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INDONESIAN FOLK NARRATIVES: ON THE INTERSTICES OF NATIONAL IDENTITY, NATIONAL VALUES, AND CHARACTER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Folklore has been linked to national identity formation. In this article, informed by Johann Gottfried Herder's romantic nationalism and following Alan Dundes's (1965) method of folklore studies, it is argued that Indonesia has historically followed this trail, and its recent movement of collecting and disseminating Indonesian folk narratives from across the archipelago is a culminating point in this endeavour. Although the move was claimed to support the national literacy and character building movement, the rigorous endeavour of the government in garnering folktales from all 34 provinces can also be read as part of the national political agenda of strengthening the national integrity, promoting unity in diversity and disseminating so-called national values. Examining further the contexts and procedures of how the narratives were collected and selected for publication, the study reveals an effort to inculcate national values targeted at students in formal education, but more particularly young children as the future harbingers of national values.

KEYWORDS: Indonesian folk narratives • national identity • national values • romantic nationalism

INTRODUCTION

Folklore has been circulating since humans were able to express themselves to others. As civilisations developed and national demarcations were created, folklore came to be regarded as one of the vital resources for creating a sense of national identity (Anttonen 2005). European countries have often been reported to turn to folklore, including folk narratives, in the process of nation building (for example, Anttonen 2005; Bottigheimer 2005; Zipes 1992 [1979]; 2012). Ruth Bottigheimer (2004: 41) further asserts that "the existence of a national repertoire of stories was required by nineteenth-century nation build-

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ers; their stories confirmed national identity by differing meaningfully from those of the nation next door". Although "the nation builders" here refers mainly to European countries, the same motif of collections of folk narratives creating a sense of national identity can also be found in other parts of the world, such as South Africa (Jenkins 2002), UEA (Hourani 2015), Nepal (Williams 2003), and Bhutan (Evans 2010), to name a few.

Indonesia also seems to follow suit, particularly with its recent concerted, systematic efforts of collecting and disseminating rewritten folk narratives. One of the most rigorous efforts was carried out by the Indonesian government through its Development and Cultivation Agency, under the Ministry of Education and Culture, in 2016. A total of 165 folk narratives from all 34 provinces in Indonesia were transcribed and/or rewritten from their originally published form and made available online, accessible to large audiences, although primarily targeted at the readers of school age. The narratives were given approval by the Centre for Curriculum and Textbooks, under the same ministry, to be disseminated to teachers, who were strongly encouraged to use them as supplementary texts in students' character education.

Many studies have been devoted to investigating the structure and social function of Indonesian folk narratives (for example, Amin et al. 2013; McKean 1971), their potential use for teaching language, such as English (for example Prastiwi 2015; Sukmawan and Setyowati 2017), and in comparison with folk narratives from other countries (for example Donaldson 2014; Astuti et al. 2016; Wardarita and Negoro 2017). A large number of studies have also performed content analysis on the folk narratives through various lenses such as feminist perspectives (for example Rosliana 2013; Masykuroh and Fatimah 2019; Nurhayati 2019), children's literature and violence (Masykuroh 2016), and systemic functional linguistics (Efransyah 2018), to quote only a few.

However, there is scarce research on the collection and dissemination of tales as a concerted effort of ruling power. James Danandjaja (1995), a leading Indonesian folklorist, initiated an investigation into the motive behind the collection of Indonesian folklore in comparison to the same endeavour in Japan from a historical perspective. Danandjaja found that one of the primary motives for collecting and disseminating folklore is the need for a sense of collective or national identity. Many years have passed since his monumental study, but there has been no renewed interest in this topic. Herein, the paper attempts to analyse the Indonesian government's most recent movements in rewriting, collecting and disseminating the so-called Indonesian folk narratives by drawing upon Johann Gottfried Herder's (1744–1803) romantic nationalism. A definition of folk narrative will be provided, after which I will trace the link of folk narratives and national identity. A glimpse into past attempts to collect and disseminate Indonesian folk narrative will then be provided; and finally, a discussion on the recent rewriting and collection of Indonesian folk narratives will be presented.

FOLK NARRATIVES

There is a great debate on what folk narratives actually mean, and this section is not intended to resolve the debate. Nevertheless, it is important to set a definition that informs the discussion in this paper. Stith Thompson, a leading folklorist from the United States, used the term 'traditional prose tales'. Equating the traditional prose tale to the folktale,

Thompson (1946: 4) defined the folktale as a "story which has been handed down from generation to generation either in writing or by word of mouth", a definition shared by Richard Dawkins (1951), who also believed that folktales are not confined within oral tradition although they were primarily transmitted orally in the past.

Disagreeing with Thompson in the use of the term folktale to refer to narratives in folklore, William Bascom (1965: 3) used the term 'prose narrative' and its alternative short term 'tales' to include what he calls "three important forms of folklore" that are interrelated to each other, namely myths, legends, and folktales. There are other forms as well, such as "reminiscences or anecdotes, humorous or otherwise, and jokes or jests [which] may constitute the fourth and fifth such categories" (ibid.: 5), but they are less complex and important than the three primary forms.

