
Retelling Folklore in the 21st Century Children's Literature: A Comparative Study on Children's Book Series by Okky Madasari and Daniel Pinkwater

Rahmawan Jatmiko¹

¹Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

✉: rahmawan.jatmiko@ugm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study searches out, observes, and analyzes the elements of folklore in the children's book series by two authors with different cultural backgrounds: Indonesian background and American background. For the analysis of the Indonesian author's works, this study chooses the adventure series of a child named Matara, a.k.a. Mata, written by Okky Madasari, an Indonesian writer who was previously known as a writer of literary works that are quite idealistic. From her Mata adventure series, this research discusses three works, namely the series *Mata Di Tanah Melus* (2018), *Mata dan Rahasia Pulau Gapi* (2019), and *Mata dan Manusia Laut* (2019). For the work of the American writer, this study selects Daniel Pinkwater's children's book, *Beautiful Yetta: The Yiddish Chicken* (2010). All the works discussed in this paper are works of 21st-century children's literature, the results of which are expected to provide new insights into the repertoire of children's literature studies, especially those related to Indonesian and American children's literature. The study of these works found that the forms of elements of culture and folklore can be used to convey social criticism to certain parties. In this case, there is society and authority. Above all, this study underlines that there are distinct presentations of those criticisms that utilize myths, folklore, and cultural symbols by Indonesian and American children's book authors.

Keywords: *adventure; children's literature, comparative study; cultural symbols; folklore*

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INTRODUCTION

When building storylines, settings, or characterizations, writers may use folklore elements in children's literature. In this case, the use of folklore elements can be analogous to the extensive use of stereotyping on clichéd characters in literature in general, specifically in popular and children's literature. The characters loaded with the formation of these stereotypes are viewed as "super" characters that readers can instantly digest so easily. From the readers' perspective, those characters that are far from complex are very easy to guess, casually and effortlessly, giving rise to a comfortable impression (light mood) when enjoying popular literary works.

Likewise, with folklore elements, the nature of high familiarity causes the folklore elements to serve as a tool that helps readers digest and appreciate the work easily, including the storyline, characterizations, or settings in children's literature. In other words, when viewed from the other side, these elements help writers to convey their ideas more easily.

The differences between Indonesian and American cultural backgrounds need to be discussed and analyzed to see to what extent they influence the appearance of folklore content in children's literary works or just the ideas related to it implicitly. In this case, examining how far folklore can contain what Slotkin and Scheick (1980) consider a cultural symbol is necessary.

Accordingly, this study chooses to explore the elements of folklore found in a collection of children's books written by two authors from different cultural backgrounds, one from Indonesia and the other from the United States. It examines the works of Indonesian author Okky Madasari, known for her previously idealistic literature, focusing on her adventure series featuring a child protagonist named Matara, or Mata. Specifically, the study analyzes three of her books: *Mata Di Tanah Melus* (2018), *Mata dan Rahasia Pulau Gapi* (2019), and *Mata dan Manusia Laut* (2019). On the American side, the study looks at *Beautiful Yetta: The Yiddish Chicken* (2010), a children's book by Daniel Pinkwater.

By exploring cultural symbols found in the works

written by authors with different cultural backgrounds, this research aims to figure out and investigate the cultural peculiarities contained in certain literary works, especially children's literature, so that they can reveal a culture that can be used as a guide in expressing and further analyzing the symptoms or problems encountered in society, especially concerning culture, both in Indonesian and American society.

Traced from the history of the formation of the genre of children's literature to the form it is known today, folklore is a fundamental part of it. Folklore elements, more or less, have become an integral part of children's literature (Rose, 1984; Reynolds, 2007). Children's literature can generally be distinguished from canon literature and popular literature in terms of its pragmatic content. The pragmatic content is related to the function of children's literary works as a tool, media, or means of carrying out or achieving certain goals. The most visible goal throughout the history of children's literature is related to education. Some experts or experts in the study of children's literature object to

the statement above, especially those researching post-romantic children's literature, or even works often referred to as radical children's literature (see Mickenberg and Nel, 2011). Reynolds, paraphrasing Jack Zipes, argues that the fantasy in folklore and children's literature serves a cultural purpose, helping to transmit values and "civilize" young readers. In other words, Reynolds reaffirms that folklore and children's stories are significant in conveying cultural traditions within and between generations. (Zipes in Reynolds, 2007, 2)

