

Critical Study of Children's Stories: Elements of Fabulousness in East Java Folk Stories

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Abstract. Children's literature is still seen as literature that does not provide added value for its readers, so that the emergence of children's literature in society often receives little attention. Children's literature that enters elementary schools is not strictly selected so that children's literature that is not appropriate to children's growth and development enters elementary schools until it reaches children's hands and is read by children. If you look more closely at books aimed at children, not all of them are suitable for children to read. The reason why children's stories are not suitable for children to read is that some of the children's stories in circulation violate the rules for writing children's stories. From here, circulating children's literature needs to be studied critically before it reaches children. This research examines children's reading that contains forbidden elements in Lamongan Regency folklore. This research uses a moral approach to see the extent to which children's literary reading is able to provide educational value as the function of literature is to educate and entertain. As a result, several stories in circulation are not suitable for children to read because they violate the rules for writing children's literature, namely the content of the story used, the language style chosen, plot, characters and setting. not suitable for elementary school children.

Keywords: Children, Literature, Stories.

1 Introduction

[1] Nurgiantoro (2003:10.8-10.10) also gave his opinion about the differences between children's literature and adult literature. Apart from the content, there are still other aspects, namely the level of readability and the level of suitability. Readability is whether or not a piece of reading is easy for readers to digest, appreciate, understand and enjoy [2]. Therefore, children's literature uses simple language. Themes in children's literature should be open, meaning that the themes can be immediately discovered by readers (children) [3]. Children's literature must also have plot simplicity, namely a progressive plot [4]. Characterization in children's literature is described simply. The setting used should not be much different from the environment where the child lives. Apart from that, children's stories have a clear narrative center, meaning the story doesn't change focus too often

Children's literature is literature whose purpose is to be enjoyed by children, so writing children's literature must be based on children's eyes [5]. When deciding what will happen in a story, young children often choose realistic events over fantastic ones [6] [7] [8]. So that children's reading is appropriate to the child's growth and development, it is important to determine the main characteristics of stories for children. With this in mind, this study builds on existing research that examines how fantasy and realism influence children's understanding and learning from picture books [9][10]. England, the United States and Canada use children's stories to learn personal, emotional and moral values. Children's literature is used for learning with the aim of conveying social, moral and emotional lessons to children [10] [11] [12] [13]. The lack of public attention to children's literature has resulted in children's literature circulating in society having many problems, these problems are related to the content in children's literature not being suitable for children's growth and development. If you look at the regulations of the Head of the Standards, Curriculum and Educational Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 030/P/2022 concerning Guidelines for Book Leveling, Children's Reading Books need to at least pay attention to fulfilling two supporting characteristics of books, namely digest-friendly books (decodable books) and leveled books.

In this regard, it is necessary to make efforts to provide reading materials or books to children according to their level of psychological development and ability to read, which is called mixing and matching between books and target readers because every child experiences language acquisition that is not always the same. Therefore, children have the characteristic ability and independence to read which is greatly influenced by internal factors and external factors, such as family, educators, society, and reading materials. One of the favorite reading materials for children is children's stories, so writing children's literature is necessary. receive special attention from the public so that children's literature circulating in society is in accordance with the development of child psychology. In an article written by Citraningtiyas in 2006 entitled "Children's Literature, an Almost Forgotten Soil" he makes the analogy that children's literature is a cultivated land that is still empty and still needs much study.

The lack of public attention means that children's stories in schools have many problems. For example, the simple story of garlic and garlic which has been known to contain a lot of verbal and non-verbal violence. The stories of Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Rapunsel, teach romance and there are kissing scenes that are not suitable for children to read. In 2012, there was a case of one of the readings on the worksheet for elementary school children containing a story related to a mistress. Not only that, several children's stories published by Era Adi Citra Intermedia in 2012 were withdrawn by the Ministry of Education because the story books were indulgent and contained many stories about free sex and even same-sex relationships [14].

This problem occurs in children's stories which are not folklore, in children's literature which originates from folklore, the community tends to be looser and less strict in supervision, this happens because our society believes that stories originating from folklore must have noble and valuable values. education. They think that all folk tales must be good so they are worthy of being passed on to children [15]. Apart from that, people also have the view that folklore is able to teach moral and religious values. The assumption is that these stories provide a source of culturally relevant information and are important in shaping children's behavior [16][17] [18]. Thus, there are many problems in children's literature that ultimately escape attention. This results in the content contained in folklore reaching children without or with only a little "filter". In fact, it is not necessarily true that these folk tales are suitable for children to read. This is because in general folk tales were not originally written for children [15].