Bascom (1965) and Dan Ashliman (2004) concur that the use of the term folktale to include all three forms of prose narrative is inappropriate because the term, a translation of the German *Märchen*, is too narrow to represent the wealth and diversity of prose narratives. Despite the disparities, scholars generally agree that prose narratives are part of the verbal arts of folklore, and they defy authorship (Bascom 1965; Zipes 1992 [1979]; Ashliman 2004). These narratives are to be distinguished from other verbal arts such as tongue twisters, epics, ballads, etc. (Thompson 1946; Bascom 1965; Ashliman 2004).

In this paper, the term folk narratives will be used, following Ashliman who, sharing many similar ideas on folk narrative with Bascom, also distinguishes these narratives into the three primary forms of myth, legend, and folktale. Ashliman (2004: 33) further explains that myth and legend are strongly related because they are often believed as "true accounts" with clear geographical markers, whereas folktales are considered fictitious accounts that probably have not happened in real life, a definition that is also shared by Bascom. To further distinguish the three forms, as Bascom (1965) explains, myth and legend, both considered true accounts of events that happened in the past, differ in terms of when the tales occurred and what types of character were involved. Legends are considered to occur more recently than myths, which transpired in the distant past, often before humans existed. As such, myths are more sacred than legends because they involve supernatural powers such as gods, deities, angels, etc., as characters, whereas legends more often involve lay people or deities with human characteristics, set in a more mundane life (Bascom 1965; Ashliman 2004).

One explanation for this different use of terms probably lies in the fact that the division between legend and myth is admittedly European influence, and so it may not apply in non-European cultures such as Indonesia. As Bascom (1965: 5) aptly explains, the separate categories, "presumably reflect the 'native categories' of the 'folk' of Europe; but they are easily reducible to the dual classification recognized in those societies which, as we shall see, group myths and legends into a single category ('myth-legend')". The single category of myth-legend will help clear the confusion over the labelling of origin stories of natural phenomena, for example.

On the other hand, folktales as fictitious accounts are rather easily distinguishable from myth-legend. Presumably because of their fictional nature without any geographical boundaries or markers, folktales have a large number of sub-types with some being easily identifiable, although some others are not. Fairy tales, or magic tales, a genre that has developed into a modern literary tradition "based only marginally on folklore" (Ashliman 2004: 31), for example, belong to the subcategory of folktales. The Aarne-

Thompson-Uther (ATU) index (Uther 2004), with a long history of revisions, is a rigorous attempt at classifying folktales. However, because of its fluidity, the folktale defies definitions and categorisations. Albeit really helpful for the study of folktales in general, the index, as argued by Ashliman (2004), has a shortfall in terms of accuracy, for example the confusing subcategory of 'ordinary folktales' under the category of 'folktales'.

Admittedly, the terms and the classification system of folk narratives are European-centric (Bascom 1965; Floyd 2017) and may not apply to Indonesian cultures; however, with respect to the universality of storytelling traditions and folk narratives, the present paper will use the above terms and classification as appropriate while carefully considering the unique characteristics of Indonesian folk narratives. In addition, Danandjaja (1980; 1994; 1995) follows Bascom's (1965) classification of folk/prose narratives in his discussion. The particular terms that will be used in this paper include folk narrative and its three types, as explained above: myth, legend, and folktale, as well as their relevant sub-types.

FOLK NARRATIVE, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND VALUES

The rewriting of folk narratives into literary narratives or tales to serve certain purposes and interests, such as those of a nation or particular group of people, has been a common practice in many countries. In the context of national identity and values, folk narratives as part of the larger category of folklore are frequently seen as the window on a nation or people, that is, to read a people's folk narratives is to know them (for example, Keding and Douglas 2005). As aptly argued by Pertti Anttonen (2005: 82): "In the 19th-century nation-building processes, the collecting [of folklore] … became a legitimate activity in the making of the modern, especially in the definition of the national territory and in the writing and representation of its history." This argument highlights the importance of storytelling as an indispensable part of folklore and of folklore itself in the establishment of civilisations and nations.

One of the theories useful for explaining this connection between folklore, including folk narratives, and national identity is romantic nationalism put forward by Herder. William Wilson (1973) explains how in its inception the theory of romantic nationalism was not warmly welcomed. However, as the need for strengthening national identity increased in Germany, its reception changed quite drastically. To help understand romantic nationalism, Wilson (ibid.: 822) compares it to liberal nationalism, and he contends:

> Romantic nationalism emphasized passion and instinct instead of reason, national differences instead of common aspirations, and, above all, the building of nations on the traditions and myths of the past – that is, on folklore – instead of on the political realities of the present.