Rennick (2001) reveals that folklore is "the expressive body of culture shared by a particular group of people," including traditions commonly found in a culture, subculture, or group. These traditions can appear as saga (tales), proverbs, and proverbs (jokes). Rennick further explained that

folklore involves the actual process of creating and producing these products—the behaviors of composing and singing a song, making up and telling a story, designing and constructing an artifact, dancing and so on. (Rennick, 2001 35)

Rennick suggested that in addition to covering the

results or products produced, folklore also includes the process of creation and behavior in that creation, for example, behavior in composing and singing songs, creating and telling a fairy tale, designing activities, or building an artifact, dancing and so on. This research is in transnational American Studies, which examines cross-cultural works while still observing American values, in this case, the material objects studied.

METHODOLOGY

This research applies qualitative research methods, starting with literary studies, followed by cultural research with a classical American Studies perspective, namely Myth-and Symbol, first initiated by Henry Nash Smith and Allan Trachtenberg. This classical method is used because this study intends to examine cross-cultural symbols, namely Indonesian and American cultural images, and to find, observe, and interpret cultural symbols and images as suggested by Slotkin and Scheick. Bruce Kucklick (1972) suggested something related to what he called a "mental picture" to denote mental objects such as images, feelings, experiences, references, or associations, which are equally useful to

construct reality. According to Kucklick (1972, 436),

Suppose I see a man on the corner, and come home and write a story about him. The "mental picture" I have in mind when I write about him is an image when I merely wish to designate or refer to the man. I name this image with the phrase "the man on the corner." If I want to speak of the symbol or myth of the man on the corner, I am making the image "carry a burden of implication (value, association, feeling, or, in a word, meaning) beyond that which is required for mere reference." We invest the image with much more than a denotational quality; we enable it to connote moral, intellectual and emotional qualities of wider and wider range.

From the above quotation, it can be seen that Kucklick has a perspective that considers symbols and myths that are not objectively factual and can contribute to the construct because they may refer to empirical facts, though they are never factual. He (1972, 436) stated that,

But symbols and myths at best reflect empirical fact, and so are never themselves factual; they are "products of the imagination," "complex mental construct[s]." So if images are of the order of

symbols and myths, and the latter are not factual but "mental constructs," then images are also mental constructs, states of mind, however accurately they may refer to the factual.

Consequently, by applying those theories, this study will consider all mental images and symbols found in the literary works as equally important as the historical facts contributing to the construct.

Myth, in this case, can refer to a traditional story that embodies a belief regarding some fact or phenomenon of experience, and in which often the forces of nature and the soul are personified; a sacred narrative regarding a god, a hero, the origin of the world or a people, etc., while folklore signifies the tales, legends, and superstitions of a particular ethnic population. However, in everyday usage, both words can be interchangeable. On the other hand, if relying on Kuklick's perspective, myth can be taken as a traditional story accepted as history, and it may serve to explain the worldview of a people.

The material objects of the research are all the children's books mentioned above, and they also serve as the data sources. These data sources are

processed to extract the data corresponding to the research's formal objects, i.e., folklore and cultural symbols. Secondary data, which consists of factual and historical accounts, are related to the works analyzed in this study. Extracting the data from the data source employs methods in literary studies, i.e., close reading and interpretation. This model is adapted from Jacqueline Rose, who started her study of children's literature through the lens of literary studies. (Rose, 1984)

DISCUSSION

This study shows the following results after completing the data processing and analysis. It starts with the process of investigating three aspects of the material objects of the research. The three aspects are cultural elements, folklore, and traditional ceremonies.

Mata di Tanah Melus (Mata in The Land of Melus)

This story begins with how enthusiastic Matara (Mata) is about many types of stories. She always remembered her grandmother's story about the solar eclipse. According to her grandmother, a lost child was once kidnapped by a giant who ate the sun because this child

peeked out the window when the sun was gone.

