu tirinya marah dan disuruh mencari sampai dapet.

Bawang Putih mencari di sungai dan ketemu sama buto ijo namanya Mimi. Bawang Putih nanya apa buto ijo melihat baju.

Buto ijo menjawab, "ya."

Mari ikut Mimi Bawang Putih sehari-hari ada dirumahnya buto ijo. Bawang Putih rajin bekerja dan buto ijo sayang sama Bawang Putih.

Dan pada suatu hari suaminya buto ijo pulang dan mencium bau manusia dan ingin makannya.

Lalu Bawang Putih disuruh pulang dan diberi satu kotak dan tidak boleh dibuka kalau tidak sampai dirumah.

Bawang Putih memberi kotak itu sama ibu tirinya dan dibuka kotak itu isinya perhiasan dan sangat banyak. Seneng sekali ibu tirinya Bawang Putih.

Bawang Merah disuruh ibunya pura-pura kehilangan baju dan mencari di sungai dan ketemu sama buto ijo, diajak ke rumah buto ijo.

Bawang Merah sehari-hari cuma makan dan tidur, tidak mau bekerja. Buto ijo marah dan diusir dikasih kotak.

Sampai rumah dibuka isinya ada ular yang menggigit ibu dan anak sampai meninggal. Bawang Putih sedih.

Pada suatu hari ada pangeran melihat Bawang Putih, pangeran itu jatuh cinta sama Bawang Putih.

Bawang Putih diboyong ke istana jadi istrinya pangeran itu.

Bahagia, wis mari.

#### *Version E Translation*

Once upon a time, there was a story – there was a father who had a daughter named Bawang Putih. Without a mother, Bawang Putih was taken care of by the father.

One day, the father married a woman who had a child named Bawang Merah, who was often lazy and angry. Bawang Putih was enslaved by her stepmother, who punished and starved her.

One day, the father witnessed Bawang Putih being mistreated by his wife, but he was powerless. He grew sad until he fell ill and died.

While washing clothes in the river, Bawang Putih did not know that one of the stepmother's articles of clothing got loose. She went home from washing the clothes, and told her stepmother about losing her clothes. The stepmother grew angry and told her to find it.

Bawang Putih looked along the river, and there met a green giant named Mimi. Bawang Putih asked the green giant if she found the missing clothes.

The green giant said, "Yes."

After following the green giant home, Bawang Putih stayed with the green giant for days, and she worked hard for her. The green giant liked Bawang Putih.

One day, the husband of the green giant went home and smelled human, wanting to eat Bawang Putih.

Then Bawang Putih was asked to leave by Mimi, and given a box that she was told not to open until she arrived home.

Bawang Putih gave the box to her stepmother, and when the stepmother opened the box, she found many jewels inside it. The stepmother was pleased.

The stepmother asked Bawang Merah to pretend to lose clothes, and to look along the river for them. Bawang Merah met the green giant and was asked to visit the green giant's house.

Every day, Bawang Merah ate food and did not want to work. The green giant was angry and Bawang Merah was given a box, and then kicked out of the house.

Upon arriving home, Bawang Merah and her mother opened the box and found a snake inside it. The snake bit the mother and daughter until they died. Bawang Putih was sad.

One day, a prince saw Bawang Putih and fell in love with her.

Bawang Putih moved to his palace to become his wife.

And they lived happily ever after. The end.

Appendix F: Liandrawati Kurniawan's Version

Pokoknya begini: Bawang Putih itu baik hati dan Bawang Merah ini jahat. Terus habis begitu, Bawang Putih ini dipekerjakan itu seperti pembantu. Bawang Merah ini pakai pakaian mewah; pokoknya hidupnya seneng-seneng, yang baik-baik. Bawang Putih ini dibuat susah, suruh cuci baju apa, sampai tiba-tiba suatu hari ada seorang laki-laki itu yang tampan, pangeran dateng. Dia seneng sama Bawang Putih terus mamanya itu kepingine Bawang Merah yang dapet. Jadi kalau dateng itu disembunyikno Bawang Putih itu. Sing ditampakno itu terus Bawang Merah, tapi arek laki ini tahu.

“Aku ndak cari sing ini, sing dulu itu ada?”

“Ndak ada ini.”

Akhire tepak itu nyuci di kali pas pangerane lewat ketok.

“Ya ini aku cari.”

Tapi akhire pangeran itu sing dinikahi si Bawang Putih. Akhire Bawang Putih sing diuji menderita hidupe bahagia, dapat pemuda yang baik tampan dan kaya.

*Version F Translation*

The principle is this: Bawang Putih was good and Bawang Merah was bad. Bawang Putih was enslaved like servant. Bawang Merah wore nice clothes; actually, she lived lavishly. Bawang Putih was treated badly, told to wash cloths, etcetera, until one day a handsome man – a prince – passed by. He fell in love with Bawang Putih, but the mother wanted Bawang Merah to marry the prince. So when the prince came by again, Bawang Putih was hidden. Bawang Merah was presented to the prince, but the prince knew she was not the same girl.

