

REPUBLISHING FOLKTALES

Their Audiences, Readers, and Influences in Modern Indonesian Literature

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Abstract

This paper presents an exploration of the republishing of traditional stories or folktales, most of which are traditionally oral, into printed form. This republishing activity has resulted in some changes in the stories, including the narrative's structure as well as writers' interpretation of the stories. As such, this paper also explains other domains that are also potentially affected by this activity. The narrative of the stories, the profile of the audience and reader, and the use of different media, particularly in the area of contemporary publishing and writing, development in Indonesia, comprise these domains. Furthermore, this paper investigates the republication of folktales, by publishing houses, in correlation with the creation of the reading public of such published literary works in West Sumatra. In such cases, the republished folktales have been changed to suit the book's form, and resulted to alterations from their original version. Some writers in modern literary works have also adopted and explored these traditional stories based on the tales' popularity to gain more readers of the printed versions. Publishing houses, at the same time, play an important role in this print literary production. The discussion also suggests that the republishing of traditional literature has significantly contributed to the shaping of folktales' audience and reader's profile.

Keywords

adaptation, printed story, traditional literature, transformation, West Sumatra

About the Author

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and Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*" (published in *K@ta*, 12.1, 2011), "Revisiting a Private Publishing House in the Indonesian Colonial Period: Penjiaran Ilmoe" (published in *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 38.111, 2010), "Roman Pergaoelan, Penulisan Sejarah, dan Kanonisasi Sastra Indonesia" (published in *Humaniora*, 21.1, 2009). He is currently a PhD student at Leiden University Institute for Area Studies in the Netherlands. His main research interests revolve around the history of Indonesian literature, creative industries, literary infrastructure, and cultural policies.

REPUBLISHING FOLKTALES

The republishing of folktales from oral form into printed form has raised concerns in the field of literature.¹ This activity has connected traditional stories to modernity by transforming the classical world surrounding the folktales into the world (and era) of printing. To a greater extent, the folktales have served as important sources for publishers. These folktales are published because they have potential readers; these readers originate from oral literature aficionados. Traditional stories (such as legends, myths, and fables) are referred to as consisting of a genre of literary works famous for being published and republished. These stories are transferred from one generation to another in the form of oral literature and later in the form of published books. The survival of these stories depend on their being delivered to society and educational institutions such as family, clan, school, and on a wider level, national television and radio programs in the form of drama or storytelling. However, the effort to preserve the traditional stories has resulted in recent concerns from various parties, including the publishing industry. The following section discusses the use of old stories republished in connection with the creation of a reader public, as well as the changes and continuation of literary development in West Sumatra.

Each society or community has stories to gather their community members, formed in various genres such as oral literature, traditional performance, or relief and craft. The stories are transferred from one generation to another through different mediums: oral, written, recorded, and audio-visual forms (enhanced by the development of media technology). The folktales exist within society as long as society uses and transfers the stories in daily life. In West Sumatra, an Indonesian province located in the western coast of Sumatra Island, the aesthetic form of oral literature has been acknowledged in a variety of genres; folktales, in particular those in the form of oral literature, are regarded as closely related to important social events such as public gatherings and ceremonies. As noted in Drakard's *A Kingdom of Words: Language and Power in Sumatra*, the language has been used in the *tambo* and royal letters and has significant power within society and more importantly in the relation between *adat* rulers and people in the region and other kingdoms and countries outside Minangkabau (117-257). Folktales, more particular in the form of oral tradition and literature, are a central medium for the Minangkabau society in their customary celebrations, rituals, and education. When discussing the art context of *sijobang* (an oral performance specifically exist in Payakumbuh), Phillips, notes that:

[T]he Minangkabau admire eloquence and enjoy both practising and listening to various kinds of verbal art. These range from such traditional forms as ritual speeches exchanged at weddings and other ceremonies, open-air theatre (*randai*), and the singing

of tales (*kaba*), to religious homilies and political harangues, and include, at the less formal end of the scale, the rhetoric of coffee-shop politicians and the fluent sales-talk of market traders. *Sijobang*, like other traditional stories (*kaba*), thus forms part of a spectrum of oral entertainments enjoyed by the Minangkabau. For the young, it is also part of their education: Khaidir Anwar, in discussing the acquisition of verbal skills by boys and girls in his village, describes the learning of *kaba* as the most important component of literary education among the Minangkabau. (2)

For the performers, who are positioned as representatives of their clan or people communicating or interacting with other clans, have privileges and are honored by their people based on their abilities and skills in oral performances.

In general, there are two categories of oral performances in West Sumatra; some of these are spread widely throughout the Minangkabau such as *randai*, *bagurau* and *salawat dulang*. On the other hand, there are also those which only exist in certain places, such as *sijobang* and *tupai janjang*. However, certain oral literatures only exist in certain places but could be performed in other places. This is based on the theme of stories that adhere with the forms or names of the performances. A story from a region might not be acceptable historically in other places. This can be also caused by the fact that people in certain places have different interpretations and beliefs toward a story from other regions. In terms of their themes, the oral literature performed in West Sumatra has Islamic values, such as *salawat dulang*. Islamic-based performances usually convey Islamic values aimed to educate the public. Meanwhile, non-Islamic based performances are performed to entertain audience, an example of which is *bagurau*. These two types of performances, in addition to the fact that Minangkabau is a matrilineal society, result in particular characteristics of oral performances in West Sumatra or Minangkabau compared to oral performances in other places in Indonesia (Amir, Zuriati and Anwar 25-31, 43-200; Amir 19-21).