The story continues with Mata and his mother traveling to the island of Atambua on the Timor-Timor border. Mata accompanies his mother, who surveys the culture there to make up her story. Bad luck began when their car hit a cow in the middle of the road. Cows are considered very significant in the culture there [same as in Bali?], so Mata's mother has to give up a lot of money to pay the customary fine. Unfortunately, the spirit of the cow still haunts Matara [mystical?] So, like it or not, she has to carry out a traditional ceremony, which is said to be "a visit permit" when they come into the area. This ceremony was carried out in a sacred place far from where they lived. They have to go to Mount Lakaan, which has a very hard and steep road. Again, bad luck came to them. Not yet arrived at the ceremony venue, their car broke down, and they had to make an early apology ceremony in a large tree near the spot where they were trapped.

Next, they walked to the main ceremony place, Hol Hara Rana Hitu, a ruins of a fort at the top of Lakaan. The ceremony is led by an elder who recites mantras, slaughters chickens, and presents the brought

offerings. The elder also had a dialogue with the owner of Mount Lakaan. The results did not match Mrs. Matara's expectations. The elder told Mata and his mother to go home because the owner of Lakaan did not approve of them being there. Heavy rain was pouring down quickly, which further exacerbated Ms. Matara's distrust of the ceremony, and she tried to deny it, especially after spending a lot of money. Mata and his mother were separated from the group and lost in a very strange place different from the previous Mount Lakaan.

The story in the land of Melus starts from this point, starting with Mata leaving his sleeping mother. Then, Mata walked around until the Melus finally caught her. They think that Mata is the Bunag who will kill the Melus people. Mata was taken to the hidden village of Melus. There, he had to participate in a cleansing ceremony so that he would not be killed by the people there. However, as a result, he could not get out of the village and could not meet his mother.

Meeting a child of the same age named Atok, Mata can calm down and learn more about the Melus people. He noticed the shape of the house, the way they spoke, and even the organization in the village,

such as the ceremonial leader, the person who guarded the village, and even their skills. Mata eventually learns that they are the guardians of the heritage of Mount Lakaan. They also worship all the forces of nature [romantic, fantasy, or magic?], not only the water and the wind but also the animals that guard them. They do not want their power source, Mount Lakaan, to be destroyed by evil humans like the Bunag people. Therefore, these guards always ask for the help of the rulers of nature to drive them away, such as by bringing heavy rain or hiding their village from being seen by outsiders. Despite his admiration, Mata still could not stop thinking about his mother at that moment. Feelings of guilt arose and pushed him to leave the village of Melus. He also persuaded Atok to help him even though Atok did not want to because he believed nobody could leave the village without Ema Nain's permission. However, Mata persisted, and finally, Atok helped. Against Ema Nain's words, their first misfortune was to get drowned in a rushing river due to heavy rain. Atok believes that Ema Nain sent the rain. They arrived at a butterfly village led by a giant talking human butterfly. Then they fled from the place, and they arrived at a lake full of crocodiles. Bei Nai, a half-

crocodile human, also guards this place. Here, they met a crocodile hunter who Bei Nai eventually defeated.

Not long after, Mata met her mother. But his mother was not alone. He was with several scientists who wanted to find the village of Melus. Atok also assured them nobody could find Kampung Melus without Ema Nain's permission. Heavy rains also came, flushing the land until finally, the land became the sea just like thousands of years ago, leaving only the peak of Mount Lakaan, the heirloom. Atok also begs the Mother of Life (Laka Norak) to save them. They were brought to the village of Melus. There, a cleansing ceremony took place. But this time, it was different. In the past, Mata survived because she was a child. It was a bit difficult this time because Mata was not alone but with several adults. At Atok's suggestion, they ran away and finally left the village of Melus. Consequently, they cannot even go back there. Eventually, they returned to a familiar place. Mount Lakaan, where they held the apology ceremony. At that time, many people were already very panicked because Mata and his mother had been missing for seven days.

Cultural Elements

In the first series, *Mata di Tanah Melus*, cows are considered important and mythical animals in Atambua. Cows and other animals are allowed to roam without being in cages. Crashing into a cow is a serious matter from a metaphysical and social point of view. People who do that, though only unintentionally, must pay the fine and conduct an apology ceremony. Without the ceremony, the spirit of the cow will wander and interfere with the impactor's life. The ruler of nature always tells the truth. If it is not destiny, he will say no. It is not good to go against the will of nature. Melus people worship all the forces of nature. Ema Nain, Melus' leader, can cause heavy rain. The Melus Nation will never kill children and women. Outsiders who enter the territory of the Melus nation will never be able to get out of the Melus territory. The Melus drink water from Cactus.

