

Children Empowerment in C.S. Lewis' novel "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe"

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ABSTRACT

This research is aimed to describe Lucy's thoughts, feelings, and actions in C.S. Lewis's novel *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. The problem formulated in the research will be answered based on Lucy's thoughts, actions, and feelings and then describe it. The main source for this research was C.S. Lewis's novel *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. This novel is considered children's literature. The focus and the data for this research were events in the novel which showed Lucy's thoughts, feelings, and actions. The data were analyzed by using qualitative content analysis. The instrument was the researcher himself. There are four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which the researcher used in order to make trustworthiness. The findings revealed that Lucy reflected her thoughts through knowledge and ideas, and understanding others' feelings; her feelings through empathy and unselfishness; and her actions through her bravery and doing a favor for others. Therefore, this novel contains children's empowerment, which can be categorized as a good novel. Furthermore, children's empowerment is considered an important aspect in children's stories and it has a great influence to enrich children's intelligence and emotion in their growing period.

Keywords: *Character building; children empowerment; children literature; Lucy's thoughts, feelings, and Actions*

INTRODUCTION

The importance attached to children's education is widening with the book into everyday life that will meet the needs of children to read. At the present time, there is available a wide range of books that can be read both printed and digital books, so it is easier for children or anyone to select books to be read. One of the best books to be read by children is children's literature. Children's literature is an important source for children to gain value. As pointed out by Fidan and Ulu (2021) children's literature such as fairy tales, stories, and legends are among the important resources in conveying many social, moral, personal, and religious values to children.

McAdam et al. (2020) stated that children's literature is viewed as a valuable resource for any society, and the fundamental way in which children learn about themselves and others (Yoo-Lee et al., 2014). Therefore, children's literature could be understood as a concrete representation of life as encountered in factual life. Therefore,

it is easy to be imagined while reading, but relatively in a short form because it is compacted. In literature, the illustrated life events are through characters in living the life that is narrated in the plot. However, not all readings that have characteristics like that can be expressed as children's literature. If so, it means that it is no different from the characteristics of adult literature. Fidan and Ulu (2021) pointed out that the target audience of children's literature is children, and children's literary work is composed of verbal, written, and visual products which address their emotional, imaginative states and thoughts. Children may have similarities in this work with their environment. In addition, children may have an opportunity to make connections and comparisons between what is written or narrated and what they experience (Fidan & Ulu, 2021). Therefore, a book can be viewed as children's literature if the images and metaphors of life that are told, either in contents such as emotions, feelings, thoughts, sensory nerves or in a form such as linguistics, can be reached and understood by children.

Currently, everything from folk and fairy tales, myths and legends, ballads and nursery rhymes – many of which date back to preliterate epochs – to such embodiments of our transliterate age as e-books, fan fiction, and computer games may come under the umbrella of children's literature (Reynolds, 2011). In addition, children's literature encompasses all genres, formats, and media; all periods, movements, and kinds of writing from any part of the world, and often related ephemera and merchandise too (Reynolds, 2011). Therefore, it could be inferred that children's literature may talk about anything including those that do not make sense to adults such as stories about animals that can speak, behave, think, and feel like human beings. The children's imagination and emotions can accept a story like that is a natural thing and that is the way it should be based on the understanding of children.

However, children's stories do not have to talk always about the good thing, like diligent and lovely children. Children can also receive a story that is not good, such as a lazy and liar child, an evil witch, lazy animals, or animals who like to eat their neighbors. A story like that is not without morals and children will identify themselves otherwise. In short, children's literature could tell anything about life issues. Therefore, it is able to provide better information and understanding about life itself. Even a children's story does not have to be always a happy ending, but it can be otherwise. Through children's literature, children receive cultural messages, values of the society they live in, and information regarding the world. Children interact with books about different countries and have the opportunity to recognize individuals different from themselves as well as others' cultures and societies (Koss, 2015).

