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Education of Islamic Characters in Literature Learning

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Abstract

Literature has functioned as a medium for understanding the nations' culture that contains education of character. The characters are those who behave, act and tempered. The readers can learn and understand various aspects of life through the characters including various motivations based on the condition of social-culture in the novel. The relation built up between the readers and the literature world is personal relation. That kind of relation will build the critical power, imagination, and aesthetics power. Through the literature, the readers do not only learn the conceptual and intellectual points but they also brought to the concrete life situation.

Literary work can be as a medium of moral education. Therefore, literary works can also be a medium for education of Islamic character. The message of Islamic character can be like guidance for facing various problems in the daily life such as, attitude, social manner, praying, tauhid and so on. The practical message of Islamic character is guidance that its model can be shown or found in the real life.

Literature learning is expected to give contribution to education of Islamic character. The values of literary works either explicitly or implicitly are media, tools to deliver the instructions and guidelines to the readers. If the Islamic values in literary works are understood and implemented in reality, it can build up the Islamic characters to its readers. Therefore, the education of Islamic character can be conducted through the literature learning.

Keywords: education, Islamic character, literature.

Introduction

The formed-character of humans is defined by two factors, (1) nature (the natural factor or natural tendency), (2) nurture (socialization and education). The influence of nature, religion (Islam) teaches that each human has the natural tendency (fitrah) to love the kindness. However, the natural tendency is conditionally potential or not manifested yet when a child just born. Confucius, a Chinese philosopher in 5 B.C. stated that even though humans have the natural tendency to the kindness, but without followed by the instructions (education and socialization), then they might change to be like animal even worse.

The education of Islamic character can be developed in the literature learning. Through literature learning, the readers will have new and unique experience that they probably do not experience in their real life. the readers of literary works can directly learn and socialize to the “nine pillars of character” which are 1) loving God and the truth; 2) responsible, discipline and being autonomous; 3) trustworthy; 4) respectful and well behaved; 5) love, care and cooperation; 6) confident, creative and high struggling; 7) justice and leadership; 8) kind and humble; and 9) tolerant and peace. (Megawangi in Elmubarok, 2008: 111). Those nine pillars are mostly found in the literary works in the form of poetry, prose and drama. This point can be obviously correlated to the main function of literature which is to make better character, increasing humanity and social care, emerging the appreciation to culture, distributing ideas, discovering imagination and raising up the expressions creatively and constructively.

There is particular correlation between literary works and the character or moral. By the moral values contained in literature, authors can reflect their view of life about the truth values so the literature can deliver the moral messages related to the high (good) character of humans, struggling the humans’ right and dignity. (Djojsuroto, 2006: 14). In this case, Nurgiyantoro (2002:321) positioning authors as designers of deed model and humans manner in the real life.

The moral value which is intended to be delivered by the authors merges in the story plot, so the readers will find various types of actions of the characters portrayed by the authors in various events. The readers will understand the good and bad behaviour by themselves.

In literature, the readers will meet with various characters that reflect the humans’ character in general. Through that interaction, the readers are able to judge every single manner of the characters. In further, it is even possible that those characters become the reference for the readers to think and act. Therefore, literature can use as learning medium for education of characters. In line with what stated by Atar Semi (1984:49) that literature is the most effective medium to build moral and personality of group in society. As well as the education of Islamic character can be obtained especially through the literature learning.

The Nature of Literature and Education of Character

Literature as a product of culture cannot be separated from its Creator’s creations that tend to be dynamic; which is, the expressions of literature always give the possibility that changes from time to time. This point is in line with the point of view that defines literature is naturally creative actions (Wellek dan Waren, 1989:30). Literature is writing or imagination in term of fiction --- “imaginative writing in the sense of fiction” (Eagleton, 1983:1)

The nature of literature is fiction but it is obviously constructed by the reality-based. In every literature work contains the particular element that is objectively factual. In every literature work contains three charges: imagination, experience and values. Through the activity of appreciating literature, all of intelligence aspects are trained. The readers' intellectual quotient will be trained. For instance, by digging up the intrinsic values in the literary works such as theme, message, background, character and story plot. Besides, it will also increase the readers' emotional quotient. For instance is tough stance, being initiative and optimistic in facing the life's problem and so on. It occurs since literature is a reflection of the society's life with all kind of problems they face. Learning literature means recognize various types of life with its background and characters. Reading the bad and good humans' life story and how a person has to behave when facing the problems will guide the readers to understand the values of life. Meanwhile, literature that can increase the spiritual quotient is mostly found in the literature with religious themes. For example is the novel entitled *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Derwick* (Buya Hamka), *Ayat-ayat Cinta* (Habiburrahman El Shirazy), *Pembawa Kabar dari Andalusia* (Ali Al Ghareem), *Kimya Sang Putri Rumi* (Muriel Maufroy), and so on. The literature with such religious themes will guide its readers to understand more about the relation between humans and their God.