Folklore

The elements of folklore are apparent in this story, such as a solar eclipse, which they believe is caused by a giant slowly swallowing the sun. No one can see outside during a solar eclipse because giants will kidnap them. If someone violates, they will lose

consciousness for a few days. There is also what they call Hol Hara Rana Hitu Fort, built with the spirits' help. Ema Nain and Maun Iso are believed to have a strong supernatural power; they can even fly. From this description, it can be seen that this book is full of scenes and descriptions related to folklore and supernatural power. It is widely known that the folklore related to the moon persists in every culture. This definition of folklore from Rennick also involves composing and singing a song, making up and telling a story, designing and constructing an artifact, and dancing (Rennick 2001, 35). More depictions of folklore can be found in the story.

Traditional Ceremonies

In this book, there is a scene when people who come to Melus territory must conduct the traditional "visit permit" ceremony and the cleansing of "mistakes." What people need to prepare for the ceremony are: three chickens, betel leaf, and rice. The visit permit ceremony includes going around the tree, putting money in it, and putting a pinch of rice and betel leaf. This is led by an older man wearing a sarong and headband; this older man chews betel. The leader casts a spell and cuts the chickens. Then he hands the betel leaf to the one

who asked for the ceremony (Matara and her mother). There is also a soul-cleansing ceremony, which Ema Nain leads. Ema Nain said a prayer/mantra, followed by others. Ema Nain splashes water on Matara's head; it is very fragrant water. The ceremony continues with a feast: beating drums, cutting pigs, and dancing together.

Mata dan Rahasia Pulau Gapi
[Mata and the Secrets of Gapi Island]

Matara's story begins with her and her family moving to Gapi Island. His father found a new job there. The time is a good coincidence because Matara was not accepted at her favorite school, so that he can move freely. On Gapi Island, Matara is homeschooled and taught by her mother. But for religious lessons, an older man always comes to teach him religion and tells him about the Prophets, the culture of Gapi, and its surroundings.

From him, Mata increasingly understands the ins and outs of Mount Gamalama, Lake Tolire, and other areas. The first unique incident he experienced on this island was when he watched the Soya-Soya dance near the fort. At that time, the dancers were so much in a trance that they ended up with the Sultan, who suddenly fell.

It is said that they were possessed by the spirits of fort guards [supernatural beings]. The spirits do not agree if the fort is demolished to become a hotel and mall.

Matara's story continues when she meets a magical cat named Molu, who has lived for hundreds of years. He told all the stories that had happened to him; one was about how his Portuguese master later became a loyal servant of the Sultan to guard Lake Tolire. When they died, they turned into Tolire Guardian Crocodiles. He also told a myth that anyone dropping something into Lake Tolire would get a blessing. However, no one can do that except the guard.

The story continues to the times of war. It tells how foreigners invaded the area. The story of Molu rescuing Wallace, who has a fever caused by the bitter herbs there. Then, the story of how the heirloom guards (crocodiles and spiders) gave up to the foreigners.

If crocodiles guard Tolire, the former Portuguese forts are guarded by spiders that will bite anyone having bad intentions. The bite has poisoned so that the victim looks like a possessed person. This spider is the incarnation

of a dog who used to serve the Sultan.

Cultural Elements

In this book, the Sultan cast a spell to deal with the trance. The spirit of the guard of the fort wandering possesses some people. They do not like forts to be disturbed (to be destroyed). The fort is considered scary because many are in a trance and or suddenly die. The people use bitter herbs (leaves) to treat high fever. Their heirlooms [*pusaka*] must always be guarded, and nothing should be damaged.

Folklore

There is a scene in this book where Mount Gamalama erupted. Two villages were crushed by lava and became a large basin like a lake into Tolire, which two white crocodiles then guarded. Only the pure in heart can see the crocodile. If someone throws something into the lake, he or she will get lucky. It is very difficult to throw something into the lake. The two crocodile guards tolire used to be two humans who served the Sultan to guard the heirlooms. The souls of the island watchers who lost the war still live on Gapi Island until now. They live in the fort.