The most important element in children's literature is the characters illustrated in the story. Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson (1999) said that characters, the "actor" in a story, are another element of fiction vital to the enjoyment of a story. A well-portrayed character can become a friend, a role model, or a temporary parent to a child reader. In general, the character in children's literature could be viewed as any person, identity, or entity whose existence originates from a fictional work or performance. In addition to people, characters can be aliens, gods, artificial intelligence, or, occasionally, inanimate objects. In the story, the significance of a character decides how completely

the character is produced and comprehended by the readers. The characters in the children's literature can help to build children's character building. Some studies analyzed the children's literature in terms of values (Erdoğan, 2017; Fidan, 2019; Kaçmaz, 2018; Karagöz, 2017; Kılıç & Aktan, 2015; Tümen, 2018).

In Indonesia, character education is integrated into the national curriculum as one of the main points of education (Kemdikbud, 2003). Every subject at primary school until secondary school has to elaborate and implement the element of character education to the students' learning process. Character building is the inculcation of values in accordance with the culture of the Indonesian nation in which there are three fundamentals, namely knowledge (cognitive), feelings (affection), and action (Muchtar & Suryani, 2019). Character building could be built from children's literature or books. Stan (2015) stated that literature helps children deal with their problems. By finding out about the problems of others through books, children receive insights into dealing with their own problems. Therefore, the role of children's literature is a media to help children learn. In addition, Tyra (2012) stated that children's literature is used to teach a variety of lessons, morals, and ideas. Therefore, literature can be a good way to teach character education because literature lends itself to the teaching of specific moral dilemmas and the examining of specific character traits (Tyra, 2012).

The main source of the research is the novel entitled *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by Clive Staples Lewis, or he is better known as C.S. Lewis. He is best known for his works of fiction. Geoffrey Bles published this novel in England in 1950. It is the first published and best known of seven novels in *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950 – 1956). This novel is interesting to be studied from many perspectives, such as plot, characterization, point of view, and setting.

METHOD

This research uses the descriptive qualitative method (see Dalman et al., 2020; Kusuma & Apriyanto, 2018; Subyantoro & Apriyanto, 2020). Specifically, this research uses content analysis to analyze the data in order to describe the character shown in the story. In order to be a focus on the research, the researcher restricted to the description of the main character, Lucy's thoughts, actions, and feelings, and others' comments appraising them, showing their efforts to deal with their life and the empowerment characterization of the children. The limitation of the problems is mainly based on the relevance of the research question, which is "what are Lucy's thoughts, feelings, and actions appear in the novel?".

The data of the research are events that occurred in the novel "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" by C.S. Lewis that describe the empowerment of child characters to cope with their problems and feelings. Besides the characterization of the child characters, children's empowerment is also strengthened by the praise of other characters for children's kindness. The focus of the research is events, which show the empowerment of the main character, Lucy to deal with her problems of life and feelings.

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of this research, the researchers applied the trustworthiness technique. According to Lincoln and Guba (cited in Elo, et al, 2014), there are four criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research, that is, credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. Credibility is aimed at achieving the validity of the data. The researcher can achieve credibility through carefully and comprehensively reading and re-reading the selected data in accordance with the research question so that the data can be considered credible. This criterion is done until the researcher gets certainty and could not find any other significant variation in the data.

In addition, the researchers also applied the triangulation technique to gain the credibility of the data. The researchers applied one technique of triangulation that is from a different person. In this technique, the researcher asked another person to discuss the valuable data to know the correct interpretation of the events whether they are relevant to the children's empowerment or not. The person who became another individual to triangulate is an English lecturer from a highly reputable university in Central Java. Therefore, his capability in analyzing children's literature will be in accordance with the research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study covered three fundamentals of children's empowerment, namely thought empowerment (i.e., thought empowerment through children's knowledge and idea and understanding other's feelings), feeling empowerment (i.e., feeling empowerment through empathy, and children's unselfishness), and action empowerment (i.e., action empowerment through children's bravery, and doing a favor for others. It is expected that children's thoughts could create feelings and then children's feelings could impact their actions.