In romantic nationalism, folklore that is handed down from one generation to another, shapes and is shaped by the people, their cultures and traditions, and is eventually instrumental in the formation of a national identity.

Herder's romantic nationalism "played a vital role in the lives and works of the Grimm brothers, who were convinced that all their writings, including the fairy tales, derived their strength 'from the soil of the German Fatherland'" (Snyder 1978: 45).

The German brothers, whose endeavours of collecting fairy tales, which are part of folktales and folk narratives, from all around Germany have inspired many nations, argued Snyder (ibid.), "were motivated by a desire to glorify German traditions and to stimulate German national sentiment". However, although the theory originated and developed in Germany, Wilson (1973: 822) argues that other similar movements manipulating folklore to create a national identity "have generally been held applicable to all nations struggling for independent existence". To cite another specific example, Anttonen (2005) mentions Finland with its appropriation of folklore to encourage people to identify with the state.

In the context of other European countries, such as Russia, for instance, Jessika Aguilar (2015) reveals how a sense of lacking so-called Russian literature, heightened by the feeling of being threatened by other European countries, prompted 19th century Russian writers to turn to folklore. Folklore was collected as authentically as possible from the people by renowned folklorists. The elements of folklore were also incorporated into various forms of literature, such as poetry, fairy tales, novels, etc. Aguilar (ibid.) concludes her study by contending that both the authentic folklore and the representation or adaptation of the lore made important contributions to the construction of Russian national identity.

To cite a few examples of how folklore has been linked to national identity in non-European countries, in his study of Bhutanese folklore, Steve Evans (2010) contends that the circulating folklore has greatly influenced and shaped Bhutanese people's values. He mentions how the number one virtue valued by the Bhutanese, friendship, is coincidentally the theme of the most popular folktale, titled "The Four Harmonious Friends". Evans (ibid.) further argues that preserving the national folklore, including folktales, will to a great extent preserve the values of the people of the nation.

Danandjaja (1995) in his comparative study of Japanese and Indonesian folklore discovers the same motif in the two countries' endeavours of collecting and disseminating fairy tales. He further explains that the need to create a national identity may be prompted by the perceived threat of foreign cultures, as in the case of Japan. In the context of Australia, the same need for 'Australian' national literary folklore was captured in the questioning of 'the national-ness' of the earliest Australian fairy tales. Michael Organ (2015) suggests that although the tales include Australian landscapes and aboriginal customs and traditions, they were still much influenced by the English style of fairy tales – and consequently by the Grimm Brothers. Australian fairy tales, as suggested by Organ (ibid.), should have a strong sense of 'Australian-ness' rather than merely being set in and "excoticising" Australian landscapes (Wood 2015). These links between national identity and folklore are very important and should be continuously studied and investigated as folklore develops and continues to be manipulated for the construction of national values and identities.

PAST ATTEMPTS TO COLLECT INDONESIAN FOLK NARRATIVES

Being an archipelago consisting of hundreds of ethnic groups and local languages, Indonesia has a great wealth of folk narratives, making the task of classification and description tremendously difficult. Every ethnic group has its own distinct folk narra-

tives, many of which are part of the religious or spiritual beliefs of the people. Attempts have been made to collect tales from across the archipelago that can be dated back to the Dutch colonisation, more popularly known as the Dutch East Indies Era (c. 1600–1942). Some of the printed collections survived the period and are currently kept in Dutch libraries, one of the most famous collections being Jan de Vries's *Volksverhalen uit Oost-Indië: Sprookjes en Fabels* (1925). To quote Danandjaja (1980: 28),

> Jan de Vries becomes important to Indonesian folklore study (at least to the literary folklorists), because he is the only Dutch folklorist who brought together representative folktales from many parts of Indonesia for comparative studies, and made a thorough analysis and study of their tale type and motif indexes.

Danandjaja's (1980) introduction to Indonesian folklore provides a comprehensive account of the collection of Indonesian folklore in general and is not limited to folk narratives from the Dutch era to the 1970s.

There are also important annotated bibliographies worth mentioning. Herman C. Kemp (2004) created a comprehensive bibliography titled *Oral Traditions of Southeast Asia and Oceania: A Bibliography*, which also includes Indonesian folk narratives from the Dutch Indies Era to the late 20th century. Another important bibliography is that by Gabriel A. Bernardo titled *A Critical and Annotated Bibliography of Philippine, Indonesian and other Malayan Folklore*, a project that began in 1923 but was only published in 1972, the same year in which Danandjaja (1995) claimed the first scientific folklore studies were conducted in Indonesia.