Kaba, a feature of traditional literature, can be narrated in *pantun* as well as delivered in *randai* (a traditional Minangkabau drama). Its performers gather in a circle, surrounded by their audience. The performers move clockwise around in each alteration scene of story, and while some of performers in the center act or tell the story, the rest sit in the circle (Junus 400).² The oral performances are mostly held at night, after *Isha* praying (roughly after eight o'clock in the evening) until dawn (recently based on the local circumstances, some forms of public entertainment are limited to end at around two o'clock in the morning), located in a village's open-air stage or arena. It may also take place in the terrace or front yard of the house. Some performances are purposely requested by a family, clan, or village in special ceremonies. Audiences are composed by those who have been

invited by the ceremonial hosts, as well as those who hear the agenda by word of mouth, and depending on the type of celebration or ritual.

A study on the Minangkabau's folktales conducted by Djamaris has shown a general depiction of folktales' forms. Djamaris chronicles certain phases of literature in Minangkabau. The first phase is oral literature consisting of *kaba* (prose) and *cerita prosa liris* (lyrical prose). The second phase is written stories in the form of manuscripts. This comprises stories that were hand-written in *Jawi* (Malay Arabic) and Roman alphabets. The third phase includes written stories in the form of books. During this phase, the stories have been printed and published by publication houses throughout West Sumatra and other places in Indonesia, as well as those in Singapore and Malaysia (Djamaris 4-9). However, in my view, the categorization does not exist in a separate timeline. For example, in the third phase, the printed and published works do not instantly replace oral performance/literature. Apparently, oral literature is still performed within the society in this age of print technology. My opinion stands closer to the explanations of Sweeney in his "Professional Malay Story-Telling" and *Authors and Audiences in Traditional Malay Literature* and McLuhan in his *Printing and Social Change*, when discussing the story and audience in relation to the transformation into the text and reader. That is, there is no clear separation between the existence of oral and written forms of the story, just as there is no clear separation among these and their public. Both the audience and reader of a story, in its oral and printed forms, could be the same person. From a different perspective, someone among the audience might have never read the print version, or perhaps might have only read the story without having watched or heard its oral form.

The changing medium of stories from oral into written form, however, has brought some disadvantages in terms of the uses of oral tradition within society. Sweeney, in another work states that the Malay oral stories have an important function in society: "[O]f the most importance in an oral society, however, they are essential for the preservation and transmission of knowledge. . . In an oral society, however, if discourse were limited to the relatively ephemeral language of everyday conversation, that society would find difficult to survive" ("Literacy and the Epic in the Malay World" 20). Oral literature, which is performed for the public in special occasions, is mostly used as a public sphere for members of society to transmit their social, historical, and cultural values. Thus, regarding the written form of oral stories, Sweeney states further that it:

would have seemed pointless to preserve in writing that material which had not been considered worth preserving in the prewriting era, that is, speech not processed for storage in the stylized form. Thus, in the context of the Malay-speaking world, when we speak of the displacement of the oral tradition by writing and the dwindling role of the

oral specialist, it becomes clear that we are particularly concerned with the shrinkage, transformation, or depreciation in importance of the enclave of contrived speech which was his domain. ("Literacy and the Epic in the Malay World" 21)

The folktales are usually recognized by the readers because they are told, performed, recited, or read to/for them since infancy. It is also common for a multicultural society such as Indonesia to recognize other folktales of other societies. The sense of multicultural awareness is encouraged by the teaching and reading of literature in schools or libraries. To strengthen this familiarity of other folktales, reading materials in schools also include folktales. For instance, a contest of rewriting folktales has been held throughout Indonesia, particularly by the Office of Tourism and Culture, Language Office, and the Office of Education and Culture. Still, the transformation of stories from oral literature into written and printed form brings some changes regarding its literary values and other social aspects of the literature. Such changes affect not only literary transformation from oral into textual, but the adaptation into other media such as animation, movie, comic, or recording as well. A study on the adaptation of *Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* (Shallot and Garlic) story,³ which is similar to Europe's Cinderella story, shows that some changes are generated by the adaptation process from an oral and written story into an animated film (Ali et al. 311-332). The story is currently widely spread in Malay society, especially in Indonesia and Malaysia in various plot versions.

FROM ORAL TO TEXT: FOUR PUBLISHING HOUSES AND ONE FAMILY

Some of the Minangkabau folktales have been composed and published by Kristal Multimedia, among others. To illustrate, most of the stories in Minangkabau are available in different forms, such as in traditional performance, manuscript, recording (cassette and compact disc), and printed material. Ekadjati et. al. note that 83 manuscripts, consisting of stories, law, and the history of Minangkabau have been transcribed and translated from Arabic into Indonesian, some of which have already been published (406-443). Currently, there are still thousands of manuscripts including old stories that are kept in *surau* (prayer room) or as part of personal collections.

According to Abdullah, the story of *Cinduo Mato*, transcribed and transliterated by van der Toorn, was published in 1891 by *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, in the 45th volume (2). This published story only consists one-third of the complete story. The same story was also arranged and published in Malaysia by Datuk Garang from Tanah Datar in 1904. Moreover, there are more than seven published versions of the *Cinduo Mato*

story. More recently, the story has also been adapted into a comic, animation movie, prose, drama, and poetry. There are twelve manuscripts of *Cindua Mato* kept by the KITLV (now part of Leiden University library collection) and the microfilm copies have also been deposited in the Indonesian National Library in Jakarta, together with hundreds of other stories (Djamaris 201-204). The story of *Cindua Mato* is famous in its oral performance as well as in its published book form. *Cindua Mato* was published by at least five different publishing houses: Balai Pustaka (1982), Balai Buku (1985), Pustaka Indonesia (1987), The Department of Education and Culture (1980), and Kristal Multimedia (2004). In addition, the story was also written to be performed for theater by Wisran Hadi, the founder of theater group Bumi, who was also a director, writer, and cultural activist in West Sumatra. Additionally, it was published as one of four plays in Hadi's play script anthology entitled *Empat Sandiwara Orang Melayu*. In its musical performance, the story appears in an anthology of opera script written by Nazif Basir, *Malin Kundang dan Naskah-naskah Lainnya*.

