

## MORAL VALUES TOWARD BAILEY'S SELECTED SHORT STORIES: AN ANALYSIS OF PRAGMATIC APPROACH

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**Abstract:** *This research aimed to describe the moral values in Bailey's selected short stories entitled *The Bird*, *The Little Boy Who Wanted the Castle*, and *The Camel and The Pig*. This research uses a descriptive qualitative, and pragmatic approach that focuses on readers' points of view. The data were collected through a questionnaire given to school students in Makassar. This study also applied reception theory. In this case, readers are free to respond to a literary text, including reflection on moral value in the stories. The results of this research reveal that there are a lot of moral values in Bailey's short stories, which the readers identify. The moral values are steadfastness, love and affection, kind-hearted, cooperativeness, bravery, humbleness, and thankfulness. This research results also show that most respondents significantly responded to the moral values using their experiences and feelings. Moreover, this research proves that reading literary works can be used as a teaching method, especially in teaching moral values to the readers.*

**Keywords:** moral value, pragmatic approach, *The Bird*, *The Little Boy Who Wanted the Castle*, *The Camel and The Pig*

### INTRODUCTION

Reading is important. There are several reasons to support this statement. First, it is good for health; it serves as entertainment to relieve stress and help the brain's performance, especially the brain memory. Second, it can establish a person's moral values. Mackay (in Wirahyuni, 2017, p. 4) states, "Our lives change in two ways: through the people we meet and the books we read. This statement strengthens the evidence that good reading generally contains good moral values and aims to impact the readers. It also explains that people have chances to make reflection and meditation by reading.

Through reading activities, a reader can choose many kinds of reading materials. One of them is literary work with some segmentations, and this research is limited to children's literature. Children's literature plays an essential role in shaping the mentality of children from the very early years of their life. This statement is supported by Arbuthnot (in Indriani, 2011, p. 1), who states that "children's literature is made to broaden their mind, enrich their knowledge and expand their social awareness."

Although the target readers of children's literature are children, adults can also enjoy it and make the genre their favorite. There are many writers for children's literature. One is

Carolyn Sherwin Bailey, whose short stories highly value morality. Moreover, she was the winner of The John Newbery Medal in 1947. The John Newbery Medal is a literary award given by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association (ALA). The award is given to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

The researchers use Bailey's selected short story by the consideration that her works have more value than the other writers because she was awarded TJN's medal. In addition, there is an interesting point that Bailey is an American writer, whereas her works are read by Indonesian, especially Makassar students. The differences between author and reader nationalities are interesting to see whether the values of the short story are acceptable to Indonesian readers or it is unacceptable.

Based on the explanation above, in this study, the researchers investigate the moral value in Bailey's selected short stories, "The Bird", "The Little Boy Who Wanted the Castle", and "The Camel and The Pig" taken from *Tell Me Another Story*, based on the readers' point of view. This purpose in literary analysis is known as a pragmatic approach, specifically in terms of reception. In this case, readers are free to respond to a literary text and its moral value. The finding of this study is expected to give an optional dimension to treating students' moral perception of literary works. On the other hand, this study hopefully gives readers experiences in reading American short stories to enrich their reading materials and hope they can learn about moral values and apply them in their life.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

There have been some previous studies that are related to this study. First is Squire (in Segers, 2000, p. 77), who conducted a survey using four short stories. Fifty-two respondents read the short stories. The themes of those short stories are about common personal development. Squire used content analysis to know students' responses by composing categories of value judgment. The most important result of this study proved that having different sexes did not affect the readers' responses. The other study was conducted by Ummah et al. (2020), who discussed the moral values found in *The Last Leaf* short story. Moral values were identified by using sociological theory. This study reveals some moral values in the short story: tolerance, fairness, belief, kind-heartedness, honesty, and responsibility.

## Short Stories

Hendi (in Kusmayadi, 2007, p. 32) says, “Short stories are short narratives that contain a single narrative.” It is relevant to Badudu (in Kusmayadi, 2007, p. 34), who states that the “short story is the leading story and concentrates on the events, which events that develop the event itself.” Kennedy (1991, p. 148) also defines a short story as:

A short story is more than a sequence of happenings. A finely wrought short story has the richest and conciseness of an excellent lyric poem. Spontaneous and natural as the finished story may seem, the writer has written it so artfully that there is meaning in heaven, seemingly casual speeches, and apparently trivial details.