Thought Empowerment

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe present Thought Empowerment that is thinking about the ability of the children through its child character's knowledge or idea and understanding others feelings. Thought Empowerment is divided into two parts. They are Thought Empowerment through Children's Knowledge or Idea and through Understanding Others Feelings.

Thought Empowerment through Children's Knowledge and Idea

Children have their own intelligence in the form of their knowledge and idea. Knowledge includes their ability to understand something, familiarity gained by their experiences, and information achieved, whereas, the idea is about their plan, opinion, or conception of something. In The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, Lucy is presented as a curious and intelligent child.

'Hadh't we all better go to bed?' said Lucy. 'There's sure to be a row if we're heard talking here'.... (Lewis, 1950: 2).

In this conversation, Lucy has an idea that it will be better to go to bed rather than talk and argue. Moreover, when they are heard by the owner of the house, which is the Professor. In this case, Lucy shows wisdom. Lucy, as the youngest child in this story, has already understood what will happen if they are heard by the owner of the house, the Professor. Lucy's ability to understand the situation around her is one of the forms of children's empowerment.

"Do you know," said Lucy, "I really believe he means us to follow him"...
(Lewis, 1950: 26).

In this story, it reinforces that Lucy can understand the situation around her. She can understand about Robin's mean that Robin means them to follow him. Lucy has knowledge about it from Robin's behavior itself. When they follow the robin, the Robin is not flying away, but he is flying to another tree. From here, Lucy can draw a conclusion that the Robin means she and her siblings to follow the Robin.

Thought Empowerment through Understanding other's Feelings

Adults often suppose that children are innocent and weak. Therefore, adults think that it is not necessary to share about something considered difficult and complex to children. In daily life, adults often hide their problems or their sadness in order to keep the children away from misery. However, children can feel and see what actually happened, and may understand the situation better than what adult's expected.

"I don't think you're a bad Faun at all," said Lucy. "I think you are a very good Faun. You are the nicest Faun I've ever met."... (Lewis, 1950: 7).

Mr. Tumnus is crying because he feels that he is a bad Faun. Then, Lucy reassures with a statement 'I think you are a very good Faun. You are the nicest Faun I've ever met'. The reassured like that can keep the Faun from crying again and think of himself as a bad Faun. Lucy's ability to understand Faun's feeling and give him a reassured is a children's empowerment.

"Oh, but we can't, we can't," said Lucy suddenly; "don't you see? We can't just go home, not after this. It is all on my account that the poor Faun has got into this trouble. He hid me from the Witch and showed me the way back. That's what it means by comforting the Queen's enemies and fraternizing with Humans. We simply must try to rescue him."... (Lewis, 1950: 26).

After Faun helps Lucy and hides Lucy from the witch, Lucy knows and understands that the Faun is in danger situation. Lucy tells her siblings to help the Faun. Lucy really understood the situation of the Faun. Lucy's ability is to understand the other's feelings and take an initiative to do something to help. In this case, help the Faun. That is one example of children's empowerment.

Feelings Empowerment

Feeling empowerments refer to types of children's mindfulness and sensibility to manage happening occasions. These two parts of feeling empowered. They are feeling empowerment through empathy and through children's unselfishness.

Feeling Empowerment through Empathy

Empathy refers to the ability to feel the emotions, thoughts, or feelings of others. Basically, every child already has a sensitivity (empathy) in themselves. Instinctively, children try to alleviate the suffering of others, but their cognitive or intellectual development is immature, the children show empathetic confusion. When Lucy saw Mr. Tumnus crying, she starts to comfort Mr. Tumnus.

... "Mr. Tumnus! Mr. Tumnus!" said Lucy in great distress. "Don't! Don't! What is the matter? Aren't you well? Dear Mr. Tumnus, do tell me what is wrong." But the Faun continued sobbing as if its heart would break. And even when Lucy went over and put her arms around him and lent him her handkerchief, he did not stop. He merely took the handkerchief and kept on using it, wringing it out with both hands whenever it got too wet to be any more use, so that presently Lucy was standing in a damp patch... (Lewis, 1950: 7).

