Orientalism and Children's Literature: An Analysis of Adult-Children Relations in A Picture Book Entitled "Bad Bad Bunny Trouble" Written by Hans Wilhelm

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines adult-children relations in a picture book entitled "Bad Bad Bunny Trouble" by Hans Wilhelm from an Orientalist perspective. The focuses of the study are the portrayal of children in the picture book and the meanings made from the portrayal. Two main theoretical frameworks were used in this study. The first theoretical framework is Orientalism from Said (2003). The second theoretical framework is visual analysis theory from Nodelman (1988) which was used to analyze the pictures. Children are portrayed as the Other while Adults are the Self. The findings indicate that as the Other, children are marginalized and adults take center stage. As the center, adults take charge and expect children to fulfill the adults' expectation to prepare the children for adulthood. From Orientalism perspective, the adults-children relation in the picture book is the representation of the binary opposition of Self and Other in Orientalism.

Keywords: *Picture Book, Orientalism, Other, Self, visual analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Orientalism was popularized by the publication of Edward Said's*Orientalism* in 1978. According to Said (2003),Orientalism is basically an investigation of European people's attitude toward Asians. The investigation looked into different types of European documents which described Asian people, and it was found that European people described Asian people based on their own assumptions and knowledge. Therefore from the investigation, Said (2003) comes to the conclusion that Orientalism can be seen as the way European people describes Asian people through their own perspectives and based on their own beliefs which in turns becomes the propaganda of geopolitical consciousness and geographic distinction.

It is also important to note that the way Europeans described Asians through their perspective cannot be separated from the Western philosophy which was set in logocentricism. Derrida (2007 cited in Bressler, 2007) explains that thinking from a logocentric way is to think by taking oneself as the center of reality as the basis of all thoughts and actions. This is why European people place themselves as the center. The center from a structuralist perspective is the Self which is in (binary) opposition with the Other. Orientalism cannot be separated from the concept of Self and Other. In this case, Said (2003) claims that the Europeans is the Self and Western as Occident, while the other (non-Occident, including Asians) is the Orient. As the Occident, the Europeans is the center of thought and action. Consequently, the Other or the Orient is everything which are not the center of thought and action. In other words, the Orient is the margin which is created from the Europeans' assumption about the Orient.

Furthermore, Orientalism as a discourse has the potential to be related to political power. However, Said (2003) believes that it is not always direct. Instead, it is created through political power, in this case, the power of European societies. This is evidenced in science, linguistics,

literatures and many other aspects (Said, 2003). One example of Orientalism in literature can be found in J.R.R. Tolkien's the Lord of The Ring. Winegar (2005), who examined Tolkien's The Lord of The Ring, explains that Tolkien implicitly uses Orientalism aspects in his novel to describe the characters and the settings of Middle Earth. He further mentions that in dividing the region of Middle Earth for example, Tolkien placed Mordor, headquarter of the evil characters, in the eastern part of Middle Earth. The description of the characters who live in Mordor also have the characteristics of the Orient. What can be learned is that Tolkien indicated that he shared the same assumption about what constituted the East (the Orient) because he constructed the character of the Eastern part of Middle Earth people based on his assumption.

In addition, several studies have revealed that Orientalism has also emerged in children's literature. Griffin (2012) asserts that children's literature which is written by adults

can be used as a means of transmitting ideas, morals and opinion. An example of this would bea study conducted by Nodelman (1992) who investigated Orientalism issues in children's literature. The investigation looks into the relationship between children and adults, and how children are put as the Other while adults are put in the position of the Self.

Based on the study above, this paper attempts to analyzea picture book entitled "Bad Bad Bunny Trouble"by Hans Wilhelm using an Orientalism perspective. How Ralph the main character and other children are portrayed in the picture book and what meaning can be made from the portrayal become the main focus of the paper.

The study was geared by two main theories. The first theory was Orientalism theory proposed by Edward Said (2003) and the second theory was visual analysis theory proposed by Perry Nodelman. (1988) Orientalism theory was used to identify Self and Other issue in the

subject while visual analysis was used to help the analysis of the subject. The two theories are explained more in the following points:

1. Orientalism

Orientalism is an investigation to the construction of the Other in Eastern or Asian culture. This construction is made by European people through their background knowledge in describing Asian people. Edward Said (2003) is the one who introduced and made a specific study about Orientalism.

Orientalism cannot be separated from the concept of Self and Other and always related to it. Said (2003) distinguishing European people as the Occident or Self and Arabs and Asians as the Other or the Orient.

The concept of Self and Other is part of binary opposition concept, a concept which states that there are two opposing things, self and another self or the other (Derrida, cited in Bressler, 2007). Furthermore,Moosavinia*et al* (2011) explain that, the range of binary opposition can be anything such as

man and woman, the colonizer and the colonized, self and other and many other opposing concepts.

