

APPLYING LITERATURE TO CHILDREN IN THE MILLENNIUM ERA

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ABSTRACT

Literature is an art that makes beautiful works. In life, we will not be separated from the embrace of literature. Literature is a work that can be enjoyed by readers, not only by adults but literature can also be enjoyed by children. The most common children's literature is fairy tales and folk tales. In this era, do children still listen to fairy tales? In the advanced millennium era, there are not a few children who only grow up without knowing that fairy tales are works of literature. Many fairy tales are known to children, but sometimes they just think it is just an ordinary story. In fact, there are many lessons, messages, morals as well as meanings contained in the fairy tales they hear. In this millennium era, of course we do not want literary works to be simply forgotten. Children do grow up with literature, but they do not realize the true nature of literature itself. The attitude itself must begin with adults who guide and introduce literature to the younger generation, as well as apply and teach the meanings contained in literary works.

Keywords: Literature, Children, Fairy Tale, Folk Tale, Literature for Children.

INTRODUCTION

Literature is the art of language which usually gives birth to works which are then called literary works. Literary works that are born from literature can be enjoyed by readers, both in earnest to find out about literary works or just as entertainment.

Literature comes from an absorption word from Sanskrit, namely shaastra. Shaastra in Sanskrit means 'text containing instructions' or 'guidelines'. Literature itself is useful for everyone, including children. Literature aimed at children will help the development of children in reading, writing and while playing. To move on to adulthood, literature is useful in the development of children. Children have the right to know everything that goes on around them. Even in this millennial era, there is still a lot of literature that coexists with the growth of children, such as fairy tales, folklore and legends. In today's advanced era, anxiety about children forgetting literature still exists, because in this era it is common for children not to read books that contain information about literature. In fairy tale books and other children's literary works, of course there are many meanings that children can absorb for their continued growth. Not only children, adults can get meaning from this literature.

METHOD

The author chose to examine approximately thirty source and journal articles as directed. With various sources the writer gets literary meanings in life, not only for children but also useful for adults. This article is focused on examining the meanings of children's literary works in everyday life and aims to help the development of children in the millennial era.

RESULTS

From what we examined according to the title of this article, the meanings contained in fairy tales, children's literature, folklore, and ancient legends contain many very deep meanings. Like the fairy

tale 'Malin Kundang' which comes from the area of West Sumatra, Indonesia. There are two kinds of languages spoken, English and Indonesian.

Malin Kundang

Long time ago, in a small village near the beach in West Sumatra, lived a woman and her son, Malin Kundang. Malin Kundang's father had passed away when he was a baby, and he had to live hard with his mother.

Malin Kundang was a healthy, dilligent, and strong child. He usually went to the sea to catch fish, and brought it to his mother, or sold it in the town.

One day, when Malin Kundang was sailing as usual, he saw a merchant's ship which was being raided by a small band of pirates. With his brave and power, Malin Kundang defeated the pirates. The merchant was so happy and asked Malin Kundang to sail with him. Malin Kundang agreed.

Many years later, Malin Kundang became a wealthy merchant, with a huge ship, loads of trading goods, many ship crews, and a beautiful wife. In his journey, his ship landed on a beach. The villagers reconigzed him, and the news ran fast in the town: Malin Kundang became a rich man and now he is here. His mother, in deepful sadnees after years of loneliness, ran to the beach to meet her beloved son again.

When the mother came, Malin Kundang, in front of his well-dressed wife, his crews and his own gloriness, denied to meet that old, poor and dirty woman. For three times she begged Malin Kundang and for three times yelled at him. At last Malin Kundang said to her "Enough, old woman! I have never had a mother like you, a dirty and ugly peasant!" Then he ordered his crews to set sail.

Enraged, she cursed Malin Kundang that he would turn into a stone if he didn't apologize. Malin Kundang just laughed and set sail.

In the quiet sea, suddenly a thunderstorm came. His huge ship was wrecked and it was too late for Malin Kundang to apologize. He was thrown by the wave out of his ship, fell on a small island, and suddenly turned into stone.



Picture 1. Malin Kundang who turned into stone. Illustration by Dongeng Kita.

In Malin Kundang's story, the morals of the story are very deep to be given to children. Malin initially promised his mother that he would return overseas one day, but when he returned Malin did not recognize his own mother because he was ashamed of his wife. Malin was so blinded by wealth that it made him forget who had given birth and raised him all this time. Regardless of whether this story is true or not, children have the right to listen to it and be given understanding, so they don't become disobedient to their parents and still remember the precious people who always support them.

Cinderella

Once upon a time there lived a girl called Cinderella. she was happy live with her father and mother. until her mother died dead and her father had married a widow with two daughters. Her stepmother didn't like her one little bit. But, for the poor unhappy girl, there was nothing at all. Her stepmother has two daughters and they were very bossy. No rest and no comfort. She had to work hard all day. Only when evening came was she allowed to sit for a while by the fire, near the cinders. That's why everybody called her Cinderella.