The widely known story of *Cinduo Mato*, in written form, was composed by Syamsuddin St. Rajo Endah, in the Minangkabau language, and published by CV Pustaka Indonesia in 1960 and later reprinted in 1982. The same story was also republished by CV Balai Buku Indonesia (second printing) in 1985. Both publishing houses were located in Bukittinggi, and in fact were family businesses. From my investigation, in connecting these publishers and the authors of the published book, it turns out that the composer, Syamsuddin, was actually the owner of both publishing houses. This fact shows that the effort in composing, printing, distributing, and preserving the stories is a family campaign, specifically through establishing different publishing houses within one passion and purpose.

Another printing and publishing house founded by the family was Syamza Offset, a company that had bookshop, printing, and publishing businesses. Syamza was an abbreviation of the names of two brothers, Syamsuddin Mahyuddin and Zainuddin Mahyuddin. Syamza published traditional stories as well as Islamic books including a Qur'anic thematic *tafsir* (interpretation) that was popular in the late 1970s. Initiated in 1982, Balai Buku Indonesia had its markets in Bukittinggi and neighboring districts such as Payakumbuh, Padangpanjang, and Padang. Its first two published books were *Cindua Mato* and *Anggun Nan Tungga*, which were, in contrast to their original versions, published by Pustaka Indonesia in the Minangkabau language and had been translated into Bahasa Indonesia. It seems that the endeavor to publish the stories in Bahasa Indonesia aimed to expand the market. The translation of stories into Bahasa Indonesia by the publisher, however, attracted reactions from readers. As noted by Salman, readers were disappointed by the fact that the stories had been translated into Bahasa Indonesia, which meant that readers who were Minangkabau but lived outside West Sumatra had no

opportunity to read the stories in its original language (22-27). According to Arfizal, the response from readers was communicated personally, telling that the translation was not fully correct. In response to the objection from readers, the publisher then withdrew the books from bookshops. Since then, the published stories by Balai Buku Indonesia and Kristal Multi Media are only in the Minangkabau language. Nonetheless, the use of Minangkabau language in the published stories causes the limitation of readers for only the Minangkabaunese, or those who speak the language.

Those three publishers were then succeeded by Arfizal Indramaharaja, the son of Zainuddin Mahyuddin, who established Kristal Multimedia in 2000, located in Bukittinggi. Arfizal and his wife, Nielyar Wisma, first established Balai Buku Indonesia in July 15, 1982. Balai Buku Indonesia focused on printing as its main business. Three years later, Arfizal started to publish folktales, with colorful illustration in its covers, which had been previously published under his father's publishing house, Pustaka Indonesia. It is worth noting here that since secondary school, Arfizal had already been working at his father's company. As such, he knew by experience how to run his newly founded company. His initiative to publish more folktales led him to establish his own publishing house, where he implemented his own changes, particularly in regard to the company's organizational structure, recruiting new employees, providing new printing machines, and working in new office. Eventually, Arfizal changed Balai Buku Indonesia into Kristal Multimedia in May 31, 2000 (Salman 22-26, 36-37). Organizationally, Kristal Multimedia is led by Arfizal Indramaharaja and supported by his staff including Susi Susandra (editor), M. Yunir Chan, Hendri Sumitra, May Chaniago and AR Nizar (illustrators), Nielyar Wisma (finance), and Zakno (marketing).

In the Kristal Multimedia's edition, the copyright is attached to the first edition's publishers; one book (*Kaba Magek Manandin*) is attached to Tsamaratul Ikhwan, one book (*Kaba Siti Baheram*) to Pustaka Arga, and the other sixteen books were devoted to Pustaka Indonesia. Kristal Multimedia still acknowledges the Minang classical series to its first publishers in the cataloguing page of the books. Kristal Multimedia has published about twenty-three books, including literary works and books on Minangkabau culture.⁴ The literary works released by this publisher are a republication of classical Minangkabau stories, which were previously published by Pustaka Indonesia and Balai Buku Indonesia. Until recently, Kristal Multimedia has republished the *Cindua Mato* story multiple times (2003, 2004, 2005, 2014, and in E-book format in 2015). The information I gathered from an interview with Zakno, the staff of Kristal Multimedia, shows that the publisher in fact reprints 200-300 copies of the book for almost every two or three months. The schedule for printing depends on the stock and demand from buyers. That is why there is no exact record of how many times a single title has been reprinted. The marketing

publication of the story could stimulate authors to write and publish similar stories of Minangkabau.⁶ Compared to the 1985's edition's preface, it seems that the publisher has managed to successfully sell the previously published and distributed book. Moreover, the publisher has stressed the importance of republishing a classical story as a way to preserve stories that are traditionally transferred among generations by word of mouth in written form. The publisher has also tried to contribute to the effort of preserving the significant cultural values from the stories by publishing them. It is worth noting that:

It is undeniable that a folktale is already a well-known story for generations, since our forefathers to the next generations. In general the stories comprise of sublime arts and cultural values that we should keep and preserve. The role of publishing house is highly decisive. Without the publishers, probably the stories will be forgotten by next generations. By considering the feeling of responsibility to the mentioned purposes, the book of *Cindua Mato* is republished in the series of Minangkabau Classical Stories. This series also opens the opportunity for our writers and illustrators to continuously increase their works in re-exploring the values of Minangkabau's arts and cultures. (Endah 5, translation mine)⁷