In further, according to Herfanda (2008:131), literature has a big potential to bring the society to the direction of change including the change of characters. As a reflective art expression, literature can be the spirit for the emerging of the society changes movement or even the resurrection of a nation to a better direction, strengthening the nationalism, as source of inspiration and motivation of moral power for changing of social-culture that is still weak and dependent.

Literature has functioned as a medium for understanding the nations' culture that contains education of character. For example is through the novel. The novel about life shows the characters in the story as life does by performance that representing the culture of the society and nation. The characters are those who behave, act and tempered. The readers can learn and understand various aspects of life through the characters including various motivations based on the condition of social-culture in the novel. The relation built up between the readers and the literature world is personal relation. That kind of relation will build the critical power, imagination, and aesthetics power. Through the literature, the readers do not only learn the conceptual and intellectual points but they also brought to the concrete life situation.

Education of Islamic Character in Literature Learning

Nurgiyantoro (2009:321-322) stated that literature often offers the moral messages that related to high humanity nature – struggling humans' right and dignity. The high humanity nature is principally universal. It means the truth of nature is owned and believed by all humans in the world. It is not merely nationality or individual even though there is a moral teaching of decency that only applied and believed by the particular groups. The characters' value in literature is universal. Those values can be from religions' values, culture, social and so on.

The characters' values acquired from the literature learning can ignite sensitivity; instill morality, ethic tradition and patriotism. Besides, it can also increase an affective, social and religious awareness.

Each literature work often emerges a lot of things and knowledge for its readers if it is really internalized. By doing this way, the readers can elaborate and acquire such knowledge in literary works. As an example, there are a lot of facts discovered in literary works, but there are still many facts that need to be gained by the readers from other sources to understand the situation and particular problems emerged in a literature work. Literary works do not provide knowledge already so. Literary works are closely correlated to all aspects of humans' life and the universe.

The influence of literature toward humans' life cannot be seen simply. The characters in the fiction works often influence the humans' life, standard of humans' morality, firing up revolution and even change the world (Latif, 2009:85). The story of Barbie, the beautiful doll that becomes a role model for a million little girls by bringing the standard of style and beauty.

Then the example of Homer work, the name that admitted as a blind poet of the ancient Greek (7BC) who created *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. Those two oldest works orally told from generation by generation. Homer's works are newly written the centuries after. So it can be imagined if the oral tradition gone from one generation, the modern society will never be able to appreciate those classical works. Homer's works give a big impact to the world and society.

Several countries give good examples about the education of character of the literature-based. In United Kingdom, Shakespeare poetries become a compulsory reading since the primary school level in order to embed the ethic tradition and society culture. In Sweden, various banner stretched in holy day (religion) which contains quotes from literary works. In Bandung, Indonesia, it is newly found the quotes from the poet's works written on the wall publicly.

In literature learning, there are two demands that can be discovered related to the characters shaping. Firstly, literature learning is supposed to build deeper feelings. From literature learning, there are lots of possibilities to bring readers knowing all of humans' life possibilities. A person who has deeply learned various literary works usually has a more sensitive feeling to decide what things are precious and other things are not. Secondly, which is related to character building, that literary works are supposed to give a try to develop various quality of readers' personality? The literary works can provide a lot of further experience. In literature learning, the readers meet various chances to figure out kind of fresh experience that continuously flows.

By reading the literary works, the readers will meet many people with their various problems. Through the literary works, the readers are persuaded to face and experience moral and social category directly with its parody and irony. The spaces available in the literary works open up the chance for the readers to grow become the one who critical in one side, and the one who is wise in the other side. This critical and wise personality can be gained because of person's experience reading the literary works that bring him or her to various themes and background and also humans' character. In many cases, literary works give chances to the readers to experience other person's position. Through the literary

reading, a person can experience role as a doctor, teacher, beggar, Peci cab driver, religions' scholar, dancer, thief, traitor, little people, official, and so on.