Traditional Ceremonies

There is a scene of "Soya-soya dance" in this book. Hundreds of men wearing yellow shirts, black pants, and yellow headbands. The leader holds a shield in his right hand, and his left hand holds a piece of bamboo with a tufted end. The drum is beaten. Everyone dances like "*Pencak Silat*," the local martial arts.

Mata dan Manusia Laut [Mata and The Sea Man]

In this book, Matara and her mother visited the islands in Southeast Sulawesi. They wanted to meet Sama's village seamen, who could dive so deep that the story of their life and culture appeared in the New York Times. There, Matara met Bambulo, a native son of the Sama people. While Matara and her mother were enjoying a party, Matara, arguing with Bambulo, finally joined Bambulo in a canoe to Sama's village.

Before Matara's story begins, this novel begins with the lives of Bambulo and Orang Sama. So many interesting stories describe how important Sanro is in the village. He is the leader of the ceremony and also the one who treats all kinds of diseases through the ceremony. It is said that Bambulo's nephew is sick and has a high fever. He was taken

to Sanro, and as soon as possible, they held a duata ceremony in the middle of the ocean and brought offerings. Before long, Bambulo's nephew stopped crying and was taken home. The next day, he was gone. Sanro's story of Orang Sama's daily life is also presented. They dive to catch fish, and often, they sail some distance to the Atoll to catch bigger and more fish. However, catching fish is taboo: they are not allowed to fish on a full moon.

That afternoon, Bambulo took Matara to the Atoll to see bigger fish. Unexpectedly, that night was a full moon night. The night the god of the sea rose to the sky, the night where the fish were not to be touched. But Bambulo realized it too late. He had also been warned by Lummu (a term for Dolphins, the guardian animals of the Sama people), but Bambulo was desperate to go to the Atoll. On the way, he was repeatedly hit by waves.

It did not stop there; he violated the taboo not to catch fish. When he caught the fish with the spear, the fish's blood did not stop flowing, and it kept bleeding and flooding the area with its blood. The sea turned red, and in an instant, a tsunami swept across the land. Hitting the Same Village. Even Bambulo and

Matara, in the middle of the sea, did not know that a tsunami was far away. All they knew was that the water suddenly receded, and they were hit by the waves and thrown far away. They finally arrived at Masalembo, an area in the Bermuda Triangle where it is said that no one can pass. They thought they were dead from getting there, but he met many people from ancient times who had not aged there. They were the people who the Sea God saved. These people [who are lost and don't age] are in charge of guarding Roro. Roro is the guardian of the ocean. He is very large, surrounding the Earth. There are only seven Roros on this Earth. Roro was disturbed by something, so he got worried and kept moving. Roro's movement can cause a powerful earthquake. Here, they calmed Roro down. After succeeding, Matara and Bambulo returned to the high seas, where the crew found them. The journey continued with several questions until they could finally return to Kampung Sama safely.

Cultural Elements

This book offers an interesting description of a traditional transportation mode named Katingting, or motorized wooden boats. The people are called "Sama". Since they were babies, Sama's

children have been put in the seawater. There is a taboo in Sama's tradition: no fishing on a full moon because it will violate the prohibition of the ruler of the universe. The Sama people catch fish with kedo-kedo, homemade fishing lines with coconut fiber, or installing FADs (piles of bamboo floating in the sea). There is Lummu, a holy being, a messenger of the god of the sea, who gives a sign of sustenance and notifies if there is danger. Lummu is Sama's word for dolphin. The Sama people leave for the Atoll at night and stay there. Lummu should not be killed because Lummu protects the Sama people. The Sama people have a unique way of treating a jellyfish bite wound. They chant a spell, rubbing their hands on the affected area.

Folklore

In Sama's culture, everyone is believed to have a twin. The Sama believe that they are sea creatures, the descendants of the sea. On a full moon night, the gods descend into the ocean, and no one can disturb them. Every full moon, the sea god ascends to the moon. That is why, according to their belief, the moon smiles. When there is an impending tsunami, the lummu jumps to the mainland, giving a signal to the land people. Butung Kukulu

also flies from the sea to the land. The sea suddenly recedes.