For many years, the existence of short stories has been discussed. Similar to the novel, the short story talks about human experiences. As a part of narrative prose, a short story also contains intrinsic aspects. The intrinsic aspect deals with the aspects of literature such as setting, character, plot, and theme. The element of fiction that reveals the place and time of events in the story is called the setting. Nurgiyantoro (1995, p. 241) says that:

The breathing the air at the time – reader entered imaginary world. Refers to setting of time, a story always happens in a particular time. An author sometimes explicitly mentions the time the story happens in literary works. So, the story happens at a specific time. However, sometimes the author does not explain the time clearly, which is called general setting.

Based on Nurgiyantoro’s statement, the setting is the general location and the historical time in which the action occurs in a narrative or dramatic work. The other intrinsic element of the short story is character. Characters hold an essential role from the beginning until the end of the story. When we read a fiction work, we will find the characters presented in it. Marsh (1995, p. 19) says that “the characters are the people in a text. They are part of the ordinary life that you meet as you read”.

Another intrinsic aspect of a short story is the plot. A plot is a chain of events formed by phases of events to interlace a story. The plot has conflict as the opposition of two persons. They may argue, fight, etc. Williams (1984, p. 51) supports this statement, who states “conflict as the roof of the unstable situation at the start of the plot.

The theme is also essential in the short story. It is the subject of a talk or piece of writing. Gill (2006, p. 195) says every fiction or literary work has a theme. It is the central idea of the story. On the other hand, Marsh (1995, p. 2) mentions that the “theme is subject which interests the writer and which is discussed in the text.” Generally, the theme of a literary text is about daily life. It is supported by Sumardjo & Saini (1991, p. 56), who mentions that themes may

be a problem of life, an author's view of life, and their comments toward life. A theme in a story is explicit. It is stated somewhere in the story, either by the author or one of the characters.

### **Moral Value**

The moral is a word derived from Latin *moris*, which means custom, habitual, values, and role of life (Bertens, 2005, p. 4). He stated that one perspective on the development of morality entailed the construction of judgments about justice, equality, and cooperation.

According to Schwartz & Boehnke (2004, pp. 230–255), morality is related to dealing with or capable of distinguishing between right or wrong conduct principles. Standards habit concerning right or wrong in conduct. Meanwhile, values are the social principles, goals, or standards held or accepted by an individual, a class, a society, etc. In short, moral value is the relation of belief, behaviour/-and attitude of each individual.

Buzan (in Syamaun et al., 2019, p. 278) has categorized moral values into eleven types. They are described as follows:

#### ***Bravery***

The Oxford dictionary defines 'brave' as: "*Ready to face and endure danger or pain, showing courage.*". Purnomo (in Syamaun et al., 2019, p. 278) states that bravery means "the principle in willing to face danger, pain, or trouble, not afraid, having courage. It implies fearlessness in meeting danger or difficulty".

#### ***Humbleness***

Ghosh (2002) said that humbleness is likely to refine, sharpen, and broaden one's thinking, keep one's mind clear and open to the unlimited possibilities in nature, contain selfishness, and prepare one for ethical decision-making in the real-world situations.

#### ***Honesty***

The meaning of honesty, in general, is synchronized between words and actions or speech and reality, but some experts give different meanings (Suud et al., 2020, p. 101). *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI) states that honesty means not lying, not cheating, being sincere, and expressing the character of someone who has an honest and straight heart (KBBI, 2016), 2002).

#### ***Steadfastness***

Nisak (2014, p. 19) mentions that steadfastness is "a kind of someone's characteristic needed to reach a dream." It can be concluded that steadfastness is defined as the resoluteness of human attitudes in making a decision.