In this story, it is clear that when starts to go over and put her arms around Mr. Tumnus and lend her handkerchief to Mr. Tumnus, this shows that Lucy is showing her sensitivity to him. Lucy's ability to go over to Mr. Tumnus put her arms around him, and lends her handkerchief to him; it shows that Lucy has empathy for him.

Feeling Empowerment through Children's Unselfishness

Unselfishness refers to the state of mind or attitude of somebody who tries to think about others' needs or welfare. It is a care expression for others. Lucy expresses her unselfish attitude on some occasions in this story.

... "What about going to see Mr. Tumnus?" said Lucy. "He's the nice Faun I told you about." Everyone agreed to this and off they went walking briskly and stamping their feet. Lucy proved a good leader... (Lewis, 1950: 25).

When Faun has told Lucy that if saw sons of Adam or daughters of eve, he will catch them and hand them over to the white witch. When Lucy comes back to the world of Narnia with her siblings, she is not selfish to take a happy adventure with her siblings. She still remembers Faun's kindness and still wants to visit Faun. It shows that Lucy is not egoist or selfish.

Action Empowerment

The Action Empowerment, for the most part, depicts children's actions, behavior, and attitude in managing incidents in their everyday life. There is two part of action empowerment. They are Action Empowerment through Children's Bravery and Action Empowerment through Doing Favour for Others.

Action Empowerment through Children's Bravery

There are various kinds of bravery. All of them are important to be learned and be known to everybody, including children. However, not all kinds of bravery are in The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe novel. One of the braveries that exists is the bravery to try something new to get rid of curiosity.

"Nothing there!" said Peter, and they all trooped out again - all except Lucy. She stayed behind because she thought it would be worthwhile trying the door of the wardrobe, even though she felt almost sure that it would be locked. To her surprise it opened quite easily, and two moth-balls dropped out... (Lewis, 1950: 3).

Lucy's brother, Peter, has said "Nothing there!". However, Lucy still stays behind. It is caused by her curiosity to try the door of the wardrobe, even though she felt almost sure that it will be locked. Her curiosity shows confidence to move forward and will not be affected by anyone. It is important to form a responsible personality.

"I can always get back if anything goes wrong," thought Lucy... (Lewis, 1950: 4).

It is clear that Lucy is so brave, confident, and believes that she can always get back if anything goes wrong. She still wants to try something new in order to meet her curiosity. Children who do not have bravery like Lucy may not think like that. It indicates that Lucy has empowerment. Particularly is in the terms of children's action empowerment through children's bravery.

Action Empowerment through Doing Favour for Others

A relationship between people with each other is necessary for everyday life. It is important to be known by children in order to make children aware that humans will not be separated from the surrounding social environment that there are various problems.

"... And so Lucy found herself walking through the wood arm in arm with this strange creature as if they had known one another all their lives..." (Lewis, 1950: 6).

In this story, Lucy is walking with Mr. Tumnus, a Faun. Lucy is friendly, so she is willing to arm in arm with him in order to help him to be able to hold the umbrella over both of them. Even though, they just got to know each other. However, shows hospitality, so they are so close as if they had known one another all their lives.

CONCLUSION

There are three kinds of children's empowerment. They are thoughts empowerment, feelings empowerment, and actions empowerment. Those empowerments are important to build children's character. The findings revealed that the main character, Lucy, showed all the three fundamentals of children's empowerment. Lucy showed thought empowerment through children's knowledge and idea, and understanding others' feelings; she showed feeling empowerment through empathy, and children's unselfishness; and she showed action empowerment through children's bravery, and doing a favor for others. Therefore, from findings and discussion, it can be concluded that *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis is a good children's book because the main character, Lucy, has empowerment.

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