This research focuses on the content contained in East Java folklore, especially children's literature whose content is considered taboo. Children's literature should tell about children's lives so that children can understand it. This is not in line with the reality that occurs in society because there is still a lot of children's literature that contains adult issues. On this basis, it is important to carry out this research to reveal children's stories that contain taboos. Thus, the problem of this research is what aspects make children's literature unfit for children's consumption? The aim of this research is to explain the aspects of children's literature that make it unfit for children's consumption.

Based on previous research, Citraningtyas found that many folk tales actually contain non-constructive values, so he proposed reconstructing folk tales to make them more relevant to current values. For example, he proposed that the story "Malin Kundang" be reconstructed because a story that ended with a curse could kill productivity. Curses result in death and shackles the cursed party so that they cannot be productive again [14]. This suggestion was put forward again in 2012, so that with Malin Kundang's story, a story entitled "Staffouli Patchouli" was created which was considered to contain values that were more relevant to apply today. In the same year, Citraningtyas also reconstructed the story "Cinderella" into "Cintarela". Then in 2015 and 2016 [14] again proposed efforts to reconstruct the folklore entitled "Roro Jonggrang" into "Rara Janitra".

[19] Nurgiyantoro revealed that there are several folk tales that are actually not suitable for children's consumption. In his article entitled "Violence against Women in Children's Stories", he highlights the characterization of women in several children's stories. He found that female characters in children's stories were generally burdened with beauty myths, cursed characters, and experienced violence. In line with Citraningtyas' opinion, he also stated that there was a need for reconstruction to prevent texts and all kinds of violence against women. Triwikromo's research focuses more on violence against women using a feminist perspective. Meanwhile, this research discusses what aspects of children's literature read that make it unfit for children's consumption, so it does not only focus on violent content. Of course, the load is not suitable for children's consumption. Therefore, I was then interested in looking at the content in children's reading, especially taboo matters or taboos in other children's literature.

2 Research Methods

This research focuses on examining the terminology and narrative of children's literary works related to taboos in children's literature. This study is based on library research. This research focuses on what aspects of children's literature read that make it unfit for children's consumption.

This research is qualitative research with descriptive methods. The method will be used to view and describe data about the suitability of East Javanese folk tales when presented to children. Qualitative research is research carried out without any formulas or calculations in it but using appreciation and sensitivity towards the object to be studied.

The research data are elements of East Javanese folklore which contain taboos in children's stories. The folklore that will be studied is East Javanese Folklore because the researcher feels that East Javanese Folklore contains taboo elements in children's stories.

The data collection technique in this research uses library techniques. To obtain the data contained in the East Javanese Folklore, the researcher read the East Javanese Folklore first. By

reading, researchers can determine the desired data. After the East Javanese folk tales were read and data was obtained, the data was then recorded. In the note-taking technique, the researcher acts as the main instrument for recording data. Meanwhile, library techniques are data collection that uses written sources to obtain data. The related data that has been obtained is then written on a data card. After data that is appropriate to the research focus is collected, the data is then analyzed.

The data analysis technique used in this research is descriptive analysis. Therefore, to examine the extent to which the content of a work of children's literature can be useful for the reading community, namely children, the most appropriate approach to use is a moral approach.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Synopsis of The Folk Story Entitled Cinderaras

[20] In a place called the Jenggala Kingdom, there lived a King, Queen and his concubine. The king was named Raden Putra. Even though both of them are beautiful, the Queen and Concubine have opposite personalities. The Queen's character is kind, smart and wise, while the Concubine always feels jealous whenever she sees the intimacy between the King and Queen. One day, the Concubine hatched an evil plan with a healer by telling the King a lie that the Queen intended to poison him. As a result, the Queen was expelled from the palace. After several months living in the wilderness, the Queen was blessed with a handsome and healthy son who was named Cinderaras. Cinderaras grew into a handsome and powerful man. One day he found an egg, and a magical rooster hatched from it. Thanks to the chicken's magical abilities, the rooster always won the fight, and Cinderaras' name became increasingly known. The news about Cinderaras and his rooster reached the King's ears. He also made a bet. If victory is on his side, then Cinderaras will be imprisoned. And if Cinderaras wins, the King must hand over all the treasures he has. Cinderaras won the battle at the same time that the King learned the truth that Cinderaras was his flesh and blood thanks to the magical abilities of his chicken. The lie was revealed, the concubine was in prison. The king came to the queen who lived in the forest to apologize. The queen returned to her throne with the king, and Cinderaras became crown prince.

This quote illustrates that the problem in this folk tale is jealousy and envy, which makes the antagonist carry out a cunning plan by means of slander. This effort was filled with deceit, cunning strategy, hatred and violence. The concubine considered the Queen unfit to accompany the King's children. The children would feel the aura of hatred and anger that was so strong in family life. Violence, domestic conflict, deep hatred, revenge are things that are not suitable for children's consumption because they are not a child's world. Therefore, this book is not suitable for children's consumption.