Cinderella used to spend long hours all alone talking to the cat. The cat always said, "Miaow", which really meant, "Cheer up! You have something neither of your stepsisters has and that is beauty." It was quite true. Cinderella, even dressed in old rags, was a lovely girl. While her stepsisters, no matter how splendid and elegant their clothes, were still clumsy, lumpy and ugly and always would be.

One day, beautiful new dresses arrived at the house. A ball was to be held at the palace and the stepsisters were getting ready to go. Cinderella didn't even dare ask if she could go too. She knew very well what the answer would be: "You? You're staying at home to wash the dishes, scrub the floors and turn down the beds for your stepsisters." They will come home tired and very sleepy. Cinderella sighed, "Oh dear, I'm so unhappy!" and the cat murmured "Miaow."

Suddenly something amazing happened. As Cinderella was sitting all alone, there was a burst of light and a fairy appeared. "Don't be alarmed, Cinderella," said the fairy. "I know you would love to go to the ball. And so you shall!" "How can I, dressed in rags?" Cinderella replied.

The fairy smiled. With a flick of her magic wand Cinderella found herself wearing the most beautiful dress she had ever seen. "Now for your coach," said the fairy; "A real lady would never go to a ball on foot! Quick! Get me a pumpkin!" "Oh of course," said Cinderella, rushing away. Then the fairy turned to the cat. "You, bring me seven mice, and, remember they must be alive!"

Cinderella soon returned with the pumpkin and the cat with seven mice he had caught in the cellar. With a flick of the magic wand the pumpkin turned into a sparkling coach and the mice became six white horses, while the seventh mouse turned into a coachman in a smart uniform and carrying a whip. Cinderella could hardly believe her eyes.

"You shall go to the ball Cinderella. But remember! You must leave at midnight. That is when my spell ends. Your coach will turn back into a pumpkin and the horses will become mice again. You will be dressed in rags and wearing clogs instead of these glass slippers! Do you understand?" Cinderella smiled and said, "Yes, I understand!"

Cinderella had a wonderful time at the ball until she heard the first stroke of midnight! She remembered what the fairy had said, and without a word of goodbye she slipped from the Prince's arms and ran down the steps. As she ran she lost one of her slippers, but not for a moment did she dream of stopping to pick it up! If the last stroke of midnight were to sound... oh... what a disaster that would be! Out she fled and vanished into the night.

The Prince, who was now madly in love with her, picked up the slipper and said to his ministers, "Go and search everywhere for the girl whose foot this slipper fits. I will never be content until I find her!" So the ministers tried the slipper on the foot of every girl in the land until only Cinderella was left.

Suddenly the fairy appeared and waved her magic wand. In a flash, Cinderella appeared in a splendid dress, shining with youth and beauty. Her stepmother and stepsisters gaped at her in amazement, and the ministers said, "Come with us Cinderella! The Prince is waiting for you." So Cinderella married the Prince and lived happily ever.



Picture 2. Cinderella with a Fairy. Illustration by firstcry.com

In the Cinderella story, the meaning contained in this story is very simple but also profound. This story teaches that our kindness will not be in vain someday. If what we sow is good, then we will reap good too. And one day we deserve our own happiness. Even though this story is more appropriate for teenagers, there is nothing wrong with children getting a lesson from this story apart from the love story.

Mouse Deer and Crocodile

One day, Mouse Deer went down to the river to take a drink. But he knew that the crocodile might be waiting underwater to eat him, so he said out loud. "I wonder if the water's warm. I'll put in my leg and find out." Of course Mouse Deer didn't put it in his leg. He picked up a stick instead and put one end into the water.

Chomp...! Crocodile grabbed the stick and pulled it underwater. Mouse Deer laughed. "Ha... ha... ha... Stupid crocodile! Can't you tell the difference between a stick and a leg?" Then Mouse Deer ran off to drink somewhere else. The next day, Mouse Deer wanted to cross the river. He wanted to eat the fruits on the other side of the river. He saw a floating log in the river. He knew that Crocodile looked like a log when he floated. Mouse Deer didn't want to be eaten by Crocodile when he crossed the river.

Suddenly, he had an idea. He called out loud, "Crocodile!" Crocodiles rose from the water, "Hello, Mouse Deer. Have you come to be my lunch?"

Mouse Deer smiled. "Sorry, not today, Crocodile. I have orders from the King. He wants to invite all the crocodiles in this river to a party. He wants me to count all the crocodiles so he could prepare enough meals for you."

“Really...? Tell us what to do,” said Crocodile be pleased.

“Yep, but you must line up from this side of the river to the other side. I will count all of you so the meals are enough” said Mouse Deer. Crocodile then got all his friends and family. They lined up across the river.