Danandjaja has pointed out that the earlier Indonesian folklore studies, as well as the collected and annotated bibliographies, were sometimes inaccurate. This is because quite a few of the earliest Dutch and other European anthropologists who studied Indonesian folklore at that time failed to consider carefully the folk or people from whom the lore or narratives were collected due to lack of knowledge about these people and their cultures. The hierarchical view of folklore developing among Dutch anthropologists in the colonial period had given Indonesian folklore a lower, very primitive, status even compared with the folklore of the lowest status circulated among the peasants in the Netherlands. In addition, Danandjaja noted that some of the tales studied by the Dutch anthropologists were derived not directly from the people, but from old books, such as the case of Kern's study (1889) of the mouse-deer tale previously recorded by Javanese scholars. Some of the circulating folk narratives might have been recorded by some literate native Indonesians. Unfortunately, many of the manuscripts did not survive and are thus unavailable for further investigation (Danandjaja 1994; 1995).

Once Indonesia gained independence, the efforts to preserve Indonesian folklore were continued by the newly formed government, especially through Indonesia's Office of Education and the central office of government-owned publishing companies such as Balai Pustaka (Kemp 2004). Private publishing companies in various cities in Indonesia generally took part in the publication of Indonesian folk narratives for profit, as is the case with many other countries such as South Africa (Jenkins 2002). Local government language centres also published local folk narratives after their establishment in the early 20th century, or post-New Order era (Moriyama and Budiman 2010).

It is important to note that during this post-independence era not only Indonesian folk narratives but also narratives from Europe, Arabian countries, and other cultures

were published after going through a translation process by both government and private publishing companies. In addition, many of the folk narratives were already written for children as the target reader (Kemp 2004). The collection and publication were carried out on the grounds of preserving local cultural values and artefacts.

However, according to Danandjaja, one of the strong motives for this collection and dissemination of folk narratives was, to create a sense of national integrity through the establishment of national culture adapted from the diverse local cultures. The specifics of constructing a national identity in Indonesia stem from Indonesia being an archipelago with diverse ethnic groups and hence cultures and identities. Ideally Indonesia should build its national culture and adapt its national values from the archipelagic cultures or Nusantara. (Danandjaja 1994; 1995)

The Indonesian language, officially made the national language a day after independence on August 18, 1945, as Danandjaja (1995: 487) contends, is "one of the most important cultural elements" of the nation. As an archipelago consisting of at least 633 large ethnic groups (Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics 2015) and 652 regional languages, not including dialects and sub-dialects (Ministry of Education and Culture 2018), it has been deemed important for the budding nation to translate the local folk narratives into Indonesian. The collection, translation and dissemination of the folk narratives is certainly aligned with Danandjaja's ideas and can be seen as an attempt to disseminate national values in order to build an Indonesian nation from archipelagic cultures.

RECENT SYSTEMATIC COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION: STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL IDENTITY

Contextual Background

The most recent collection and publication of Indonesian folk narratives by the Language Development and Cultivation Agency of Indonesia under the Ministry of Education and Culture, in 2016, was one of the activities carried out to implement the regulation Number 23 of 2015 from the Minister of Education and Culture on the inculcation of moral through literacy movement.[1] The national folklore collection movement and its interstice with the national character building and literacy movements is worth further investigating for two reasons. First, although folk narratives have been collected from various parts of Indonesia since Independence (Danandjaja 1994; 1995), the movement by the Language Development and Cultivation Agency can be said to be the first systematic and comprehensive effort. Earlier endeavours by the government did not particularly attempt to garner folk narratives representing each province. Each province has its own language centre that takes the responsibility to preserve local folklore; however, such a concerted effort of selecting representative folk narratives from each province involving all local language centres was unheard of until the 2016 movement. The current effort also involved a special committee dedicated to select which authors and tales to be included in the collection.

Second, the recent movement not only involved representative authors from all local language centres but also the general public through a selection process that was made

transparent by online dissemination. Writers from the general public were invited to join Folklore Competition 2015 ("Sayembara Penulisan Cerita Rakyat 2015").[2]

To further understand to what extent the selected tales represent the 34 provinces of Indonesia, identification was made to each of the titles based on the claimed province of origin mentioned in each of the published folk narratives.[3] The Government has translated the published folk narratives into English and made e-book versions available to the public.[4] To help with the identification, the collected and published narratives were divided into two types, those targeted at younger readers (elementary school children) and those targeted at older readers (junior and senior high school students, totalling 109 and 56, respectively). Table 1 shows the distribution of the folk narratives based on province of origin.