The story also describes a small child who bets on cockfighting. In children's literature, something that is told must be related to the child's world and/or how the child views that thing. In short, it can be said that the problems and conflicts that are narrated must be within the child's reasoning, intellectual and emotional reach [19]. Apart from that, the storyline should be simple and clear. Plot clarity can be interpreted as the clarity of the story, plot simplicity means the story is easy to understand, and plot complexity means the story is not easy to understand [19]. Thus, it is clear that this theme is not suitable for children because it revolves around household conflicts which are adult problems.

3.2 Origins of Surabaya

[20] Once upon a time there lived two strong animals, namely Sura who was a shark and Baya who was a crocodile. The two of them are good friends. However, a fight between the two cannot be avoided when they fight over food, because both of them have the same nature, namely greed. Nothing can stop their fight. One time they were fighting over a game. Unfortunately, they didn't have time to eat the game because they were busy fighting. Sura also proposed the idea of dividing their hunting area. Sura is in the sea, while Baya is on land. They agreed. One day the two of them didn't get anything from their game. Sura secretly enters Baya's hunting area. Baya didn't accept it, he was angry because Sura broke his promise. The two fight. Baya won the great fight. Sura decided to return to his territory.

A fictional story becomes interesting and even tense because there is conflict between two opposing groups of characters. The conflict that commonly occurs, especially in children's stories, is between characters with good characters who are called protagonists and characters who have bad characters who are called antagonists. These two types of characters must be present in fictional stories because the tension between good and evil makes a story interesting, suspenseful, and ultimately provides satisfaction through catharsis when the evil character is defeated. The protagonist is a character who carries a mission of truth and moral values which is in contrast to the antagonist who is actually the bearer of evil or disaster. In children's fiction, the distinction between protagonist and antagonist is often more explicit because the reading book functions to instill moral values as portrayed by the protagonist [19]. However, in the story there are too many scenes of fighting between Sura and Baya to win over territory, this makes the story unfit for consumption by relatives because there are too many violent scenes.

3.3 Twin Mask

[20] Once upon a time, King Bontolo in the Bintolo Kingdom, East Java, had a beautiful daughter. Many young men came to the kingdom wanting to propose to the princess. Meanwhile, in a small village there lived a young man and his mother. The young man's daily life is making masks. Besides, the young man had an ugly face. Because of his ugly face, the young man did not have the confidence to propose to the princess. However, he couldn't fake his feelings. Every day, he continued to imagine the princess, until he fell ill. Following his mother's advice, the young man made the best mask that could change his face to be handsome. The time came for him to come to propose to the princess. Both of them fell in love. However, the young man realized his mistake. He told the truth, which resulted in him being punished by the king. Apparently, the princess was not angry at all. The princess stated that her love was truly sincere. Finally, the two of them decided to get married and during the wedding ceremony both of them wore the same mask. This incident inspired some people to create a dance called Joged Topeng Kembar which is famous in East Java, especially in the Lumajang area.

Apart from physical violence, there is also psychological violence. Psychological violence is violence carried out by the perpetrator against the victim's mental state by shouting, swearing, threatening, humiliating, commanding, harassing, stalking, spying, or other actions that cause fear (including those directed at people close to the victim). , for example family, children, husband, friends, or parents). Moreover, these curses are encouraged because they are richer, more honorable and have a higher position, so they feel they have the right to treat other parties who are considered lower in this way. Children who read reading material that is full of curses will indirectly have the idea that this is a normal thing. . Thus, if he happens to come from a rich family, he will look down on others who are poorer. In fact, it's not uncommon for him to follow along in uttering harsh insults at that person. These quotes also illustrate that in society there are negative stereotypes towards village people and women. People who come from hamlets are

stereotyped as stupid, shameless, ignorant of customs, and ignorant of manners. Thus, it seems as if city people are better off than village people because they have higher education. Apart from that, these quotes also depict the stereotype of women as stupid and unlucky. These two stereotypes have negative meanings that can influence the attitude of a child who reads the literature.

3.4 Lembusura

[20] It is said that King Brawijaya from the Majapahit Kingdom had a beautiful daughter named Dyah Ayu Pusparani. Because of her desire to see her daughter get married, Putri Dyah held a competition. Whoever succeeds in using the Garudayaksa bow and Gong Kyai Skardelima has supernatural powers, then he will marry him. No one has succeeded in using these two objects. The king intended to stop the competition. Suddenly a young man named Lembusura came to try it. The competition was won by Lembusura. It was time for the wedding ceremony, Putri Dyah was sad, she didn't want to marry a young man with an ox head. Putri Dyah asked to make a well at the top of Mount Kelud for bathing. Lembusura agreed. When he dug up the peak, several soldiers buried Lembusura alive in it. Before meeting his death, Lembusura vowed to destroy the Majapahit Kingdom. Until now, people believe that the eruption of Mount Kelud was the work of Lembusura who was seeking revenge.