The transformation of folktales from oral literature into written literature is generally accepted by the public, as long as the stories remain the same. Even though in the published books the stories are shortened due to their limited pages, the public still recognizes the stories' main narratives. The similar recognition does not take place for works resulted as adaptation or reinterpretation from the established folktales, which I will discuss in the following section of this essay. The transformation and publication processes have resulted in the selection of certain popular folktales by writers and publishers in considering the market. To illustrate this, consider that from hundreds of folktales, only a few famous folktales are transformed into written form. The popularity of certain folktales is also supported by, among other aspects, the field of literary, historical, and philological studies. These fields of study explore the important information from folktales and oral literature that attract the public's attention. The cases of the published *Kaba Cindua Mato* and *Anggun Nan Tongga*, for examples, are resulted from their connection to the history and social system of Minangkabau society that have been presented by (to name only two) Umar Junus (1984) and Taufik Abdullah (1970). Whereas the less popular folktales are left behind in this transformation process, however, they still exist in society. This selection shows the importance of preserving the folktales as mentioned by the publisher. These stories should be saved in multiple forms, such as documentation, oral performance, transcription, and audio and video recordings, in order to keep them alive.

Beside the purpose of introducing old stories to children, the publisher considers the possibility of this potential market as the result of the new additional school curriculum. To be specific, the Ministry of Education has included local content as part of school subjects. This new subject differs in each province in Indonesia, in terms of name and content. In West Sumatra, for example, the local subject is named as *Budaya Alam Minangkabau* (Minangkabau World Culture). Due to this need to provide reading materials, the published old story by Kristal Multimedia, as well as other publishing houses in local and national levels which publish similar readings, therefore serves as an example of how to serve the available potential market. In accomplishing the required curriculum reading materials related to Minangkabau culture, the published books on this theme already have its market. As a marketing staff, Zakno informed me that he regularly approaches headmasters or teachers in Bukittinggi and its neighboring districts to offer the published books. He also comes to seminars and other public gatherings, in particular those related to educational events, to promote the readings. Part of his agenda is also to offer a special discount for certain number of books ordered. Additionally, each school has a special fund called the schools' operational aid (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah*), provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This fund is managed by the school's committee and could be spent to organize school's activities, including purchasing books for its library.

Another potential market is the Minang *perantau* (expatriate). About thirty percent of Minangkabaunese live outside the province, although they have migrated to business center cities such as Pekanbaru, Jakarta, Tanjung Pinang, Medan, Surabaya, Singapore, and some cities in Malaysia. Those who live in *rantau* still identify themselves as Minangkabau, by practicing their custom and cultural activities, especially in important events or gatherings. The Minangkabau cultural values and teachings are also introduced and passed on to their children and descendants by way of music, literature, recorded *adat* speech, or by visiting their homeland during the Hari Raya holidays. The need for reading materials in the theme of *adat* and cultural values is then very essential for *perantau*. In order to suit the needs of readers, in schools and expatriates, some changes in the print form of folk tales have been made. The stories are printed in pocket book form, comprising of 130-200 pages, which shorten the stories. However, the decision to keep the Minangkabau language is a positive aspect that serves to help readers feel closer to their culture.



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Daftar Buku 2015

No.	Judul Buku	Penulis/Pengarang	Harga
I.	Adat dan Budaya Minangkabau		
1.	Tambo Minangkabau	Ir. Edison Piliang SH, M.Kn.	Rp 90.000,-
2.	Tambo Alam Minangkabau	Ibrahim Datoek Sanggoeno Diradjo	Rp 75.000,-
3.	Peran dan Fungsi Niniak Mamak Alim Ulama sarato Cadiak Pandai di Nagari Kurai	Yusrizal, S.Sos. Sutan Mangkuto	Rp 75.000,-
4.	Menelusuri Jejak Sejarah Nagari Kurai Beserta Adat Lembaganya	M.A. Dt. Kampung Dalam	Rp 60.000,-
II.	Pasambahan/Panitahan → Logat Minang		
1.	Sumarak Nagari	R. St. Tandiko – M.I. St. Rajo Batuah	Rp 30.000,-
2.	Pasambahan	Jamilus Jamin - M. Dt. Mangkuto Rajo	Rp 30.000,-
III.	Kaba Klasik Minangkabau → Logat Minang		
1.	Kaba Anggun Nan Tongga	Ambas Mahkota	Rp 30.000,-
2.	Kaba Cindua Mato	Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah	Rp 30.000,-
3.	Kaba Magek Manandin	Sutan Pangaduan	Rp 20.000,-
4.	Kaba Laksamana Hang Tuah	Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah	Rp 18.000,-
5.	Kaba Angku Kapalo Sitalang	Darwis St. Sinaro	Rp 18.000,-
6.	Kaba Malin Deman	M. Rasyid Manggis	Rp 18.000,-
7.	Kaba Puti Nilam Cayo	Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah	Rp 18.000,-
8.	Kaba Rambun Pamenan	Sutan Mangkudun - Ilyas St. Pangaduan	Rp 18.000,-
9.	Kaba Rancak di Labuah	Dt. Panduko Alam	Rp 18.000,-
10.	Kaba Sabai Nan Aluih	M. Rasyid Manggis	Rp 18.000,-
11.	Kaba Si Buyuang Karuik	Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah	Rp 18.000,-
12.	Kaba Si Gadiah Ranti	Sjamsudin St. Radjo Endah	Rp 18.000,-
13.	Kaba Siti Baheram	Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah	Rp 18.000,-
14.	Kaba Siti Kalasun	Sjamsudin St. Radjo Endah	Rp 18.000,-
15.	Kaba Siti Risani	Sutan Nasarudin	Rp 18.000,-
16.	Kaba Si Umbuik Mudo	Ilyas Payakumbuh	Rp 18.000,-
17.	Kaba Sutan Lembak Tuah	Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah	Rp 18.000,-
18.	Kaba Tuanku Larch Simawang	Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah	Rp 18.000,-
IV.	Bacaan Anak: Hikayat Lama dari Ranah Minang		
1.	Si Buyung Telong	Dt. B. Nurdin Yakub	Rp 20.000,-
2.	Sang Sapurba	Dt. B. Nurdin Yakub	Rp 20.000,-
3.	Mikinoka	Yunus St. Majolelo	Rp 20.000,-
4.	Tuanku Keramat	Yunus St. Majolelo	Rp 20.000,-
5.	Angku Pulai	Azwan	Rp 20.000,-
6.	Angku Padang Data	Azwan	Rp 20.000,-
7.	Sang Pembawa Pena	Herisdon	Rp 20.000,-
8.	Kisah Hewan di Sekitar Kita	Herisdon	Rp 20.000,-