Table 1. Distribution of Folk Narratives based on Province

No	Province	Younger Reader	Older Reader	No	Province	Younger Reader	Older Reader
1	Aceh	1	1	18	Kepulauan Riau	3	1
2	Bali	1	4	19	Lampung	3	1
3	Bangka Belitung	2	4	20	Maluku	3	0
4	Banten	2	0	21	Maluku Utara	1	0
5	Bengkulu	2	1	22	NTB	1	1
6	DI Yogyakarta	3	1	23	NTT	3	0
7	DKI Jakarta	1	2	24	Papua	7	1
8	Gorontalo	0	0	25	Papua Barat	2	1
9	Jambi	2	1	26	Riau	6	1
10	Jawa Barat	6	4	27	Sulawesi Barat	5	0
11	Jawa Tengah	3	2	28	Sulawesi Selatan	3	4
12	Jawa Timur	5	3	29	Sulawesi Tengah	3	0
13	Kalimantan Barat	4	0	30	Sulawesi Tenggara	3	1
14	Kalimantan Selatan	5	1	31	Sulawesi Utara	3	3
15	Kalimantan Tengah	3	1	32	Sumatera Barat	4	3
16	Kalimantan Timur	4	4	33	Sumatera Selatan	6	1
17	Kalimantan Utara	2	1	34	Sumatera Utara	7	2
Total						109	50

Note: six of the folk narratives were Arabic and Indian tales translated into Indonesian and thus not included in the table.

In terms of type, in general the narratives can be divided into those belonging to myth, legend, and folktale. Examples of myths include "The Guardian of Kapuas River", "The Adventure of Baron Sakender", "The Black Serpent of Bukit Tenganan", "Nyai Undang Ratu Rupawan from Kupang", "The Sweet Scent of Tarumenyan", and the like. These narratives commonly tell the story of mythical, magical figures considered to be sacred by the local peoples among whom the story takes place. The next common type of folk narrative found is legend, which tells the origin story of some natural phenomena, such as mountains, lakes, rivers, hills, and the like. Examples include "The Legend of Bantul District", "The Legend of Kota Baru", "The Legend of Danau Maninjau", "The Legend

of Tanjung Penyusuk", "The Legend of Putri Pucuk Bukit Kelumpang", "The Story of Banjar Angkah", "The Legend of Condet", "The Legend of Naya Sentika", and many others. Folktales make up the rest of the folk narratives, ranging from fables such as "The Beguiled Bekarung" to trickster tales such as "Pak Belalang" and "Si Kabayan".

This systematic and concerted endeavour was claimed to be part of and to support the Ministry of Education and Culture's National Literacy Movement interlinked with the character building agenda. However, it can be argued that the endeavour was also aimed at strengthening national values by inculcating the values to school children in formal education, from elementary to senior high school level. Following the two steps of investigating folklore in literature, identification and interpretation (Dundes 1965), the author contends the recent movement of collecting and disseminating Indonesian folk narratives can be interpreted as follows: First, the movement can be read as a literary folklore movement with the main objective of promoting national values. Second, children are clearly the main target of the national agenda in conjunction with the literacy movement and character-based education using folk narratives as core texts. There is an additional finding that highlights some of the inconsistencies found in the national folklore movement.

Use of the Literary Folklore Movement to Promote National Values

The first finding unearthed from the analysis is that the endeavour of collecting and publishing Indonesian folklore can be read as a literary folklore movement to promote national values and strengthen national identity. The majority of the folk narratives published by the Agency for Language Development and Cultivation were either written or adapted from printed versions of tales instead of recordings of oral tales as recounted by local people. The adapted versions of the tales were in themselves the literary forms of the original, orally transmitted folktales. The folk narratives subsequently underwent major modifications to include and promote national character values as mandated by the law and regulations on the national education system. The inculcation of national values culminates in the strengthening of Indonesian national identity as captured in the national slogan, "Unity in Diversity".

The literary folklore movement with the agenda of national values inculcation and identity consolidation can be dated back to the Romantic period. In this period, Romantic authors rewrote the recorded tales from the oral traditions by adhering to the literary conventions, with clear characters, plot, setting, and theme (Samper 2019). This period coincided with the national agenda of strengthening national identity.

Consequently, the authors were strongly encouraged to revise tales with the national agenda in mind. As explained by Anttonen (2005: 54),

> When materials recorded from oral communication […] receive their value as printed, metonymic representations of, for example, the nation and its cultural heritage, folklore as a document of orality is in a fundamental way conceptualized as – and entextualized into – literature.

Thus, the term literary folklore came to be developed. The term is very broad, including all forms of lore, not limited to folk narratives.

Other attempts have also been made by the government of Indonesia to record and publish folk poetry, such as lyrics (for example songs) and epics (ballads) (Lopatin 1951), but this is beyond the scope of the study. In other words, the present study focuses on literary folk narratives that belong to the broader category of literary folklore. To further distinguish oral folklore from literary folklore, Jens Tismar's guidelines (as cited in Zipes 2015) are helpful. Although Tismar's ideas were concerned with literary fairy tales, they are also applicable in the context of literary folklore, which is characterised by the entitlement of the author/authors to the tale written, and as the word "literary" implies, literary folklore can be differentiated from the original, orally transmitted folk narratives, with its elaboration and structural conventions. However, Jack Zipes (2015) also argues that being more elaborated and systematic does not mean that literary folklore is better than oral; in fact, the two are strongly interrelated.

