

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of Study

Ethics refers to principles of right and wrong, especially in relation to specific moral choices that affect others. Right and wrong become anchor points that keep us away from the relativity of moral values. In ethics, we believe something is right or wrong because the society around us says it is. In certain contexts ethics tend to be consistent, but it can also be different between contexts. As a civilized citizen, having good ethics can help make the society better, guiding us in making the right decisions, even success in business. Ultimately, ethics is important not so that "we can understand" philosophically, but rather so we can "improve how we live" (Lafollette, 2007).

Ethics plays a critical role in shaping individuals' behavior in society. Unfortunately, in today's society, there has been a degradation of ethics because of the changes in the environment and cultural norms. The degradation of ethics can give serious impacts to society. The public, whether it is business, friendship or any kind of interaction, functions because humans rely on a varying level of trust, respect for others, and cooperation (Cordeiro, 2003). To prevent worse degradation of ethics in the future, we can teach ethics to children as the next generation through something that is easily understood. Children should be taught about ethics at an early age because they learn about moral rules at the same time.

They give their judgement for something that they saw. It is important for schools to have the Primary Ethics Curriculum. The approaches are Consequentialism, Deontology, and Virtue (<http://rockethics.psu.edu/this-is-the-rock/news/children-and-the-development-of-ethical-decision-making>). One of the media to convey these ethical lessons is through children's literature.

Children's short stories can be divided into classical and contemporary. Classical short stories are those written throughout the world by both major and minor short story writers in the early centuries until the beginning of 20th century. While contemporary stories are written in the early 20th century to the present day. Classical literature tends to be written by and for people from high society or the elites. It usually also follows a strict set of rules in writing based on cultures and beliefs. Modern literature, on the other hand, includes a diverse number of writers from different social backgrounds. It mixes different types and qualities of literary work in order to form a creative work.

In children's stories, from the beginning of the story until the end of it, we will find a timeless and ever-changing world, where nothing is impossible and dreams can become reality if we believe it. Many kinds of children's stories that came in lots of variations usually convey moral values. It also conveys the social lessons through skillful narrative and the characterization in the story. Some stories sometimes related to certain cultures. Such as folktales functioned to educate and sometimes frighten children into compliance. This is intended to avoid wrong actions. The moral values and ethics interpret in the stories remind us about the realities restricted by prevailing norms.

This study focuses on how ethics are presented in children's short stories, both classical and contemporary. As one of the moral value presented, ethics can be different in the details, based on contexts. Culture, social habits, and education have the main impact on ethics and moral value. Therefore, people from different culture tend to have different ethics. In story writing, ethics are concerned related to the moral of the story. What happens at the time of writing can be the background of the story because it is the inspiration of the author, including the ethics that prevailed at that time. Some stories give details based on the author's cultural background. From the varieties of ethics in the story, we can take the moral value and apply it in our daily life.

The classical children's short stories being analyzed are Little Red Riding Hood wrote in 1697 by Charles Perrault; Hansel and Gretel wrote in 1812 by Brothers Grimm; and The Little Match Girl wrote in 1845 by Hans Christian Andersen. The contemporary children's short stories, mostly written in 2014, are The Adventure of Bird by Bob Harding-Jones, Naughty Noel by Nathan Oser, and The Sweet Smelling Skunk by Artie Knapp. Each of the stories chosen above has its own ethics and moral value based on what was believed at the time.

Educate someone, especially children to have good behavior can be through various ways. Good behavior is associated with moral values such as honesty, respect, generosity, politeness, etc. But ethics has a big role, related to social norms, such as virtue ethics, consequentialism, ethics of care, role ethics, etc. Basically, moral values are the standard of right and wrong. Meanwhile, ethics are the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human action.

Moral values and ethics can be found in many kinds of literary works. It could be in the form of poems, short stories, drama, or novel. Children's short stories are one of the literary media that is used by parents to teach their children about moral values and ethics. This study chose children's short stories as one of the ways in conveying ethics to children because it is easier to understand.

### **1.2. Research Questions**

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How is ethics presented in classical children's short stories?
2. How is ethics presented in contemporary children's short stories?
3. What are the differences between classical and contemporary children's stories in conveying ethics?

### **1.3. Research Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to analyze:

1. The way classical children's short stories convey the ethics.
2. The way contemporary children's short stories convey the ethics.
3. The differences between classical and contemporary children's stories in conveying ethics.

#### **1.4. The Scope of The Study**

This research analyzed 3 classical children's short stories and 3 contemporary children's short stories. The Classical children's short stories are: 1) The Little Red Riding Hood; 2) Hansel and Gretel; 3) The Little Match Girl. The Contemporary children's short stories are: 1) The Adventures of Bird; 2) Naughty Noel; 3) The Sweet Smelling Skunk. From the chosen stories above, the writer focuses on the words, utterances, narrations, and dialogues that indicate ethics.

#### **1.5. The Significance of The Study**

The study focuses on ethics being conveyed through children's short stories. Moreover, the study is expected to achieve the research purposes, produce a systematic report, and can be useful for further research in general. The target readers for this study are parents and teachers in order to teach their children and students about ethics. In other words, short stories can be one of the media to educate children. Meanwhile, for advanced students who are doing research related to this topic, this study is expected to be a source of reference.