The prince said, “I am not looking for this one. Is the other one here?”

The stepmother said, “She is not here.”

But when Bawang Putih was washing clothes in the river, the prince found her. He said,  
“This is the one I was looking for.”

Finally, the prince married Bawang Putih. Bawang Putih, who was previously mistreated, attained a good life, having married a handsome and rich prince.

Appendix G: Table of Selected Motifs in the Tales<sup>11</sup>

<b>Tale</b>	<b>“Bawang Merah” A</b>	<b>“Bawang Merah” B</b>	<b>“Bawang Merah” C</b>	<b>“Bawang Merah” D</b>	<b>“Bawang Merah” E</b>	<b>“One-Eye”</b>	<b>“The Fairies”</b>	<b>“Mother Holle”</b>
<b>Helper Figure’s Form and Gender</b>	Fish (Female)	Giant (Female)	Fish (Neutral)	Giant (Female)	Giant (Female)	Wise Woman (Female); Goat (Neutral)	Old Woman/Fairy (Female)	Old Woman/Fairy (Female)
<b>Circumstances under which Heroine Receives Money from Helper Figure</b>	Reward	Payment	Reward	Payment	Payment	Gift	Reward	Payment
<b>Form of Money Heroine Receives from Helper Figure</b>	Food; Gold Bush	Squash Filled with Jewelry	Box of Jewelry	Box of Jewelry	Box of Jewelry	Food; Tree of Silver Leaves, Gold Fruit	Voice of Gems, Flowers	Covered with Gold
<b>Final Recipient of Money</b>	King	Ambiguous	Bawang Putih	Ambiguous	Prince	Knight	Prince	Heroine
<b>Deaths</b>	Fish	Stepmother; Bawang Merah	Stepmother; Bawang Merah	Stepmother; Bawang Merah	Stepmother; Bawang Merah	Goat	Elder Daughter	None
<b>Mother Figure’s Relationship to Heroine</b>	Stepmother	Stepmother	Stepmother	Stepmother	Stepmother	Biological Mother	Biological Mother	Stepmother

<sup>11</sup> Murti Bunanta also provides a comparative motifs table in her book on “Bawang Merah.”

*Appendices H-I: Human Subjects Research Review Committee Approval Documents*

Appendix H: Initial HSRRC Approval Letter



Post Office Box 751  
Portland, Oregon 97207-0751  
Human Subjects Research Review Committee  
hsrrc@lists.pdx.edu

503-725-2227 tel  
503-725-8170 fax

Date: July 12, 2013

To: Amanda Byron / Sarah Donaldson

From: Todd Bodner, HSRRC Chair

Re: HSRRC approval for your project titled, "Complicating the Cinderella Study: A Comparative Study of the Indonesian Oral Folktale *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* in Relation to Non-Cinderella European Fairy Tales" (HSRRC Proposal # 132713)

Approval-Expiration: July 12, 2013 – July 11, 2014

Review Type: Expedited, Categories 6, 7

Dear Sarah:

In accordance with your request, the Human Subjects Research Review Committee has reviewed your proposal referenced above for compliance with PSU and DHHS policies and regulations covering the protection of human subjects. The Committee is satisfied that your provisions for protecting the rights and welfare of all subjects participating in the research are adequate, and your project is approved. Please note the following requirements:

**Changes to Protocol:** Any changes in the proposed study, whether to procedures, survey instruments, consent forms or cover letters, must be outlined and submitted to the Committee immediately. The proposed changes cannot be implemented before they have been reviewed and approved by the Committee.

**Continuing Review:** *This approval will expire on 07/11/2014.* It is the investigator's responsibility to ensure that a *Continuing Review Report* on the status of the project is submitted to the HSRRC two months before the expiration date, and that approval of the study is kept current. The *Continuing Review Report* is available at [www.rsp.pdx.edu/compliance\\_human.php](http://www.rsp.pdx.edu/compliance_human.php) and in the Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships (RSP).

**Adverse Reactions and/or Unanticipated Problems:** If any adverse reactions or unanticipated problems occur as a result of this study, you are required to notify the Committee immediately. If the issue is serious, approval may be withdrawn pending an investigation by the Committee.

**Completion of Study:** Please notify the Committee as soon as your research has been completed. Study records, including protocols and signed consent forms for each participant, must be kept by the investigator in a secure location for three years following completion of the study (or per any requirements specified by the project's funding agency).

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the HSRRC in the Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships (RSP) at 503-725-2227, Market Center Building, Suite 620, or email [HSRRC@pdx.edu](mailto:HSRRC@pdx.edu).