The studied folk narratives belong to the category of literary folklore. Each of the titles can be identified by a single author assisted by an editor and an illustrator. The folk narratives are written following certain conventions such as a modified title, definite setting, advanced plot, specific characters and characterisation. More importantly, these narratives are written from the point of view of an author with a particular intention aligned with the national agenda. Many of these authors also did not record the folk narratives as recounted by local people; instead, they re-wrote or adapted previously published tales, meaning they have gone through multiple processes of 'literarisation' (Matejic 1978). In some cases, the authors re-wrote their own previously published folk narratives, and as such the narrative is said to be re-published by the Agency.

Importantly, the term literary folklore implies a certain agenda, and that this agenda stems from a ruling power that has control over the production and reproduction of lore or tales. Anttonen (2005: 81) argued that the "folklore scholarship [is] not only fundamentally modern, but utterly political and rhetorical". Anttonen has shown how European countries, such as Sweden, Britain and Finland, resorted to folklore to help with the dissemination and inculcation of national values. The same phenomenon is observed in the Indonesian 2016 literary folklore movement. In fact, the Directorate of Internalisation of Values and Cultural Diplomacy, Ministry of Education and Culture, takes the theme of "Folklore as a Medium for National Character Development" for the Folklore Writing Competition 2015, the winning tales of which were included in the 2016 publication. The Directorate explicitly states the competition aims:

> [To] increase the Indonesian people's creativity in composition in an attempt to protect the wealth of Indonesian national culture […] it is expected that the folklore distributed widely in the Archipelago can be well documented and help inculcate the cultural values applicable in daily life. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2015)

The announcement makes it clear that in addition to preserving the wealth and diversity of local cultures, the Ministry has a national, political agenda with the competition and the collection of folk narratives. The agenda is realised by preserving diverse local cultures, embedding 'national' values into the local folk narratives, and distributing the local tales nationally.

The preservation of folk narratives as representations of local cultural values and the foundation of national culture, as suggested by Danandjaja (1995: 486), can be said to be a "nativistic" movement, which is "a logical reaction on the part of a group whose cul-

ture is changing rapidly". The increasingly global world and free flow of information can be seen as a threat to the local and national cultural values. Documenting folklore is thus seen as an attempt to protect and preserve these values. It is also an attempt to 'claim' and 're-claim' national territories (Abrahams 1993, as cited in Anttonen 2005) as enacted in the collection of representative folk narratives from a number of provinces.

As the country consists of diverse ethnic groups, a sense of national identity has been adopted "from the rich Nusantara (archipelagic) cultures, especially in the form of their folklores", as suggested by Danandjaja (1995: 487). Building the national culture by garnering local cultural values represented in local folk narratives reflects the later development of the principle of romantic nationalism that highlights "national differences instead of common aspirations" (Wilson 1973: 882). The movement acknowledges local cultural differences, embracing these differences and establishing them as national culture in order ultimately to strengthen the bond, the unity of the Indonesian people through traditional tales. At the same time, this movement also reflects the original idea of Herder's nationalism, which rejects the notion of hierarchies of cultures (Schmidt 1956), placing Indonesia and its national culture in a similar position to other nations.

National Agenda with Children

The second important finding that can be interpreted from the movement is the national folklore agenda's focus on children. Although folk narratives were not initially intended for children, cultural productions, reproductions, and adaptations of narratives or tales have come to be targeted at and appropriated for children (Athanasiadis et al. 2010). The rewriting as well as appropriation is primarily based on a belief that folklore can serve didactic purposes well (Bettelheim 1976; Zipes 1983). Betty Lanham and Masao Shimura (1967) concurred, noting that the education value of folklore is really the concern of those wishing to use the tales for children.

As Table 1 shows, out of the 165 folk narratives published by the Agency, 109 or 66.10% of them are written with primary school children as the target readers; in other words, age-wise the readers are expected to be 6–12 years old. This finding means that the primary target of the national agenda of inculcating national values is children. In the context of romantic nationalism, children have indeed been targeted for such a national agenda. As Snyder (1978: 39) explains:

> The idea for a collection of children's stories may be traced directly to Herder, who in 1773 aroused immediate attention to folk literature with an essay entitled Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker. Such a collection, Herder once remarked, would be a Christmas present for the young people of the future.

The folk narratives were rewritten and appropriated for children with simpler diction, appealing plots, and attractive illustrations. Importantly, the narratives were rewritten and appropriated with the national cultural values as mandated by the national character-building policy. There are 18 values that are mandated to be inculcated through character education in schools. These values are a combination of religious values, *Pancasila* (the five principles of Indonesia), cultural values, and national education goals. Specifically: (1) religion, (2) honesty, (3) tolerance, (4) discipline, (5) hard-work, (6) crea-

tivity, (7) independence, (8) democracy, (9) curiousity, (10) nationalism, (11) patriotism, (12) appreciation of achievements, (13) being friendly/communicative, (14) being peace-loving, (15) avid reading, (16) being environmentally aware, (17) being socially aware, (18) responsibility (Centre for Curriculum and Textbooks 2009: 9–10).