Self is the center character because Self always thinks that they are the center of truth and existence. Said (2003) named his concept of Self the Occident. Further he posits that the Occident, although the representation mostly refers to European people because they always think that they are the center of truth and existence,does not only refer to European people but also to American and other countries which call themself as the West. Therefore, the concept of Self is socially constructed (Moosavinia*et al,* 2011).

Other, on the other hand, is the margin character which is oppressed by the center character. The Orient is the term used by Said (2003) to refer to the concept of Other in Orientalism. The Orient is something that is created through European people perspective in describing Asian people. In European people's perspective, the Orient is an idea which has its own history, culture, language and way of

thinking which is different with them. Without the East, the West can never be exist because West is existed by comparing themselves with another self. In other words, the East is the reflection of the West.

Nodelman (1992) states that, the relationship between adults and children in picture book is one example of Orientalism issue representation in literature. Whenever adults dealwith children's literature, it means that adults ismaking statement about children's world, describing it, explaining it and teaching it. Consciously or unconsciously, it will affect children's psychology. More or less, that kind of habit shown by adults in dealing with children literature is the same as the habit of Orientalist wehenever they deal with Asian or Eastern people.

2. Visual Analysis Theory

Since images and words communicate information differently in picture book, and both of them complementary each other, Nodelman (1988) underlines some features in understanding picture book. He said that, tounderstand picture books, there are some elements of picture book, i.e. line, color, shape, texture, design and media and technique that can convey meaning to the readers. In line with Nodelman, Bang (2002) defines how the elements can give meaning based on her experience as children's picture book author.

a) Line

Picture book artists use line, a mark on paper or place when different colorsmeet, to convey the meaning that they want to convey to the reader, just like motions and emotions. Line starts from a stroked dot that goes into a line that may be slow and rolling, sleek and fast, quiet or frenetic (Nodelman, 1988).

b) Color

Colors can be used to convey many things such as warmth, coolness, personality traits, feelings and meanings. Subdued colors can express weariness, boredom and serenity, whereas intense colors evoke feelings

of energy and, vibrancy and excitements. The value or the amount of light and dark of color can be vary and it creates drama or movement; an absence of contrast creates a quiet or solemn mood (Nodelman, 1988). Bang (2002) states that, White or light colors connote safe and comfort feelings while dark colors connote unsafe and uncomfortable feelings.

c)   Shape

An area or form with define outline is called shape. Shape suggests feelings and ideas to the viewer's eye together with line. Shapes can be geometrics (circle, triangle and square), abstract (suggestive, less well-defined shapes such as clouds) or realistic (Nodelman, 1988). In addition, Bang (2002) defines how shape can connotes meaning. She states that, smooth, flat, and horizontal shapes present a sense of stability and calm; vertical shapes are more exciting and active, implying energy and reaching; diagonal shapes are dynamic, implying motion or tension; pointed shapes connotes frighten; rounded shapes or curves

connote the feeling of comfortable and safe.

d)   Texture

Texture is another element of picture book that can convey meanings. Texture also conveys a sense of reality, interesting visual contrast or patterns suggest movement and action, roughness or delicacy. Texture can be illustrated smooth or rough depend on the artist and what kind of things that the texture wanted to convey (Nodelman, 1988).

e)   Design

Design is the combination of the four previous elements, line, color, shape and texture. The elements are combined to create meaning and there are some design principles to express the meaning summarized by Bang (2002). Bang (2002) states that the upper half of a picture connotes freedom, happiness, triumph, spirituality; the bottom half connotes threat, heaviness, sadness, constrain; the upper half connotes "greater pictorial weight" or emphasis.

Furthermore, she states that if an object is portrayed in the center of the illustration, it means that the object is the main focus of the illustration. If an object is portrayed in edge or in the corner of an illustration it means that the object is less important than the object in the center. In line with Bang (2002), Kress and van Leuween (2008) states that the main focus or the important object is placed in the center of a picture composition. The object that is not portrayed in the center is called the margin object, it is placed in the edge, in the corner or in near the center object of a picture composition and the larger the object is the stronger it feels.

METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study is qualitative because it attempts to analyze descriptive datain the form of words and images which are the portrayal of children as other and the meaning from the picture book. This is in line with Cormack (1993),Stauss and Corbin (1998), whostate that a qualitative research method is an appropriate research procedure to analyze and produce descriptive data in spoken or written words of people and also their behavior.

The data, in the form of images and words, were taken from a picture book entitled "Bad Bad Bunny Trouble" by Hans Wilhelm. The picture book have potentials to be used as teaching material in kindergarten in Indonesia because of its easy access from the internet. This, for Indonesian teachers is a solution to the problem of finding kindergarten books for their students.