## Appendix I: Amended HSRRC Approved Application (for Title Change)

### **I. Investigator's Assurance**

Please see attached file in email.

### **II. Project Title and Prospectus**

Title: The Secret Life of the Cross-Cultural Fairy Tale: A Comparative Study of the Indonesian Folktale "Bawang Merah, Bawang Putih" and Three European Fairy Tales

Prospectus:

Pop culture often pigeonholes the Indonesian oral folklore of *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* as an Indonesian version of *Cinderella*, due to their shared theme, although *Bawang Merah* has yet to be classified under the Aarne-Thompson classification system for folklore. This study attempts to draw parallels between versions of *Bawang Merah* and non-*Cinderella* fairy tales, such as *Little One-Eye*, *Little Two-Eyes*, and *Little Three-Eyes* and *Toads and Diamonds*. Specifically, I want to identify similar motifs between these stories, and use these shared motifs as a vehicle by which to classify *Bawang Merah* within the Aarne-Thompson. I also want to identify diverging plot points between these stories, to deduce how differences in folklore traditions between the western world and Indonesia are due to differences in cultural values, and reflect upon how each culture uses this "type" of folktale as a medium to impart in children societal morals.

I will videotape Javanese people (*Bawang Merah* is thought to originate from East Java) retelling the story, and interview them about the origins of the tale (i.e. what island did they think it originated from, who first told them the story, was their version of the story passed down through family members or did they hear it from a professional storyteller, etc.). I will then transcribe these interviews, and translate them in English. Then, I will conduct historical and literary-based research on the European fairy tales I feel best compare to these told versions of *Bawang Merah* in regards to plot and motifs. As prior stated, I will identify similar motifs between *Bawang Merah* and the European fairy tales. I will identify contrasting plot points between the stories to make the argument that these differences are a manifestation of the differences between Indonesian and western cultural values (as reflected in children's literature).

### **III. Type of Review**

I will need an expedited review because I am interviewing people while videotaping them.

### **IV. Subject Recruitment**

I plan to recruit ten individuals for videotaped interviews for my project. I suspect many of my interviewees will be elderly, and of Indonesian descent. I plan to interview my relatives and close family friends, and ask family members and friends if they can refer me to anyone who might like to participate in my project. Then, I will call the individuals I am referred to, or have family members or friends call them. I don't have any criteria for inclusions or exclusions. I plan to recruit elderly individuals because younger people might not know many folktales, while

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professional story tellers were often hired by families in the past. I want to both preserve these slowly disappearing folktales, and study them.

#### V. Informed Consent

All participants will be 18 years of age or older. If they do not understand English, I will have my grandfather, mom, or other close relative (fluent in English, Javanese, and Indonesian) translate the consent form orally to them.

I will hand out to each participant a consent form they will have to sign before being videotaped:

**Complicating the *Cinderella* Study:  
A Comparative Study of the Indonesian Oral Folktale *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* in  
Relation to Non-*Cinderella* European Fairy Tales**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Sarah Donaldson from Portland State University, English department. The researcher hopes to learn about the folktale *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih*, or another Indonesian folktale, and the origins of said tale. This study is being conducted for the Honors Program senior thesis under the supervision of Portland State University Professor Amanda Byron. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you know the folktale *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih*, or another Indonesian folktale.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to retell the folktale *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* or another Indonesian folktale while being videotaped. This process will span as long as you need to retell *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* and describe its origins. It will take place in my grandparent's home, your home, or a public location. While participating in this study, it is possible that you may be inconvenienced by the time commitment you have to make, or feel embarrassed being videotaped. I will allow you to choose the time and place you wish to be interviewed to lessen the time commitment you have to make, and I will destroy your video if you verbally or in writing withdraw your consent to participate in the study. You may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this study, but the study may help to increase knowledge which may help others in the future.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be linked to you or identify you will not be kept confidential or anonymous in any way. I will save the videos on my computer, but will take no precautions to code it.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to take part in this study, and it will not affect your relationship with Portland State University. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without affecting your relationship with Portland State University.

If you have questions or concerns about your participation in this study, contact Sarah Donaldson at 16740 NE Glisan Portland, OR 97230, or (503) 252-7517. If you have concerns about your rights as a research subject, please contact Research and Strategic

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Partnerships, Market Center Building 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Portland State University, (503) 725-4288.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information and agree to take part in this study. The researcher should provide you with a copy of this form for your own records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

#### **VI. First-Person Scenario**

I received a call from Sarah Donaldson (or relative or friend of Sarah Donaldson) asking me to participate in her study. She told me that she wanted to videotape me telling a folktale, if I am willing to participate in the study, and if I choose to participate, I must sign a consent form. I agreed. We met up (in her grandparent's house, or in a public place, or in a location of my choosing) and she brought along her grandparents and mother with her. She set up the video camera, I signed the consent form, she told me I could withdraw my consent at any time during or after the filming (**in which case she'll destroy the video**), and then she videotaped me telling a folktale. After I finished telling the folktale, she turned off the camera and thanked me. I am happy I participated in her project.