While content analysis is needed to reveal what values each of the published narratives promote, the movement as a whole can be interpreted as ultimately promoting the values of nationalism and patriotism. More specifically, the promoted value is unity in diversity, or national integrity, as shown by the inclusion of folk narratives from all provinces in Indonesia (Danandjaja 1994; 1995). In the introduction to the collection, the Agency strongly recommends that teachers introduce children to the wealth of Indonesian folk narratives and the cultural values embedded in them. By doing so, the children are encouraged to see Indonesia as consisting of diverse folk narratives and cultural values. This diversity makes up one nation, true to the national slogan "unity in diversity".

This political agenda targeting child readers is more noticeable in the structure of the published tales and books. All books begin with an introduction from the Head of the Language Development and Cultivation Agency emphasising the beauty of diversity, the importance of adapting folklore into literary work for children, the contribution that the publication makes to the National Literacy Movement, and the benefits of literary folklore in enriching knowledge of the past, which can be helpful for present and future lives. The last idea is particularly aligned with the concept of "nationalised antiquities" where folklore is treated "as a provider of a picture of the past, that which is regarded as folklore has an explicit role to play in the making of the present" (Anttonen 2005: 81). The introduction is followed by a preface from the authors who generally introduce the story and explain its origin.

Some authors go further by conveying some messages concerned with the inculcation of national cultural values. The author/adapter of "Jaka Prabangkara", Fairul Zabadi (2016: ii) in his preface said, "this story is really appropriate to be made teaching material for multicultural education. We have been living harmoniously within diverse cultures, origins, and religions." While Zabadi seems to address teachers in his introduction, Nurweni Saptawuryandari (2016) directly addresses children and encourages them to learn from the exemplary character traits displayed by the main character in her book, *The Adventure of Baron Sakender*. This kind of encouragement of national cultural values is also found in the preface to many of the published tales.

It is also important to note that instead of identifying the origin of the folk narratives based on local ethnic group, the government labelled them based on province of origin, as can be seen on the cover of the book, and also on the official webpage of Laboratory for Language and Literature Diversity. The labelling was despite some of the authors choosing to identify the narratives by ethnic origin in their introduction to their work (for example "The Beguiled Bengkarung", "Behind the Misery of Boru Tombaga") or not to identify with either province or ethnicity, but with the source of their work (for example, Jaka Prabangkara). However, some other authors did mention the province of origin of their tales. In fact, one of them used the name of the province in the title: "Stories from the Land of Papua" (Jaruki 2016). The author's introduction to the story further strengthens the argument that the story is meant to encourage children to get to know the cultural values of this province and inculcate a sense of nationalism. The introduction goes, "Papua Province is the eastern most province and the largest

in Indonesia. Its landscape consists of mountains and forests. Once upon a time, there was a mountain in Papua named Mount Rongkwri" (Jaruki 2016: iii). Such a didactic approach to the (re-)writing of folk narratives and the emphasis on these narratives as a tool to unite the nation can also be observed in the rest of the publication series.

Some Inconsistencies

Another important finding to note is that there are some inconsistencies in the collection of the folk narratives, suggesting that the provinces have not been represented equally. The first inconsistency is the uneven number of the folk narratives from each province, as can be seen in Table 1. Folk narratives from West Java were the most common with 10 in total, followed by tales from Sumatera Utara (9), Papua, Kalimantan Timur, and Jawa Timur (all 8). On the other hand, there were only two folk narratives from Banten and Nusa Tenggara Barat, respectively, and only one from Maluku Utara. Certainly, this uneven distribution raises questions over the representativeness of the folk narratives. Why did the committee not select equal numbers of folk narratives from each of the provinces? What were the criteria used to select the tales aside from the requirement to promote national values?

Another inconsistency is concerned with the non-inclusion of one province, Gorontalo, despite the claim that the folk narratives were collected from all 34 provinces in Indonesia. One possible explanation for this is that Gorontalo is one of the new provinces, established on December 5, 2010. However, the explanation is not really plausible because Gorontalo is the fourth youngest province, with Kepulauan Riau, Sulawesi Barat, and Kalimantan Utara the three youngest (these provinces figure in the statistics with 4, 5, and 3 narratives, respectively).