Fig. 2. List of books published by Kristal Multimedia. Printed book list provided by Kristal Multimedia's marketing staff for promotion purposes. Scanned by author.

Additionally, Kristal Multimedia frequently advertises its publications in its Facebook timeline, while a full list of its publication is available on its blog. In addition to the printed form, there are eighteen books available in digital form that can be purchased and downloaded via Google Play for smartphone- and computer-based applications. By using these social media platforms, the publisher can expand the market to other groups, including young people who are technologically literate as well as those who live outside West Sumatra. In a response dated 2 July 2016 to the author's question about the use of social media, Arfizar claims that Kristal Multimedia gets more buyers from across Indonesia from social media such as Facebook and blogs; moreover, it is able to send the published books to Singapore and Malaysia multiple times. In fact, there are many Minangkabau people who have lived for generations in these two countries, since the places have become the main destinations of *merantau*.⁸ Overall, 17% of the total sales result from social media promotion. In terms of direct distribution within the province, the republished stories are distributed in West Sumatra through different strategies. Within the province, the books are mainly distributed in some bookshops in West Sumatra such as Sari Anggrek in Padang and Bukittinggi, Seroja, Irama, and Asriyah in Bukittinggi, Hizra in Payakumbuh, and Carano in Pariaman. These bookstores are owned by locals who welcome books published, likewise, by local publishers. Meanwhile, the published books are not available in Gramedia Padang bookshop, a chain bookshop owned by national scale publishing company Kompas-Gramedia based in Jakarta, because it now uses a new distribution system and hardly receives and displays books from local publishers except those who are able to fulfill the required criteria. For those who order the published books from outside West Sumatra, they can submit a request and the publisher will then send the ordered books by a courier.

FROM TRADITIONAL TO MODERN LITERATURE

The above discussion shows how traditional stories are modified into printed form. This intermediation has also changed the public as well as influenced other newly created literary works. There are several different kinds of folktale reproduction from oral to printed forms. Some modern Indonesian literary works were written based on traditional and oral literature. The following examples are presented to provide an illustration of such stories. Five short stories in *Lima Tjerita (Five Stories)* written by Junus St. Madjolelo, for example, are based on oral stories told by the writer's grandmother:

When my grandmother was still alive—forty years ago—she often told stories for us, her grandchildren. Among the stories, there are some which attract our hearts, so until

now we still remember what the stories are. In order to be enjoyed by children who live in modern age as well, I recompose five of them. The difference is that grandmother told the stories in Minangkabau language whereas this presence stories are in our unity language, Bahasa Indonesia. (Madjolelo 4, translation mine)⁹

A novel written by Damhoeri entitled *Talipuk Layur* (which refers to the name of the main character and literally means “lotus”) was also written based on an oral performance in Damhoeri’s previous school. This novel was published under the series of the aforementioned Minangkabau classical series. The story was explicitly adapted by Damhoeri from a story that is still known by the people in Payakumbuh, as stated by the writer in the preface of his novel that the story he wrote was based on that kind of performance:

Once a year, when I was schooling at the Normal School Padangpanjang, we hold school party. The purpose of the party was a farewell with students grade IV who would leave the school. One of the agendas was performance of Minang classical songs that was common in students’ *kampongs*. When we celebrated Or. Mandank [as one of the students in grade IV], a well-known poet, he performed himself before the audience with a famous *dendang* in the Talang Pauh Tinggi region. With his specific funny gestures, Or. Mandank sang a song: Talipuk Layur nan Dandam. This was a folktale in Talang Pauh Tinggi.

As each Minang classical story brings full of moral lessons and useful metaphors as guidance in our life, so this story Talipuk Layur did. Our hope was that this piece of contribution would benefit for recent Indonesian young generation. (5, translation mine)¹⁰

It is worth noting that the mentioned literary works were published in West Sumatra. In addition, there are also a number of literary works as the result from adaptation or exploration from folktales in West Sumatra published by national coverage publishers. In the early establishment of Balai Pustaka, the published novels penned by writers who originated from Minangkabau explored the social phenomena of Minangkabau society. *Sitti Nurbaja* (Marah Rusli, 1922), *Salah Asuhan* (A Moeis, 1928), and *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* (Tulis Sutan Sati, 1929), to name only a few, examine the conflict between younger and older generations, the role of *mamak*, and forced marriage. Chairul Harun, in his novel *Warisan* (1979) investigates the conflict of a family in dividing their inheritance. The social problems told in this novel, and in particular between the younger and older generation, represents the conflict between modernity (symbolized by the younger generation) and tradition (represented by the older generation). Meanwhile, Darman Moenir’s novel *Dendang* (1988) tells a story of a young boy who, in order to study and work, migrates from his village to Padang. Ultimately, he makes the final decision to live in the urban area. However, the character still associates himself as

a member of his village. In a more explicit exploration, Gus tf Sakai in his *Tambo Sebuah Pertemuan* (2000) challenges the established *tambo*, a historical story of the people of Minangkabau, in society. In his works, Wisran Hadi (1945-2011) explored traditional stories and performances as the basis of his literary exploration. He also entitles most of his plays from the characters' names of the folktales.

