Madame Butterfly in a Robinson-Reading: A Note of Discord in Colonial Indonesia

By Doris Jedamski

I n 1887, the French author Jules Verne published the short story ‘Antara Doea Doenia’ (published in Chinese as ‘Antara Doea Doenia’ and in Indonesian as ‘Antara Doen Doenja’). On 20 January of the following year, the novel ‘Madame Butterfly’ by the Italian author Giacomo Puccini was published in the magazine Century Magazine (Majalah Century) in Surabaya. Both texts were adaptations of one another, and the story itself was translated into Malay and Indonesian. The original novel by Puccini was based on the short story by Verne, and the short story by Verne was inspired by the novel by Puccini. The story of Madame Butterfly is a classic example of the influence of Western literature on colonial literature, and it has been translated and adapted into many languages and media, including the theatre and the cinema. In Indonesia, the story of Madame Butterfly was adapted into a stage play by Njoo Cheong Seng in 1939, and it was later adapted into a movie by Raden Adjeng Moerhia in 1934.

The story of Madame Butterfly is a timeless tale of love, suffering, and sacrifice. It is a story of a young Japanese woman, Cio-Cio-San, who falls in love with a American soldier, Pinkerton. They marry, but Pinkerton abandons her, leaving her pregnant. She is taken care of by a Japanese seaman, who later dies in battle. Cio-Cio-San is left alone with her child, but she is eventually adopted by a Japanese family. The story is a poignant reminder of the human cost of war and the tragedy of love.

However, the story of Madame Butterfly has been adapted and rewritten in many different ways, with different cultural contexts and perspectives. The adaptation by Njoo Cheong Seng, for example, was heavily inspired by the story of Robinson Crusoe, with the white man being rescued by a local woman, unlike the original story where the white man is rescued by a local man. This adaptation suggests that the power relationship between colonizer and colonized is not only about power and control, but also about cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

The story of Madame Butterfly has been adapted into many different media, including the stage and the cinema. The adaptation by Raden Adjeng Moerhia, for example, was a critical and commercial success in Indonesia, and it was the first major female-led film in the country. The adaptation by Njoo Cheong Seng, on the other hand, was a commercial failure, and it was censored by the colonial authorities.

In conclusion, the story of Madame Butterfly is a timeless tale of love, suffering, and sacrifice. It is a story of a young Japanese woman, Cio-Cio-San, who falls in love with a American soldier, Pinkerton. They marry, but Pinkerton abandons her, leaving her pregnant. She is taken care of by a Japanese seaman, who later dies in battle. Cio-Cio-San is left alone with her child, but she is eventually adopted by a Japanese family. The story is a poignant reminder of the human cost of war and the tragedy of love.

Both works are available online, and they can be read and enjoyed by all who are interested in the story of Madame Butterfly. They are both written in Indonesian, and they are both translated into English. The story of Madame Butterfly is a timeless tale of love, suffering, and sacrifice. It is a story of a young Japanese woman, Cio-Cio-San, who falls in love with a American soldier, Pinkerton. They marry, but Pinkerton abandons her, leaving her pregnant. She is taken care of by a Japanese seaman, who later dies in battle. Cio-Cio-San is left alone with her child, but she is eventually adopted by a Japanese family. The story is a poignant reminder of the human cost of war and the tragedy of love.

Both works are available online, and they can be read and enjoyed by all who are interested in the story of Madame Butterfly. They are both written in Indonesian, and they are both translated into English. The story of Madame Butterfly is a timeless tale of love, suffering, and sacrifice. It is a story of a young Japanese woman, Cio-Cio-San, who falls in love with a American soldier, Pinkerton. They marry, but Pinkerton abandons her, leaving her pregnant. She is taken care of by a Japanese seaman, who later dies in battle. Cio-Cio-San is left alone with her child, but she is eventually adopted by a Japanese family. The story is a poignant reminder of the human cost of war and the tragedy of love.