#### **VII. Potential Risks and Safeguards**

I don't anticipate any major risks for the participants of my project. Participants may be inconvenienced by participating in my project, or may feel embarrassed and choose to withdraw their consent. I will try to inconvenience participants as little as possible, by allowing them to choose the times, dates, and places they would like to be interviewed. If a participant withdraws their consent, **I will destroy their video.**

#### **VIII. Potential Benefits**

No compensation will be given to participants choosing to participate in the project. People will benefit from my project because I will be preserving old Indonesian folktales in video format, and contributing to a largely unexplored area of folkloristics, Indonesian oral folklore.

#### **IX. Confidentiality, Records, and Distribution**

I will not keep my records confidential or anonymous. Participants who change their mind about participating in my project can withdraw their consent at any time during or after the filming, **in**

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**which case I'll destroy their video.** I will keep the videos in a file on my computer, and saved on a backup hard drive. I plan to store the records forever. Data may be transported via a flash drive. I will not take any precautions to keep records secure.

I want to videotape participants because I believe it is easier for participants to retell folktales, rather than having to take the time to write them down. Also, I believe they would make interesting and important historical records in it of themselves. In addition, it is easier for me to verbally translate Javanese, than it is for me to translate written documents. I want to videotape participants rather than audio record their stories because I believe it would be easier for me to correctly transcribe their stories if I were to see their lip movements, gestures, and other expressions.

**X. Training and Experience**

I do not have training or experience working with human subjects. My research will be advised by Portland State University Professor Amanda Byron.

**XI. Appendices**

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Telephone Introductory Script:

"Hi. My name is Sarah Donaldson and I was referred to you by \_\_\_\_\_. I'm interviewing people for my thesis and I was wondering if you wouldn't mind participating in my project? I want to videotape you telling the folktale *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih*, or if you don't know that tale, another one of your choosing, and then ask you questions about the folktale on video. Would you be interested in participating? Please feel free to say 'no' if you don't want to or can't participate. If you're able to and want to participate, we can find a time and place to meet. You can always change your mind later and decide not to participate or not have me use your videotape. What do you think?"

\*\*Note: If they cannot understand English, since my Javanese accent is poor, I will have one of my family members (most likely my mom, grandfather, or another close relative) speak to them instead.

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Interview Questions:

1. Please retell the folktale *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih*, or if you don't know this tale, another one of your choosing.
2. What island do you think that story came from?
3. Who first told you that story?
4. Was that story passed down through family members, or did you hear it from a professional storyteller?
5. When did you first hear that story (i.e. how old were you when you first heard it)?
6. Do you have anything else to say about that story, or Indonesian oral folklore in general?
7. Is it a popular story around here (East Java)?

**\*\*Note:** I may decide to add more questions later, but they will be about the general origins of the folktale, rather than anything personal.

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Informed Consent Document:

**Complicating the *Cinderella* Study:  
A Comparative Study of the Indonesian Oral Folktale *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* in  
Relation to Non-*Cinderella* European Fairy Tales**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Sarah Donaldson from Portland State University, English department. The researcher hopes to learn about the folktale *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih*, or another Indonesian folktale, and the origins of said tale. This study is being conducted for the Honors Program senior thesis under the supervision of Portland State University Professor Amanda Byron. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you know the folktale *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih*, or another Indonesian folktale.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to retell the folktale *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* or another Indonesian folktale while being videotaped. This process will span as long as you need to retell *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* and describe its origins. It will take place in my grandparent's home, your home, or a public location. While participating in this study, it is possible that you may be inconvenienced by the time commitment you have to make, or feel embarrassed being videotaped. I will allow you to choose the time and place you wish to be interviewed to lessen the time commitment you have to make, and I will destroy your video if you verbally or in writing withdraw your consent to participate in the study. You may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this study, but the study may help to increase knowledge which may help others in the future.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be linked to you or identify you will not be kept confidential or anonymous in any way. I will save the videos on my computer, but will take no precautions to code it.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to take part in this study, and it will not affect your relationship with Portland State University. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without affecting your relationship with Portland State University.

If you have questions or concerns about your participation in this study, contact Sarah Donaldson at 16740 NE Glisan Portland, OR 97230, or (503) 252-7517. If you have concerns about your rights as a research subject, please contact the PSU Office of Research Integrity, Market Center Building 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Portland State University, (503) 725-2227.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information and agree to take part in this study. The researcher should provide you with a copy of this form for your own records.

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**Signature**

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**Date**

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**Print name**

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