The Sama believe that the sea god loves humans. He invites, picks up, and saves humans who love the ocean. The Sama also believe in Roro, who caused the ocean to shake. According to their belief, Roro inhabits the sea. It sleeps at the bottom of the deepest ocean, spanning almost a quarter of the Earth's circumference. The Sama also believed a big snake was in the middle of the sea. Every time the snake moves, the storm comes.

Traditional Ceremonies

In this book, the author describes a traditional ceremony named the Duata Ceremony. It is held to cure disease. Sick people are taken to the middle of the ocean. They bring bunches of bananas, coconuts, betel leaves, colorful rice, and pillow covers used daily. The data ceremony gives offerings to the person's twin at sea. Another ceremony to invoke salvation by the lord of nature and the brethren at sea is the Karia Feast, a three-day grand celebration. In this ceremony, they sing to the god of the sea, usually after a great disaster.

Beautiful Yetta: The Yiddish Chicken

Like Mata'' story, Beautiful Yetta: The Yiddish Chicken by Daniel Pinkwater is an adventure story. Yiddish refers to a language used by Jewish people in central and eastern Europe before the Holocaust. It was originally a German dialect with words from Hebrew and several modern languages and is today spoken mainly in the US, Israel, and Russia. The Beautiful Yetta story begins when Yetta is sold by the owner to the city. Even though he had to sell the chickens, the owner felt sad when he had to part with the chickens he raised with all his heart. He finally let go of the chickens while crying and said, "Goodbye, my chickens." But on the way, the crate containing Yetta was not quite close enough so that she could run outside and say, "Now I'm free." Yetta had no idea what happened next and did not know where she was. She was lost in the crowded and confusing city of Brooklyn. She met many other animals, such as mice and pigeons, but none recognized Yetta. Then, Yetta accidentally met a small green parrot who a cat was stalking.

Yetta noticed the presence of the cat that was hiding to pounce on the little parrot and immediately chased it away. The cat ran because it saw a big

Yetta ready to peck. Seeing this incident, another member of the parrot group thanked Yetta for saving his young members. Yetta tells them that he is lost. The green parrot family is amazed by Yetta's beauty and feels sorry for Yetta's loss. They then offered Yetta to stay with them, saying, "Please stay with us, beautiful chicken." The parrot family lived in high places, some even perched on power lines. Yetta joins them. The parrot family seemed to welcome the presence of Yetta because of two things: Yetta was beautiful, and she could chase away cats.

Yetta's story provides a fairly complex multicultural picture, especially regarding language use. At least three types of languages are used: American English, Spanish, and Jewish. Pinkwater even writes these three languages directly in the dialogue balloon between the characters in this story. Pinkwater also provides Hebrew letters and a way to read them in English directly in the dialogue balloon. He also provides direct translations of Hebrew and Spanish into American English. In addition, a guide to the Hebrew alphabet employed in Yiddish is also included on the final page.

Cultural Elements

In this short Yetta story, Pinkwater provides quite a lot of insight into the cultural elements, especially those tied to Jewish and Hispanic traditions. Yetta, the main character, communicates in Yiddish, introducing readers to this language and its cultural importance. The story honors and preserves Jewish heritage by including Yiddish words and expressions. The setting of Brooklyn, known for its cultural diversity, further enriches the narrative. The presence of Spanish-speaking parrots showcases the city's multicultural dynamics and highlights Hispanic cultural influences. Yetta, the central character, speaks Yiddish, which allows readers to explore the language and its cultural roots. Expressions like "Oy gevalt!" and "Gevalt!", which can mean something like "Oh, my goodness!" or "Oh no!", showcase her surprise and dismay, adding realism to her identity and emphasizing her Jewish heritage. Jewish humor and speech are sometimes dramatic or exaggerated, making it both expressive and colorful in everyday language (Mersey M, n.d.). The parrots communicate in Spanish, using phrases such as "Hola, Yetta!" and "Gracias!". Their dialogue gives authenticity to the

characters and introduces readers to the richness of Hispanic culture and language.