A slightly different case occurred in the elaboration of folktales in the modern literary works adapted from these folktales. In some of Wisran Hadi's works, for instance, there are some changes made in terms of the motivation behind conflicts, as a result of his interpretation of the established stories. Hadi received protests and negative criticism from *adat* leaders due to the fact that his works are perceived as digressing from established stories within society (Sahrul 69-79). The well-known case was his play and performance entitled *Imam Bonjol*, based on the character of Indonesia's national hero. Imam Bonjol was the leader of *padri* (a reformist Islamic group in West Sumatra) who fought the Dutch troops during the Padri war (1803-1838). In Hadi's interpretation, the character who would have been portrayed as a hero, was instead portrayed as someone who had common feelings such as hesitation, weakness, and fear. The reactions came from the West Sumatran governor, Islamic community organization Muhammadiyah, *adat* leaders, and academics (Effendi 49-59, Sahrul 69-79) and reported in local newspaper *Singgalang* on 10 October 1995 and weekly newspaper *Canang* on 14-20 October 1995 edition. However, the play was finally performed in the Festival Istiqlal in Jakarta from 13 to 15 October 1995 as reported in the newspaper *Harian Terbit* on 14 October 1995.

Nevertheless, the West Sumatran governor wrote a letter addressed to the festival's committee, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister of Social, and Wisran Hadi, and which was later on published in the weekly newspaper *Canang* on 14-20 October 1995 edition and republished with additional letter from Wisran Hadi on 21-27 October 1995 edition and comments from some *adat* leaders who opposed Hadi's opinion. According to his evaluation based on the performance staged in the West Sumatra Cultural Park, 30 September 1995, as a rehearsal performance, the portrayal of Imam Bonjol in Hadi's play could disrupt the image of the hero within society. This was considered inappropriate with the spirit and soul of Imam Bonjol's struggle, which could then stimulate restlessness in society. Wisran Hadi responded to the letter by requesting the governor to consider the evaluations of artists and art institutions regarding the content and alleged threat of the play as a work of art. So, besides the change in language as mentioned above, the alteration of a story in terms of its narrative structure could stimulate reaction and rejection from readers, in particular those who know the original.

From the above provided examples, the republication of folktales demonstrates that the transformation of literary works from one time to another, from classical

to modern style, in various media, does occur. The folktales, in various forms and media, were influenced by previously composed literary works, either from a different part of the country or even from foreign countries, such as from (Middle) East Asian countries, European, or Roman and Greek legends and stories (see for instance Braginsky's *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature* for further reading about the foreign influences in Malay literature). Later, the stories also influenced subsequent works. A number of the published literary works in contemporary or modern Indonesian literary period were influenced by the folktales. In the genre of prose, the influences can be traced from the intrinsic element of the works. The main part that moves the story is conflict. Notably, the conflict and other elements of stories in Minangkabau folktales mostly emerge in modern prose written by West Sumatran authors, especially during the early modern period of Indonesian literature, and marked by works published by Balai Pustaka.

FROM AUDIENCE TO READER

Transforming folktales into written form has resulted in different effects, particularly in the shaping of the public. For instance, the performance of folktales enjoyed by the public as an audience can be seen as a collective activity. In contrast, the similar story is treated differently when it is told in the printed form when a reader comes to a condition that "[T]o read print is to act both as movie projector and audience for a mental movie. The reader attains a strong feeling of participation in the total motions of a mind the process of thinking" (McLuhan 4). Readers can easily choose to read the story anytime, a choice which is unavailable to the audience of an oral performance, because such an occasion has to be scheduled well beforehand. The effort to transcribe an oral performance into a full-length story as well as an adapted and shortened printed version has also changed the public profile of the folktales. In their later development, the *kaba* stories were shortened in order to provide readings for specific targeted readers such as children. If a reader is coming from, or at the same instant is still a real audience of story, it would be true that he or she is familiar with the story. Thus, the changes in written and published forms are basically already recognized by the public.

Related to the republishing of folktales, a transformation of its public, from "audience" into "reader" has been created. Finnegan, especially in her *Oral Poetry and Literacy and Orality*, has extensively explored the effect of the transformation of oral into writing to the audience and reader. It is not only beneficial economically and culturally, but it also has brought some changes in society. The readers of published folktales might be those of the buyers who find the books in bookshops, street book vendors, distributors, the publishers, libraries, or private book collections in

literary clubs and individuals. Each reader deals with the books in personal ways and can produce a different interpretation and conclusion of the readings because of their various reading instruments such as cultural background, education, and reading habits. The changing of these two genres also influences the shaping of the public age as the result of the changing forms of the stories. In oral performances, the public consists of all ages, from infants to the elderly. The separation usually takes place in connection with the time when a story is performed. In this form, audience's devices to enjoy the performance are mostly only eyes and ears.

While in most cases, published folktales are seemingly directed for young readers and older people. Hence, the reader should be equipped by the ability to read, which is usually achieved from schools. In correlation with the audience of folktales in Minangkabau, Junus in his "Political History" separates the audience of *kaba* or folktales from that of modern literary works, based on their specific characteristics. The audience of *kaba* is characterized as (1) those who are not at all, or are less, educated as a logical consequence of being a part of village life, (2) those who have "leisure" time in business or family life, and (3) a group of young people which may be referred to as *parewa* (hoodlum)—in other words, those who have yet to decide on their future, simply enjoying their life and spending most of their time chatting, playing, and gambling (197-199). This portrait of oral performance or storytelling audience is the goal of the moral message behind every performance; it is the wish of all that they can change habits and characters. The activity of republishing folktales has also shaped the public profile of the stories. As a result, the act of hearing or watching oral literature creates an audience who is regarded as a collective group. Furthermore, in the context of audiences of oral performances as characterized by Junus and the reader profile of Kristal Multimedia's published books, it seems that the audience, along with the performances, is identified as those who live in rural areas. Meanwhile, readers, along with literary activities in general, are associated with those who reside in urban areas. There are some additional facts that support this both types of public, including educational institutions, literacy rates, economic conditions, public infrastructure, and the professions of residents.