The final inconsistency lies in the inclusion of several narratives that were not identified as originating from any of the Indonesian provinces. These folk narratives were mainly Arabic *hikayat* or sagas originally written in Jawi,[5] circulating after the coming of Islam to the Archipelago. They were rewritten and adapted into Indonesian local contexts. "Dewi Joharmanik", "Indra Laksana and Indra Mahadewa", "Pangeran Indra Bangsawan", "Broken Ties of Kinship", and "A Story for Kirana" are all adaptations of Arabic sagas transliterated from their original Jawi scripts. "White Clouds on the Horizon" was adapted from the Indian saga "The Adiparvan". The sagas were based on previously published adaptations and had undergone significant changes from the original versions. This inconsistency highlights the problems of identifying and classifying narratives based on province of origin. The common practice in Indonesian folklore studies is to identify folklore based on ethnic group, such as exemplified by Danandjaja (1994; 1995). This can be problematic in general, and is even more when including political and geographical units such as province. One ethnic group or culture may be spread across several provinces, with the reverse also true, i.e. one province may include different ethnic groups meaning that there may be overlaps and inaccuracies in identification and classification. The trickster tale Si Kabayan, for instance, is generally identified as a Sundanese folktale (for example Danandjaja 1980; Hidayat and Desa 2019; Humaira 2020). The Sundanese ethnic group is spread across two provinces, West Java and Banten, with the latter initially part of the former and only recently established as a sepa-

rate province. However, in this government's collection Si Kabayan was identified as a folktale originating from West Java Province. These inconsistencies also suggest that the movement is not so much concerned with the classification of the tales as it is with the national agenda of inculcating national values and strengthening national integrity.

CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of the Indonesian government's 2016 movement to collect and publish folk narratives has confirmed how folklore has stood the test of time and continues to be used as an invaluable source for the exploration of national values and the creation of national identity. The digital form in which the tales are published and redistributed to general audiences also shows that folklore has retained its importance and "has formed distinct patterns of action, employing other media such as print, electronics, drawing, photography, movies, and digital technology" (Zipes 2012: 20). The versatility of folk narratives allows for their manipulation in service of the national agenda of inculcating so-called national values and strengthening national identity and integrity.

The way the folk narratives were collected, selected, and appropriated by the Indonesian government for the inculcation of national values in children's education is truly reminiscent of Herder's romantic nationalism. The national values disseminated through the published folk narratives are targeted at children as part of the future. The didactic approach to the writing and rewriting of folk narratives can be strongly perceived in the published works. The message that is given by diverse folk narratives is unity in diversity, as per the Indonesian national motto, in which the folk narratives serve as a tool for the union. The nation embraces difference, seeing it as the foundation of the nation and of national culture. The movement is expected to strengthen national integrity, especially against the threat of national disintegration and the influence of foreign cultures.

However, it has to be noted that despite the claim to have collected folk narratives representing all the provinces that make the nation-state of Indonesia, the movement can be said not to have succeeded. Some inconsistencies were found with regards to the number of narratives taken from each province and the inclusion of all provinces in the collection. Some of the published narratives were also found not to be originally from local ethnic groups but were foreign folktales translated into Indonesian.

The present paper has ultimately focused on analysing the movement as a whole from the perspective of romantic nationalism. It does not conduct any content analysis on the folk narratives. Future researchers wishing to unravel national values promoted in the folk narratives are strongly encouraged to do so. In addition, the province-based identification and classification of Indonesian folklore is worth further investigation, creating possibilities for future study to pursue this as a topic. Future researchers may also be interested in investigating the folklore literary movement from the perspective of the cultural politics of the modern world, such as in the context of "investing in creativity" to protect and promote diverse cultural expressions (UNESCO 2005).

NOTES

1 This regulation was linked with the previous movement of national character building launched by the Ministry of National Education in 2009, as reinforced by Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System. The Directorate of Internalisation of Values and Cultural Diplomacy further translated this regulation into the inculcation of national character traits through Indonesian folklore as stipulated in the *Cultural and National Character Development and Education* (*Pengembangan dan Pendidikan Budaya dan Karakter Bangsa: Pedoman Sekolah*, 2009) written and published by the Centre for Curriculum and Textbooks, Research and Development Agency, Ministry of National Education (2009).

2 The competition was held by the Ministry of Education through its Directorate of Internalisation of Values and Cultural Diplomacy, Directorate General of Culture. The narratives collected from the competition were subsequently submitted to the Centre for Curriculum and Books in coordination with Head of the Centre for Development, Head of Teaching and Learning Section, and Head of National Literacy Movement Module and Teaching Materials Sub-Section, all under the same ministry, to be further evaluated for their appropriateness for publication and use within the context of the national character-building curriculum. They were thus published based on the Decree of the Head of the Centre for Curriculum and Books, Ministry of Education Number 12xxx/H3/3/PB/2016 dated 30 November 2016 on the stipulation of 120 titles of folklore books (batch iv) as non-textbooks that meet the eligibility requirements and can be used as learning resources at the level of primary and secondary education.

3 The information can be found on the publisher's cataloguing publication. The folk narratives are accessible on the official website of Language Development and Cultivation Agency.

4 Some of the English translated versions of the books can be accessed on the website of Loyola College High School Library by manually searching for each English title.

5 An adapted Arabic written script used to transcribe some languages in Southeast Asian countries.

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