This study was conducted based on these following steps. First, defining Self and Other characteristics based on Orientalism theory proposed by Said (2003) and Nodelman (1992) criteria; Second, making criteria of what constitute Self and Other according to Said (2003) and Nodelman (1992); Third, identifying images and written texts in the picture book using the criteria of Self and Other that have been made previously; Forth, interpreting the data with visual analysis theory proposed by Nodelman

(1988) and relating it with Orientalism theory to create textual evidence from an Orientalist perspective; Fifth, concluding all the analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that children are portrayed as the marginalized character even though they are the main characters. Meanwhile, adults are portrayed as the center character as well as role model for the children in the picture book. In terms of its meaning from Orientalism perspective, the portrayal of adults-children relationship is the same as the other opposite of Self is Other. Further detailed explanations are as follows:

1. Children as the Marginalized Character

Findings reveal that there are five characteristics which can be referred to Said's (2003) Orientalism characteristics and Nodelman's (1992) category of children as the marginalized character. The five characteristics are first, children positioning; second, children being gazed; third, children sizing; fourth, color backgrounding; and fifth, fewer and submissive dialogues. The details of the findings are explained in the points below.

a)   Children Positioning

Van Leeuwen (2008) states that, if an object is portrayed at one side or at one corner of an illustration, the object is called the margin object and thus it becomes less important. Furthermore, Bang (2002) states that, if an object is illustrated at the center of an illustration, it means that the object is the main focus of the illustration or the greatest attraction of the illustration so it becomes the most important object. Children in the picture book are portrayed as the margin character because they are mostly placed at the side or at the corner (margin position) of the illustrations.It means that children are portrayed as the marginalized character which are less important than other characters especially the adults.

b)   Children Being Gazed

In the picture book, children are portrayed as the subject of adults' gaze or the gazee. Children cannot do anything but accept the fact that they are being gazed by the adults. There is no single illustration that portray children gazing adults. It shows that children are marginalized trough the way they become the subject of gaze from adults. Since gaze is one way to show authority and power and perfect subjects of gaze or gazees are those who are passive and submissive to the gaze, which mean that they cannot do anything but accept the fact that they are being gazed (Nodleman, 1992), it is clear that children in the picture book have less power and authority compared to the adults.

c)   Children Sizing

Children in the picture book are always portrayed smaller than the adults. Even though the adults are portrayed from afar or they are portrayed in a different page, the children are still portrayed smaller than the adults.Bang (2002) asserts that, those who are portrayed bigger have

more power, children in this picture book who are portrayed small in size visually have less power than adults.

d)   Color Backgrounding

Background color can be one indicator to indicate the feelings of the character. White or light colored background connotes comfortable and safe feelings while black or dark colored background connotes unsafe and uncomfortable feelings (Bang, 2002). Children are mostly illustrated in light or white colored background,The background color indicates the children's safety and comfortable feelings while doing their activities. However, background colors for adults are not the same.Adults are portrayed in a contrast background color with the children which indicate that adults do not share the same feelings as the children. There are some illustrations that portray children affected adults' feeling. The background color where adults are illustrated are darker than the children's background. It means that,when children do their activities,

somehow adults feel uneasy and uncomfortable being around the children.

The background colors show the feelings of adults and children as they affect each other. Lighter or white background color is the characteristic which indicates that children are having safe and comfortable feeling when they do their activities in a particular environment. Even though from the background children are portrayed as having safe and comfortable feeling when they do their activities, the adults still consider the children as uneasiness or something that make the adults uncomfortable because the dark colored background where the adults are portrayed is the effect of children's activities.

e) Fewer and Submissive Dialogues

In the picture book, children are portrayed as characters who are always being ordered by the adults and always accept every orders from the adults whether they like it or not. Even though the adult character is absent or not portrayed in the illustration, the command or the order of the adults still can be found and the children cannot refuse what is ordered by the adults.

Different from the adults, children never give order to the adults.If they want something they request it to the adults. The adults can always refuse the children's request but the children can never refuse adults' order to them. The dialogues show power differences between adults and children in which adults are more powerful and have more authority than the children. It can be concluded that children are portrayed as the character who are dominated by a stronger character, in this case an adult. Adults dominate children with the power they have and use it to advantage over the children. Even in their absence, adults are still more powerful than the children. It makes children as the main characters less important than the adult characters. Everything children do should be based on adults' approval or based on what is good from adults' perspective.