On the other hand, folktales in printed forms create a reader who personally reads the text with additional skills rather than simply enjoying the story. The printed story needs to be read and interpreted. An illustration is provided by Ong: "Writing is not merely a transcription of oral performance—as someone . . . transcribed the Homeric tales from the oral world and made them artificially for the first time into fixed texts, that henceforward had to be not retold but interpreted. Writing is, rather, putting words together with the help of an imagined audience and of something mute outside us" (204). The publication of folktales, for instance, by Kristal Multimedia, considers the reader as a consumer in regard to the number of

printed books, because each reader is expected to buy the books. The publishing system, with its apparatus, continues to shape the reader. As mentioned above, the published folktales are directed as the reading materials for children and young educated people. Thus, readers should have reading skills through education and a foundation in literacy, as well as access to the stories (through libraries or bookshops). Most probably, these readers also have a better status or characterization in contrast to what Junus described above. Furthermore, the aforementioned books have brought the stories to readers who can understand them without watching or hearing them via oral performances. However, as a social medium, performed oral stories in society have their social and educational functions that are perhaps more effectively informative than their printed forms. For example, in oral performances, the audience can participate interactively with others such as their friends, family members, or fellows from neighboring villages.

As a final illustration, in December 2015, I attended a festival of traditional performances held by West Sumatra Cultural Park from the 18th to the 20th. In that festival, every district in West Sumatra performed their most popular and unique performances, amounting to 15 performances from all districts, with an additional four exhibitions from educational arts institutions. What is more important to note, though, is that the audience was made up of only 20 people, including the office staff and jury members. This is proof that traditional performances now have smaller audiences, especially in urban settings. My experience is further evidence that even though the traditional performances are brought to people with free entrance, performed in a modern stage, and facilitated government support, it is still necessary to ask audiences to actually recognize the changes in the conditions for traditional performances, especially those who live in urban areas and have limited time to attend traditional performances.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have discussed the activity of republishing folktales in West Sumatra. This activity supports the familiarity of readers with literature and literary works, provides sources for writers to create stories based on folktales, and also encourages the distribution of the published works to involve the business lines in the field. However, the republishing of the folktales has also brought some changes in many ways. To be particular, the transformation of the stories from oral into print form has changed the stories themselves, including their lengths, plots, characters, and details that are limited in printed form.

Not only that, the activity of republishing the folktales has also changed the audience of stories. The reader profile of the print stories is different from the audience of oral performances. However, this difference does not exactly separate the public from being the audience or reader; instead, they can position themselves in both places simultaneously. This fact is also supported by the reality that the oral performance still exists and is staged in society. They are also still watched by people who can be classified as readers with categories which have been mentioned in the previous discussion. Thus, the republishing actually benefits the literature in preserving, creating, and adapting traditional stories into modern works.

As illustrated in this paper, republishing stories from oral to print shows an understanding of how this activity gives people the impulse to become readers. Furthermore, it supports the availability of the sources for the publisher, writer, distributor, and reader to be involved in the continuity of literature and literary works. The folktales are used by contemporary writers as significant sources to create new works by treating the folktales as the bases for adaptation, giving new interpretations of the established stories, and challenging the information from the stories, or even finding new aesthetic style from the folktales. The folktales, however, are incorporated in recent (and most likely in future works) as their influence is always present in many ways. Henceforth, the aforementioned activities in republishing traditional stories into modern and print forms have contributed to the preservation of the stories, the shaping of readers, and added to the challenge for authors to write contextually new stories and bring the cultural richness of society in a different medium. This activity has thus fulfilled a significant position in a greater system of literary infrastructure in the region.

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Notes

1. The term “republishing” is used throughout this paper to refer to the activity of publishing stories from oral form to printed form, and in which the stories are transformed from one medium of oral performance, for example, into another medium of paper-based printing. Thus, the (inter)mediation of the stories through different media, which will be shown in this paper, is part of a greater system in literary infrastructure. It contributes significantly to the creation of a reading public.
2. For more information about the shifting and continuation of *kaba* stories, including its problematic issues such whether a *kaba* is a finished or newly arranged story, Junus’ “Kaba: An Unfinished (His-) Story” gives a sufficient picture.
3. In a generally accepted version, the story tells of two siblings who have contradictive habits. Bawang Putih is a kind, helpful, and hardworking girl, whereas Bawang Merah is a lazy and greedy girl. Bawang Putih, as a stepchild in the current family, has to do all of the household duties. One day, she is washing clothes in a river. She then realizes that one of her stepmother’s clothes is floating. She tries to find it, but her search is unsuccessful. As she drowns, she meets an old woman with the clothing she is looking for. The old woman will give back the cloth, but Bawang Putih has to clean up her house in return. Bawang Putih then accepts the offer. When she finishes, the old woman is satisfied and gives her a pumpkin.

In her house, Bawang Putih peels the pumpkin and finds gold and other jewelry inside it. Her stepmother and Bawang Merah are jealous. She asks Bawang Merah to do the same. Bawang Merah then washes some clothes in the river, drops them, and drowns herself in the river until she finally meets the old woman. But she refuses to clean up the old woman’s house; instead, she asks for the pumpkin directly. When Bawang Merah and her mother peel the pumpkin, they find a snake and other wilder animals instead. Finally, Bawang Merah and her mother realize and regret what they have done to Bawang Putih.

