

# Literary Appreciation: Media Implanted Character Values to High School Students

Prayudias Margawati  
Universitas Negeri Semarang  
prayudias@gmail.com

*Abstract - Some of learning literature objectives are to widen insight, to refine characters, and to improve knowledge and language skills, to appreciate and proud literary works as cultural treasures and Indonesian Intellect. In line with that, this study covers literary studies including understanding to literature and aesthetic introduced to students in secondary schools. This article describes overview and understanding about literary appreciation activity to educate character values to the students. Furthermore, students regular class during literary appreciation activities are observed. Results show that from three short stories (Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen, Great Expectation by Charles Dickens, and My Family and Other Animals by Gerald Durrell) secondary students are interest to study social context they find everyday. The background of the three stories however is social life of middle class people, therefore it is easy to meet narration conformity to students real life. In addition, they also learn to identify characterization through characters and their behaviors in society. Reader students moreover identified and applied values to their own characters. Through this activity, students enable to learn and adopt characters value reflected in stories they appreciate. The activity also motivated and supported students cognitive development. Their personalities are automatically formed well when they enable to express emotion and show empathy to other people.*

**Key words:** literary works, appreciation, characters, values, students

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language has a central role in students' intellectual, social, and emotional development. Language also becomes one of the supporting keys in successfully learning all field of studies. Language learning is expected to help the students knowing themselves, their culture, and another culture, expressing ideas and feelings, participating in society that uses the language, and finding also using analytical and imaginative ability within themselves (Permendiknas, 2006). Although there are no boundaries between language and literature learning in learning language, still as a teacher it is better to know more about literature and literary education in depth as a competency improvement's effort. Therefore, in understanding literary education, the teacher firstly is hoped to learn

about literary study, in relation with various connection and philosophical as well as scientific problem. By doing that, it is meant that the understanding of the teacher in literary education could be comprehensive.

One of the purposes in learning literature is for broadening knowledge, refining characters, and improving the knowledge and language ability, respecting and be proud of literature as a cultural treasure and intellectual. In accordance to that purpose, in this research it covers literary study that include the understanding of literature, the beauty, esthetic, and its development that being applied to high school student. The discussion about what is the goal of this research will be explained on the following paragraph.

In general, many people argue that literature is defined as the beauty in language. The understanding of literature as human being product that contains the value of beauty. If we trace the definition of literature by its history, in the West (read: from the ancient Greek) as well as in Indonesia, the values of beauty always become one of the main criteria of literature.

## *Literature and The Implanted of Character Values*

Discussion about literature will always relate with literature experience and character values. Literature is not only a thing, but also values represented as aesthetic response from public by literature experience process. Between the literature experience and values, it could not be avoided from the literary appreciation context. In appreciating literature, there are six elements, which are: (1) literature thing, (2) literature, (3) public literature, (4) literary context, (5) literature values, and (6) literature experience (Sumardjo, 1997:16). The writers of literature works try to communicate their ideas by publishing their works to the public. The public enjoys and values the works then appreciates or gives values to them. How the public appreciates their works means those writers are success in delivering positive values readers. With the relation of research subject with this humanities background, character values that obtained from literature works are needed to be taught towards high school students. The availability of counseling guidance in schools is assumed incapable to repress negative behavior of the

high school students nowadays. Ironically, most of the headlines in electronic and printed mass media often reports the negative behavior of the students in the capital city. The riot between students, rape cases, motorcycle gangs, bullying cases in schools, and many other moral problems. The research convinces that moral education from the family or school is always given to those teenagers. Therefore by this research, in spite of not totally help solving teenagers problems especially high school students, it is hoped to give a little significant contribution in implanting character values to fix the behavior/condition of those teenagers. The purpose of this article is giving us a picture and clear understanding about the activity of literary appreciation that has been much needed to implant the character values to high school students. This research also has a purpose to get the positive effect from literary appreciation of students in high schools.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### A. Appreciation and Aesthetic Understanding

In literature aesthetic understanding, the form of its application means appreciation. Literary appreciation is a conscious process that has been done by the readers when encounters and understands literature work. Appreciation differs from enjoyment, appreciation is a process to interpret the meaning in a literature work. An observer who tries understanding the presentation must firstly know the organization structure or the basics construction of the respective work.

Appreciation has the logic dimension, while enjoyment psychologically does not really have logical dimensions aspect. Appreciation demands aesthetic skill and sensitivity for making possibility to someone in getting aesthetic experience while observing literature work. Aesthetic experience is not something that easily appears or gets, because all of that need real focus and concentration. An appreciator who feels the satisfaction after living a literary work, then the person could be called to get aesthetic satisfaction. Aesthetic satisfaction is a combination between subjective attitude and the ability of doing a complex perception. Basically, aesthetic experience is a result of interaction between the literary works with its appreciator. Those interactions would not be happened without a supported certain condition and in condition to seizure aesthetic values that contained in a literature work; which are intellectual and emotional condition.

Steppen C. Pepper in *The Liang Gie* (1976:54) writes psychological approach with mentioning monotonous (the excessive similarity) and confusion. To overcome those two factors that prevent and ruin the aesthetic experience, the arrangement of literary

works must be striven with diversity and balance. In appreciating literature, the readers should understand the line or scratch, the shape that has been showed, color with their roles and functions, time and space dimensions etc., also know the principle of the arrangement design, and the character on its each supporting element. As previously mentioned, Aesthetic experience needs real focus and concentration to come up. There is another obstacle that makes it more difficult which is the emotional personality of the reader. A literary readers would feel a satisfaction after living up to a literature work, then that person could be called to get aesthetic satisfaction. Aesthetic satisfaction is a combination between subjective attitude and the ability of doing a complex perception. The aesthetic experience may be defined as satisfaction in contemplation or as satisfying intuition. Basically, aesthetic experience is a result of interaction between the literary works with appreciator. Those interactions would not be happened without again supported condition to seizure aesthetic values that contained in a literature work.