Teaching honesty to children must start from an early age, like a tree, honesty is the root, honesty is the most important character value, according to the definition of "honest" in the Big Indonesian Dictionary which means being upright, not cheating. Honesty obeys [21] is the ability to convey the truth, admit mistakes, be trustworthy and act respectfully [22] says that honesty is obedient behavior in words, actions and work. Meanwhile, according to Magnis, honesty is a brave attitude that shows who he is and says what he means correctly. Honesty is a connection of the heart to the truth. Meanwhile, in the story of Lembusura, there is a content that tells about betrayal or dishonesty due to not keeping promises, which in the end makes Lebu Sura hold a grudge which seems as if the grudge is justified because Lebu Sura is a victim of dishonesty. If this story is read by children, it will give children an understanding that it is permissible to hold grudges as long as they are not guilty and that is contrary to the psychology of children who never hold grudges. A child's soul is a pure soul without any grudges in it, even if it hurts it will quickly be resolved without holding a grudge.

3.5 Garlic and Shallots

Bawang Putih was the daughter of a rich merchant. His very happy life suddenly disappeared after his mother died. The father decided to remarry. Every day his mother and half-brother named Bawang Merah treated him like an errand boy. Bawang Merah is actually treated like a princess in her father's house. One time, Bawang Putih was ordered to wash clothes in the river. But the clothes were washed away into the river. The stepmother scolded her and forbade Bawang Putih to return home before the clothes were found. Bawang Putih met a grandmother. It turned out that the grandmother was the wife of a giant named Kala Glugutbumi who liked to eat humans. Hearing Bawang Putih's life story made the giant pity him. The giant presented him with a pumpkin. What a surprise when he opened the pumpkin and it contained lots of jewellery. Bawang Merah was asked by her mother to do what Bawang Putih had experienced. They pretended to look for clothes that had been washed away. Initially they received the same treatment. Their plan to bring home a pumpkin was successful. However, Bawang Merah and

her mother were shocked when they saw that the contents of the pumpkin were not jewelry, but deadly animals. Both of them died instantly because they were attacked by the animals.

The theme raised in the story, namely fortitude in facing life's trials, is actually suitable for children, but if we read further, the content of the story is not appropriate for the world of children. The content in *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* talks a lot about adult problems that are not in line with children's understanding. The content in *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* mostly tells about the conflict between stepmothers and stepbrothers. Thus, reading this book children will be brought to the understanding that every stepmother and stepbrother is evil. So children will feel afraid if they want to have a stepmother or stepsiblings. In the story of *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* it is also described that wealth is everything that is more important and more than anything, there are a lot of lies and slander in the story of *Bawang Merah* and *Bawang Putih* which makes this book unfit for children to consume.

4 Conclusion

Like language, the use of several illustrations in children's reading displays acts of violence. This results in children not only reading, but also being able to "see" violent images. It is feared that children will imitate this. They will easily carry out these actions because they are used to finding them in their reading. Therefore, children's literature is not suitable to be presented to children.

If viewed from a moral approach, namely how a literary work can increase the dignity of humans as cultural, thinking and divine beings, these five children's literature cannot carry out their function as educational media. This is because there is a lot of content that is not appropriate for children's literature, namely violence, love triangles, revenge, betrayal, etc. Therefore, presenting children's literature that is not suitable for children is tantamount to carrying out hidden violence against children. Apart from that, by allowing children's literature to contain violence, it is still consumed by children, we are actually contributing to perpetuating violent practices in society.

After knowing the problems in several children's literature readings, as parents, we should be careful when choosing reading materials for children. Good children's literature is literature that tells stories from a child's perspective, whoever the writer is. The themes raised are themes in the everyday world of children. The story must also be told from a child's point of view, not an adult's. The language used in children's literature should be children's language, not adult language, and should not contain violence or eroticism. The plot used should be a single plot so that it does not confuse children. The book's illustrations are also made to be as attractive as possible and there should be no illustrations that depict violence or eroticism. If parents are not selective in what literature their children read, the negative influence of these misdirected books has the potential to damage their souls, minds and behavior.

Children's book writers should also be careful when writing children's stories. They must consider the child's level of psychological development. Things that lead to eroticism, violence, betrayal, love triangles, or adult conflicts should be removed from their stories. Writers are expected to be creative in processing stories so that the moral values the story wants to convey remain interesting without being presented with taboo things for children. Finally, the moral responsibility to provide good and appropriate reading for children is our shared obligation. This is because the future of this nation rests on the shoulders of children. Until that time comes, we

must prepare them to become an intelligent and qualified generation, both mentally and physically. Their quality will become a benchmark for the quality of a nation.

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