In addition to multiculturalism, Pinkwater also provides an overview of the intersection of rural and urban cultures. It is said that Yetta originally lived in the countryside, which we can see when he introduces himself to the other animals in Brooklyn; he says, "I'm from the country." This language expression signifies that Yetta is willing to explain her cultural background to anticipate that there will be no misunderstanding when making contact with her new friends who are urban residents. This can also be interpreted as Yetta's ability to communicate interpersonally and use pragmatic strategies. When she first walked in the city of Brooklyn, Yetta seemed to experience "culture shock" because she used to walk on the grass and now has to walk on the sidewalks on the streets of the crowded city of Brooklyn.

Folklore

Referring back to Rennick's definition of folklore, folklore is: "the expressive body of culture shared by a particular group of people," which can include traditions commonly found in a culture, subculture, or group. These

traditions can appear as saga (tales), proverbs, and proverbs (jokes). Find some things in this Yetta story that can be categorized as folklore.

In this story, folklore describes how Yetta dances and jumps after being freed from the chicken seller. Yetta is also a symbol of freedom because she can escape from the cage that brought her to a chicken shop and then say, "I'm free."

Traditional Ceremonies

In Yetta's story, there is no typical traditional ceremony. However, it can be seen in daily rituals; for example, when the chicken owner brings his chickens from his farm to the city, he uses a pickup truck with several chicken coops (crates) on the truck's box. In addition, another ritual described here is symbolized by the habit of Yetta's new friend, the parrot family, who likes to occupy high places to perch. They asked Yetta to join their family and imitate their ritual of perching in a high place. Yetta finally agreed.

Discussion

Given the population density on the Java island and the distribution of marketing for children's books in Indonesia, it can be assumed that the

readers of Okky Madasari's works are mostly from areas on the island of Java. However, the story told in the three books takes place in areas outside Java, namely East Nusa Tenggara, Ternate, and Southeast Sulawesi. Therefore, the elements of folklore can help children to get to know more about cultures from other regions.

In addition, they will have fun encountering unique things they did not know before. Children usually see strange and new things as fun, provoking them to learn more.

In addition to culture, children who read these works will also learn history, especially in Mata and the Secrets of Gapi Island. Most of the content of this book is about history, which is sometimes told monotonously from the point of view of a cat named Molu. The cat tells the monologue at length, and this part seems the most tiring for the reader. The other two series have more cultural depictions and seem more interesting. Apart from these things, readers seem to be taught to pay more attention to nature and are also given some kind of motivation to take steps to conserve nature.

The message in this work is conveyed subtly through

symbols. For example, when the author conveys that we must not kill crocodiles or exploit nature on a large scale, the message is conveyed indirectly, when it is told that a crocodile hunter has come. There is the character of Bei Nai, a guard. Crocodile. In that section, no explicit sentence states that killing crocodiles is not allowed. Still, a very charismatic charge guard appears, which suggests that crocodiles occupy a very important role. Although this Bei Nai character can be said to be only a fictional character, this is not entirely the case because the author of a mythical story in the area took this character. So, in this section, the message is conveyed subtly and not patronizingly, with the media depicting figures taken from local myths. Then, we were also told that we should not swim on the full moon because the moon goddess and the sea goddess would be angry.

In Pinkwater's *Beautiful Yetta: The Yiddish Kitchen*, cultural influences, modern folklore, and messages of community and acceptance create a compelling story that celebrates friendship and diversity. Its use of different languages, the hero's adventure, and the portrayal of community solidarity add depth

and charm to the narrative. This story also provides an overview of the intersection of rural and urban cultures. As previously discussed, the fact that Yetta originally lived in the countryside and her experience of "culture shock" when she first walked into the city of Brooklyn suggests the differences between rural and urban life. Yetta's characterization and behavior can also be seen as a symbol of freedom, as she escapes from the cage that brought her to a chicken shop and declares, "I'm free". This act of liberation and her subsequent adventures can be seen as a metaphor for pursuing freedom and self-determination.

CONCLUSION

Okky Madasari and Daniel Pinkwater describe cultural intersections, whether mutual or antagonistic. In Madasari's works, the intersections are more hostile, and at the end of the story, they require separation or returning to their home culture. On the contrary, in Pinkwater's work, the intersection looks friendlier. At the end of the story, the characters that experienced culture shock at the beginning blend in with the new culture. Then, the character stays permanent in her new culture at the end. In other words, there is no

"coming-home scene" in Yetta's story. It can be seen as unusual in children's literature, since the coming home scene is usually seen as a resolution in most children's books.

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