Mouse Deer then jumped onto Crocodile’s back. “One,” he counted. He jumped onto the next crocodile, “Two” And the next crocodile, “Three”. Mouse Deer kept jumping until he arrived on the other side of the river.

“How many are there?” asked Crocodile.

“Just enough,” said Mouse Deer while jumping across the river. He laughed and said, “Oh crocodiles, do you know that I actually do not bring good news from the King of the Jungle? Actually I have tricked all of you into crossing this great river. Ha ha ha...”

Seeing the mouse deer laughing while saying that, the crocodiles felt both angry and ashamed because they had been tricked by the mouse deer. “You are a naughty and cunning Mouse Deer. Watch out, okay... If we meet again, I’ll eat you!” said one of the crocodiles.

The mouse deer was not at all afraid of the threat and immediately ran to the forest.



Picture 3. Mouse Deer and Crocodile. Illustration by Riri.

The moral message contained in the story of the mouse deer and the crocodile is to return to each of us. The hare has the same ingenuity as us humans. But whether that ingenuity will be used for good or bad things. So the role of parents is needed in educating children and side by side with children's literary works.

Snow White and Seven Dwarfs

Once upon a time in a faraway palace, there lived a beautiful princess. She was very pretty, with blue eyes and long black hair. Her skin was smooth and white, so she was called Snow White. Snow White has a stepmother who was always jealous with her beauty, while her father has passed away. Her Stepmother was cruel. She had a magic mirror that could say who was the most beautiful women in the country.

One day, her stepmother asked to magic mirror that which woman was the most beautiful in the country. The magic mirror answered that Snow White was the most beautiful woman. Her stepmother was very angry, then asked her servant to get rid of snow white from this kingdom. The servant was asked to kill snow white in the woods but the servant didn't do it. He just took snow white into the wood and left her alone but her stepmother didn't know that snow white was still alive. In the forest, Snow White was alone and scared. She did not know where she should go. Suddenly she saw a quaint little cottage. She wondered who lived there and then she decided to get into the house.

In the house, she saw 7 small beds and a kitchen. Snow White cleaned up the house such as washing clothes, cleaned the bed and others. After working so hard, she went to bed and slept there. In the afternoon, the seven dwarfs who lived in the cottage went home. They were surprised to see there was a young woman there. One of them waked her up and asked who she was. Snow White told them her sad story. The seven dwarfs felt pity on Snow White and they asked her to stay with them in the house.

While in the palace, then stepmother asked the magic mirror one again who the most beautiful woman in the kingdom was. The magic mirror answered that Snow White was still alive and lived in a small house with the seven dwarfs. She was still the most beautiful woman in the world. The stepmother was angry and she planed something bad for Snow White.

Then stepmother disguised herself as an old woman who sold poisoned apple and went to the dwarf's house. Before the seven dwarfs went to work, they warned Snow White not to open the door to strangers. When her stepmother arrived to the house, she began offering Snow White's apple. Snow White refused to open the door but her stepmother forced her. Snow white felt sorry to her and opened the door. She took the apple from her mother and ate it. After eating the poisoned apple, she fainted and felt to the ground with the poisoned apple on her side.

In the evening, when the seven dwarfs came home, they were surprised to see Snow White lying on the floor with a pale face and a poisoned apple beside her. The seven dwarfs were sad to see Snow White which was dying but she did not dead. Then the seven dwarfs decided to make a beautiful bed made of crystal to make Snow White still alive.

Day by day, the seven dwarfs were waiting for a miracle to come so that Snow White could get back from her faint. Then one day, there was a traveler who was actually a prince of another kingdom that was so far. He saw a beautiful woman laid on a bed of crystals. The prince also asked what happened to the girl to the dwarfs. Then the dwarfs told him what had happened to Snow White.

Hearing the story, the prince was so sad. He was coming closer to snow white. He felt sorry and kissed her. Suddenly Snow White came to. The curse was broken by the prince's kiss. The dwarfs were so happy. Then the prince asked Snow White to come to his place and marry her. Finally they lived happily ever after.

In the story Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, there is someone who stands out apart from Snow White, she is the Stepmother. Because of malice and jealousy, she did evil to Snow White. The moral of this story is that we should not be jealous of our neighbors, and that can be used by adults to educate children.

CONCLUSION

Children are very important in the continuity of generations, in that case children need to grow together with children's literature. Children's literature is very useful for growth in this era. Literature is a pure thing and has many benefits. In ancient times, children grew up with fairy tales, folklore, and legends by word of mouth. Like the story of Malin Kundang which, although initially only a legend in certain areas, contains a moral message. Literature is free and unlimited, beautiful and pure. Adults must

always remember and teach literature from generation to generation so that literature will not disappear in the future. Even though without realizing it, literature is always around us, of course we don't want literature to just be forgotten. Therefore, the authors hope that this article will be useful for the younger generation and future generations and also for the future.

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