4. Among the published stories are: *Kaba Anggun Nan Tongga* (Ambas Mahkota), *Kaba Cindua Mato* (Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah), *Kaba Magek Manandin* (Sutan Pangaduan), *Kaba Siti Baheram* (Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah), *Kaba Rancak Di Labuah* (Dt. Paduko Alam), *Kaba Rambun Pamenan* (Sutan Mangkudun), *Kaba Si Umuik Mudo* (Ilyas Payakumbuah), *Kaba Angku Kapalo Sitalang* (Darwis St. Sinaro), *Kaba Siti Risani* (Sutan Nasarudin), *Kaba Siti Kalasun* (Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah), *Kaba Puti Nilam Cayo* (Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah), *Kaba Malin Deman* (M. Rasyid Manggis), *Kaba Sabai Nan Aluih* (M. Rasyid Manggis), *Kaba Si Gadiah Ranti* (Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah), *Kaba Laksmana Hang Tuah* (Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah), *Kaba Sutan Lembak Tuah* (Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah), *Kaba Si Buyuang Karuik* (Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah), *Kaba Tuanku Lareh Simawang* (Syamsuddin St. Radjo Endah).
5. *Dewasa ini buku-buku hikayat lama, sangat sulit mendapatkannya di pasaran, karena memang buku-buku tersebut sudah tidak lagi diterbitkan oleh penerbitnya.*
Dengan terbitnya buku Cindua Mato ini yang kami himpun di dalam “Seri Klasik Minang”, mudah-mudahan akan dapat kembali menggairahkan

penulis-penulis kita untuk terus berkarya, menggali seni dan budaya minang, yang juga merupakan seni dan budaya bangsa Indonesia.

6. However, the list of books published by Kristal Multimedia shows that the titles remain the same, with only a few new titles published. The publisher's dream to have more new titles penned by other writers seems far from reality. I assume that the publisher has no effective strategy in attracting writers to send their works and that writers have not seized this opportunity yet.
7. *Tak dapat disangkal lagi Cerita Rakyat merupakan suatu cerita yang sudah dikenal secara turun-temurun, sejak dari nenek moyang kita sampai kepada generasi mendatang. Cerita itu pada umumnya mengandung nilai-nilai seni dan kebudayaan yang sangat tinggi, yang wajib kita pelihara dan kita lestarikan.*

Peranan penerbit dalam hal ini sangat menentukan. Tanpa penerbit, besar kemungkinan cerita-cerita itu akan terlupakan oleh generasi-generasi yang akan datang.

Terhimbau oleh rasa tanggung jawab yang besar terhadap nilai-nilai tersebut, buku Cindua Mato ini kembali kami terbitkan yang kami himpun dalam serial Cerita Klasik Minangkabau. Serial ini juga membuka kesempatan yang seluas-luasnya bagi para pengarang/penulis dan ilustrator kita untuk terus meningkatkan karyanya menggali kembali nilai-nilai seni dan kebudayaan masyarakat Minangkabau.

8. According to some literatures, the Minangkabau began to come to Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia since the end of 14th century. The people in Negeri Sembilan, moreover, asked Minangkabau kings to send persons from Minangkabau to be their kings to lead the people in Negeri Sembilan, for several successive times (de Jong 9-14; Samad 13-30). Until recently, Minangkabau community in this region is still preserving and practicing Minangkabau traditions, especially in four areas namely Kuala Pilah, Tampin, Seri Menanti, and Jelebu (Jani and Hussain 318-319). For an in-depth anthropological study of Minangkabau in Negeri Sembilan, see, for an example, Peletz's "Sibling and Social Structure in Negeri Sembilan" (73-109).
9. *SEMASA nenekku masih hidup- empat puluh tahun jang lalu- kerap kali benar beliau bertjerita-tjerita kepada kami, anak tjutju beliau.*

Diantara tjerita-tjerita itu, banjak jang menarik hati kami, sehingga sampai sekarang masih teringat oleh kami, bagaimana djalannja tjerita-tjerita itu.

Agar dapat pula dinikmati oleh anak-anak, jang hidup dalam zaman kemadjuan ini, saja karangkan kembali lima buah diantaranya. Hanya bedanja: nenek bertjerita dalam Bahasa Minangkabau, sedang tjerita ini diolah kembali dalam Bahasa persatuan kita, Bahasa Indonesia.

10. *Sekali setahun ketika saya masih duduk di bangku Sekolah Normal Padang Panjang kami mengadakan pesta sekolah. Maksudnya ialah perpisahan dengan murid-murid kelas IV yang akan meninggalkan sekolah. Salah satu acaranya ialah mengadakan pegelaran lagu-lagu klasik Minang yang lazim di setiap kampung para murid.*

Dan ketika Sdr. Or. Mandank, seorang penyair terkenal kami pestakan, ia sendiri tampil ke depan dengan membawakan dendang yang terkenal di daerah

Talang Pauh Tinggi. Dengan kocaknya diikuti gerak-gerik yang khas Or. Mandank membawakan lagu: Talipuk Layur nan Dandam. Ini ialah sebuah cerita rakyat di daerah Talang Pauh Tinggi.

Sebagaimana halnya setiap cerita klasik Minang penuh dengan nasehat-nasehat dan ibarat-ibarat yang sangat berguna sekali sebagai pedoman dalam kehidupan ini maka demikian juga halnya dengan cerita Talipuk Layur ini. Harapan kami semoga secuil sumbangsih ini akan ada manfaatnya untuk generasi muda Indonesia sekarang ini.

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