### ***Love and Affection***

According to Merriam-Webster (2021), the term “affection” is; (a) a moderate feeling or emotion, tender attachment, fondness, or (b) the action of affecting. Botirovna (2009, p. 9) underlines that affection is an expression of personal feeling of love or caress to people, animals, and things you love and respect. Affection may be expressed with words, phrases, and facial expressions, with the help of touching one’s head or patting them with love and care. The main thing in affection is the intense feeling of love. We think one cannot use affection for somebody or something if they do not love them.

### ***Sympathetic to Others***

Hornby (2015, p. 1514) defines sympathetic as “the feeling of being sorry for somebody. It shows that we understand and care about the problems of the other people”. In other words, sympathetic concerns about someone in a bad situation.

### ***Cooperativeness***

Merriam-Webster (2021b) defines cooperativeness as willing to be helpful by doing what someone wants or asks for. Hornby (2015, p. 323) states, “cooperativeness involves the fact of doing something together or working together toward a shared aim.”

### ***Thankfulness***

Hornby (2015) defines the word thankful as “pleased and relieved.” Both of those are great feelings. Everyone wants to be pleased and relieved. Thankfulness is “a big appreciation about what has been received by someone from God or other people” (Nisak, 2014, p. 20). Usually, this action refers to the correlation between God and humans.

### ***Trustworthiness***

Trustworthiness refers to the quality of being reliable and truthful. To be trusted by others, someone must do good things such as telling the truth, being responsible

### ***Sincerity***

Yahya (in Syamaun et al., 2019, p. 278) states that sincerity is “acting by complying to Allah’s orders without considering any personal benefits or any expectations in return.”

### ***Kind-hearted***

Merriam-Webster (2021c) mentions that being kind-hearted is having or showing a sympathetic nature. A kind-hearted person likes other people and always wants to help them.

## **Pragmatic Approach/ Reception Theory**

Sell (1994, p. 31) states that the literary pragmatic looks at both writer and reader (implied by the text) “as being aspects of the real writer and reader, between whom there is an interaction

in the real world.” Horatius (in Teeuw, 2020, p. 51) mentions that Art must combine *utile* and *dulce*. *Utile* means useful, and *dulce* means interesting. The values of *utile* and *dulce* are given by readers. The theory used to know readers’ response toward literary works is reception. Reception derives from the word *recipere* (Latin). It is interpreted as acceptance from readers. Pradopo (2021, p. 218) says that reception is the science of beauty based on reader responses to literature. Reception theory refers to the attempt to account for a single text that can be interpreted differently by different readers.

Iser’s theory of reception explains the potential meaning without limiting itself to certain aspects because the meaning of the text happens dynamically. It is similar to Endraswara (2003, p. 125), who mentions that the reception shows readers of literary texts distinctly, so the responses by the readers are different. The difference in experience will determine the meaning and reception of literary texts.

From the explanation above, this study follows Iser’s idea. The procedure of this study consists of the essential point that the result depends on people’s interests or views. In this case, there is no authority to determine whether something is true or false; because everybody may have different responses. So, the readers possibly give positive or negative receptions toward short stories.

## **METHOD**

The method of this study is a descriptive qualitative research based on interviewing and observing data. The researchers asked the readers to read the selected story and instructed them to reflect on the moral values in the stories. After that, the data were categorized based on the eleven moral values explained by Buzan’s classification.

In collecting data, the researchers follow Endraswara (2003, p. 126), who states that synchronic data collection takes two steps: first, readers or a predetermined group read the literary work. Then the readers answer the oral questions (interviewing) or written questions. The answers from the readers should be analyzed according to the form of the question. If using a questionnaire, the data can be tabulated. While the researchers used the interview method, it can be qualitatively analyzed. After that, the readers will be asked to interpret the literary work they have read. The results of the reader’s interpretation will be analyzed using the qualitative method.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Short Story 1: “The Bird”

This story was about Serozha’s birthday when he received many different gifts. His uncle gave him a gift that he prized above all the rest; it was a trap for snaring birds. He ran into the house to show his mother the trap. His mother said: “It is not a good plaything. What do you want to do with birds? Why do you want to torture them?” “I am going to put them in a cage,” Serozha said. “They will sing, and I will feed them.” The story ended when “Serozha went to his cage, he saw the bird lying on its back, with its legs crossed, and all stiff. After that Serozha never again snared birds” (Bailey, 1918a, pp. 229–230).