2. The Adult-Children Relation from Orientalism Perspective

The portrayal of adults and children relationship in the picture book lead to the positioning of Self and Other in binary opposition. According to Derrida (2007 cited in Bressler, 2007), binary opposition refers to two opposing things, self and another self or the other. Self is the center and the basis of all thoughts and actions, while the other is everything that the self not. In other words, Self is the center character while the other is the margin character. Said (2003) asserts that, in Orientalism study, the position of Self refers to the Occident because they claim that they are the center and the basis of all thought and actions and create the concept of the Orient as the other or the margin.

a)   Adult as the Self

Self is the center character which is different from the Other. Self is always thought that they are the center of reality and the base of all thoughts and actions (Bressler, 2007). According to Nodelman (1992), adult characters in children's literature developed the same characteristics as the Self. The Self is always seen as rational, virtuous, normal, and always right. Therefore, the Self in children's literature is represented by the adult character.

Based on findings, it is found that adults in "Bad Bad Bunny Trouble" picture book have the same characteristics with the Self. They become the base of thoughts and actions. Everything that children do should be based on adults' approval so the children will not be considered as bad children. Adults want the children to be more like them. They expect the children to fulfill their expectation to later become adults like them. Therefore, to achieve the expectation of the adults and reach the adulthood children have to be obedient to the adults no matter the children like it or not.

Adults in the picture book are visually portrayed having more power, more involvement and more appearance than the children. There is

a huge gap between adults' power and children's power in the picture book. Even in their absence in the illustration adults are still powerful. There is no single illustration that portrays children who can refuse adult's order even though the adult is absent in the illustration.

Since adults are the superior and the center character, they become the role model for the children.The role of the adults have two functions, the first one is the function to show the children good deeds and the second one is to show the bad things. In one hand, the adults showed good deeds to the children that they should look up toand in the other hand the adults act as the bad character and show the bad things to the children so they can be aware of the bad things and never do the bad things.

In sum, adults want the children to be more like them for their own interest, which is to prepare the children to fulfill their expectation to become adults. Thus, they told the children what to do, what to be, what they can do and what they cannot do

for their own interest. They show children what is good for them and what is bad using their power as adults. They want the children to be obedient to them. Every children's behavior in the picture book should be based on adults' approval or if they do not do that they will be considered as a bad child just like Ralph. Ralph and the children in the picture book are portrayed as the marginalized character or the Orient while adults are portrayed as the center character or the Occident.

b)   Children as the Other

From an orientalism perspective the way children are treated by adults in the picture book is the same as the way how the Orient are treated by the Occident. The Occident wanted the Orient to be more like them and afraid if they are influenced by the Orient (Said, 2003). It is found that the portrayal of adults and children relationship in the picture book portray a similar distinction of how the Occident and the Orient are portrayed in Orientalism. The Occident and the

Orient are portrayed as the center and the margin characters.

The picture book is telling a story about particular children character. However, this character never become the Self or the center character. Children should act like the adults, they should be obedient to the adults and they cannot resist and refuse what adults told them to do and to be. Based on the characteristics found, Ralph and the children in the picture book can be defined as the Other. Adult wanted Ralph and the children to be obedient to them for their own benefit. If there were unwanted behaviors of Ralph or the other children, they can be defined as not obedient and the adults cannot accept their behavior.

To be accepted by the adults, children should do good deeds that is acceptable by the adults. Ralph finally can be accepted by the adults after he did a good deed that is acceptable from adults' perspective. In the very beginning of the story Ralph is portrayed playing soccer. When Ralph is playing soccer, what he is doing is

considered as bad thing because he is get dirty because of playing soccer and after that he is scolded by his mother. Even though at the beginning Ralph is being scolded because of playing soccer, in the end Ralph save the day by performing soccer skill, kicking a ball through the barn, so a bull named Brutus can get rid off the threat that threatening them. The same performance did by Ralph but only accepted by the adults when they get advantage of it.

Based on the findings and discussion presented previously, it is safe to say that, children in the picture book entitled "Bad Bad Bunny Trouble" are portrayed as the Other. It is clear that children is portrayed as the marginalized characters who are oppressed by adults. Children in the picture book are portrayed as those who cannot give any resistance to the oppression of the adult. Adults become the bench mark and role model for whatever the children should do even though the children cannot be put in the same position (as the Self) with the adults. Children can always be in the

position of the Other. This binary opposition in portraying the relationship between adults and children in the picture book is the same as the way Orientalism portraying the relationship between the Self and the Other, the Occident and the Orient and the European or West and the East.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, children are portrayed as the Other, which are portrayed at the margin and make them less powerful than the adults. On the other hand, adults are portrayed as the Self which dominate children for their own interest and make the children not as the main character. The adults tell the children what to do, what they can do and what they cannot do for their own interest. They show children what is good for them and what is bad using their power as adults. They want the children to fulfill their expectation and to be preparedto become adults like them. Thus, the adults keep the children as the marginalized character or the Other and become the role model in the picture book.From

Orientalism perspective, binary opposition of Self and Other is represented by adults-children relationship in the picture book.

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