Literary works providing life experience which is not a simple knowledge (Rosenblatt, 1978:38). If the readers read a literary work, for instance the novel *Kimys Sang Putri Rumi* (Muriel, 2007), they will not only get knowledge related to that novel, but also the life experience of Kimya as step daughter of Rumi who was born as farmer's kid in the inland of Anatolia. Since she was a kid, Kimya felt like mysterious longing to *The Invisible*. Kimya witnessed closely the process of her step farther changes. From the respectful scholar in Konya, he turned to be the one who yearns God. Poetrying and dancing to celebrate the God's love. It all happened because of his meeting with the traveler-philosopher, Syams dari Tabriz.

After the readers read the life experience of the characters in those literary works, their experience is might be the same or might be not. It might be touching in their daily life. However, those literary works have given new things to its readers' life experience. So that, literary works have given stimulus of educational character.

A good literary work always delivers the message for the readers to act. The message is named "moral" or "mandate". A good literary work always persuades its readers to highly respect the norms of morality (Darma, 1981:6). Literary work can be as a medium of moral education. Therefore, literary works can also be a medium for education of Islamic character. The message of Islamic character can be like guidance for facing various problems in the daily life such as, attitude, social manner, praying, tauhid and so on. The practical message of Islamic character is guidance that its model can be shown or found in the real life.

The value that gained by the readers in the literary works is definitely good. If the literary works perform the character's values which are not really Islamic, it does not mean that its author suggest the readers to behave and act so. It is performed to be an example and not to be followed by the readers.

In addition, to bring the education of Islamic character achieved well through the literary learning, there are several indicators that have to be concerned by the readers and also the authors in order to identify the values of Islamic character in the literary works, for example, the indicator of Islamic moral characters. Here are the several examples of Islamic moral characters adopted from Miskawaih (1994:46-50).

| No. | Moral Category | From | Characteristics |
|-----|----------------|------------|--|
| 1 | Wisdom | a. Smart | Quickly take a conclusion |
| | | b. Record | Defining the description of what have been internalized by soul |
| | | c. Think | Effort to justify the objects learned by soul to conclude what is intended |
| | | d. Clarity | The soul readiness to think and conclude what is intended |

| | | | |
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| | | e. Sharpness/brain power | The action of staying away from doing the led things |
| 2 | Simplicity | a. Shame | The action staying away from doing the bad things |
| | | b. Calm | Ewing careful in avoiding mocking |
| | | c. Patient | Ability to self-controlling when positioned in a desire |
| | | d. Generous | Giving the treasure to those who deserved |
| | | e. Integrity | The soul kindness that make person searching for the treasure in the correct way |
| | | f. Satisfied | Not too much for eating, drinking and face make up |
| | | g. Loyal | Soul character that obey to the good deeds |
| | | h. Discipline | Spiritual in reaching the goodness Soul condition that measure all the thongs and follow it correctly |
| | | i. Optimistic | A will for completing soul with the holy moral |
| | | j. Softness | Soft heart to soul – the character that free from the anxiety |
| | | k. Graceful and Dignified | Mental rigidity in the face of demands |
| | | l. Sincere | Self-shaping to do the good deeds for reaching the perfect soul |
| 3 | Bravery | a. Greatness of soul | Leaving the important and unimportant thinks and also able to have honor/abjection |
| | | b. Unruly | Self-confidence in facing the scary things |
| | | c. Dexterous | Serious/concern |
| | | d. Calm | The soul readiness in facing the good for bad destiny even for the death |
| | | e. Mettlesome | It is not easy to be whispered to do the dab time |
| | | f. Self-controlling | It is not easy to get bad-tempered |

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| | | | Self-control ability in facing the urgent situation |
| | | g. Powerful | Ability to do big work by hoping to get good reputation |
| 4 | Justice | a. Friendly | Pure love, being care of people, being care of friends' problems Have an effort to be the same in paradigm and belief |
| | | b. Socially enthusiastic | Cooperation |
| | | c. Visiting | Sharing the world goodness to the close relative |
| | | d. Giving tip | Responding the good deeds by doing the same even better |
| | | e. Good in cooperation | Take and give in business fairly based on the interest of the related sides |
| | | f. Foresting in deciding matters | Correct and fair in deciding things without entailed by regret |
| | | g. Love | Expecting love from those who satisfied with the life they achieved, also from those who known as holy by pretending to do things that make them impressed |
| | | h. Praying (practicing) God-fearing | Glorify the God's nature, praise him and obedient. |

Conclusion

To make the education of Islamic character in literary works succeed, so the selection or creations of literary works have to contain the good values. The literary works should have the Islamic values.

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