Most readers say that this story has good moral values. The moral values are “do not torture the animal,” “take care of your pet,” “animals have their own life and deserve freedom,” and “listen to your mother.” This response related to the love and affection aspect based on Buzan types. In the significant meaning of moral values, one reader says, “better to let someone go than you take care of them, but in the end, you just ignore them.” It is a good comment because the statement is out of the characters of the story. It proves that the reader tried to involve the story by reflecting the bird as the symbol of a human being and relevant with kind-hearted by Buzan.

On the other hand, steadfastness refers to the response that “sometimes you want is not always the best.” This story is not only about the pet but also many things in our life. In contrast, some of the readers dislike this story because the ending of the story is not a happy one. The other negative response comes from one respondent who said that “it is a bad moral value because his uncle gives trap and it teaches the children to torture animal in an earlier age.”

### Short Story 2: “The Little Boy Who Wanted the Castle”

“The Little Boy Who Wanted the Castle” tells about the boy who decided to find a castle based on her picture book. He told his mother about it, for he always told her everything, and she smiled down into his face as she buttoned his coat. “Are you sure you can find a castle?” she asked. “Oh, yes indeed, very sure,” the boy answered. “And if I can’t, I’ll ask someone on the road, and he’ll be able to tell me.” In his adventure, he asked some people where the castle was. At the end of the story, the boy only found his own house. He had come back by way of the turns in the road. It was his pretty garden that he saw and his fine supper that he smelled. His dear father and mother waited at the door, with their arms outstretched to greet him. “You are the king and queen,” shouted the boy, “always good and kind!” “And this is our castle,”

laughed his mother. “Come in, my little Prince. The feast is waiting for you” (Bailey, 1918c, pp. 11–14)

The majority of respondents give positive responses to moral values in the story. The moral value is kids need to be brave to do adventure. This response includes of bravery aspect of Buzan. Next, some respondents said “real castle is home,” “the better place is home,” “be grateful in your life,” “we don’t need something perfect or luxury, but we need something that makes us feel happy,” “we don’t need a castle to live on because we have our own home with good feast and parents that love us so much,” “we should appreciate everything that we had because not all people can have what we have.” In this case, those comments are related to the thankfulness aspect. The love and affection aspects are also reflected in readers’ responses: “King and queen do not always use crowns because the true king and queen come from the heart,” and “don’t leave your home and parents because parents are everything.”

### **Short Story 3: “The Camel and The Pig”**

This story about a camel and a pig chanced to meet in a far country, and as neither had seen the other before, they began at once to boast. “The greatest distinction and the best in the world come from being tall,” said the camel. “You are in the wrong, Camel,” argued the pig. “There is nothing in the world so important as being short. “This matter must be settled by a test,” the camel said. “If I fail to prove the truth of what I feel about myself, I will give up my hump.” “That is well-spoken,” replied the pig. “And if I cannot show you the truth of what I have said, I will give up my snout.” In the story’s ending, the two thought the matter over and decided that the camel had reason to keep his hump and the pig to keep his snout. It is good to be tall when height is needed; it is also sometimes necessary to be short (Bailey, 1918b, pp. 295–297).

The moral values given by the readers are “sometimes good be tall and sometimes good be short depend on condition,” “everybody has plus-minus,” and “grateful of ourselves because God made us always have a reason of something.” Those comments are related to humbleness, cooperativeness, and thankfulness aspects. The interesting one is a respondent who says, “there is a symbol of religion that camel is identical with Arabian or Muslim and the pig is similar to non-Muslim. It means that this story teaches us how to be tolerant of religion.

## CONCLUSION

Bailey's selected short stories entitled "The Bird", "The Little Boy Who Wanted the Castle", and "The Camel and The Pig" are good reading materials for kids and teenagers because they are interesting and educating. Based on the result and discussion above, the researchers conclude that some moral values exist in Bailey's selected short stories. Those moral values, namely steadfastness, love and affection, kind-hearted, cooperativeness, bravery, humbleness, and thankfulness.

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