To encounter literature works, literary performances, literature; paints and another branch of literature, an appreciator must be able to interpret organization structure that presented by the litterateur using symbols or word symbols. The symbols that presented by information, is not just as given word information in a literal meaning, but an appreciator must really get the true intention of the litterateur using their composing words. So that not only the literal meaning that has been informed to the reader, but also the symbols that hidden in their composing words. Here, an appreciator should understand every element and character that has been told by the litterateur. And here also we know why someone could understand the songs and literary works quickly, because they are often involved in the understanding process of the works.

With the relation of this research topic, it is hoped that subject who are the students of high school could enjoy literary works provided to them in English class. After that, they can take the character values that have been taught through the story narration. The duty of the teachers is being selective in deciding the story theme or topic. The theme or topic should have contained character values and moral values that can be learned by their students. How this method is applied by the teachers, is their authority. This research observes the post-effect of high school student after doing literary appreciation that once again has many positive values in it.

### B. Character Education

Character has some aspects, which are the purposes that is possessed by human in their actions. According

to Reading, character is a basic human structure that is different with others, personality organization of an individual, or relevant organization that socially is owned by an individual (1986: 52). Character has a very close relation with an individual personality, so the character quality of an individual could be identified from his or her personality appearance that reviewed from moral norms perspective. An individual could be called having a good character if showing an attitude that suitable with the valid moral norms. From that brief explanation, it could be concluded that character is values of human behavior that relates to the god, himself, the others, environment, attitude, feeling, words, and action according to religion, law, cultural and custom norms. Any of the consolidation process of religion, social, cultural, national, and environmental norms should be integrated and embodied through declaration and action.

Character education as the core of this research is a system that implant character values to school residents that includes knowledge component, awareness, volition, and action in doing those values. Character education in schools includes all of the components which are curriculum material, learning process, assessment process, class and school management, activities, the empowerment of infrastructure and facilities, funding, and school environment. The character education teach the students to think and behave for helping an individual in cooperating as family member and parts of the society. Character education directs the students for thinking smart, responsible, and well-mannered. In a unit level in school, character education directs to form a school culture that becomes the identity, character, and image of the respective schools. Kanzunnudin underlined that character edition is categorized to 4 kinds; character education based on religion, cultural (character, Pancasila, literary appreciation, the exemplary of the historical figures and leaders of the nation), environmental, and self-potential value (2015:201).

### III. METHODOLOGY

Study conducted towards high school students in Semarang in *SMP* level. From those of many high schools in Semarang, the sample that would be used is a *SMP (Sekolah Menengah Pertama)* from one of the UNNES partner schools in Semarang. The sampling technique that used is random sampling, which is taken from any class in any grades. Several techniques applied in this study to answer the problems. Questionnaire that chosen is a form of opening or unstructured questions because the answer of every question could be given freely according to personal opinion (Margono, 2000:168). Questionnaire is given to the sample literature subjects and their opinions. The

observation technique is used to give the researcher a comprehensive picture and based on the fact in the field. In this paper, the writer also acts as an observer, because of that the applied observation is participation observation which means the observer takes the role and interacts with the people in the environment that being observed.

Data tabulation technique could be done by several activities which are marking study subject answers on the questionnaire with the needed data and the result of the open discussion with the student as the reader for answering problems. The needed data that the writer gets from observation will be used to give a clearer picture by looking to the data that has been processed. The result of the observation that has been done will add the description about the condition of the high school student before and after the activities of literary appreciation for implanting character values towards them.

### IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Discussing literature and character education is inseparable things. Literature expressed various values that connects to human living on the earth. Literature even discusses everything that is not discussed in another field of study for example sociology, economy, psychology, etc. Literature still holds a vital function from human living aspect like human religiosity that determines human attitude and personality. Literature touches abstract values that have not been touched by other fields of study because that thing (abstract) could only be touched by language symbol and savor of the contact which only literature could do it.

Relate to literature and student character establishment, Tarigan in Kanzunnudin (2015:202) states that literature really plays a role in the child education, which are in language, cognitive, personality, and social development. In short, it could be said that experience through literature reading could motivate and support cognitive or students' reasoning. This personality will be automatically formed and looked clear when those students could express their emotion, show the empathy to others, develop their feeling about self-conception so that finally they could have good characters and socialize with the environment too.

In this study, the team visited one of the UNNES partner schools where college practitioner students was doing PPL. Through that momentum, the writer could introduce about several literature works to the students in the class although they showed no interest at first. Then, the students were persuaded to interact through English Short Stories. Narrations were read, and short discussion was held. For convincing the students to understand the meaning of the text, one of the students

was retold the story with his or her own language. After that, the writer gave some simple questions relating to the text. The students easily answered every of those questions. However, the purpose of this study does not stop in the works understanding level. After the writer delivered the moral value of the text, the students were given questionnaire that contains some situations possibly occur in their environment/ society. They were given instruction to answer those questions freely. They are 25 students and only needed a short time to get the result.

In practical, the writer was helped by PPL teacher to direct the students in reading literature process. The students were persuaded to find out the positive values from the stories that had been read. Then, they were guided to apply those positive values in daily life. The short stories chosen as the media in this study are short version of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, *Great Expectation* by Charles Dickens dan *My Family and other Animals* by Gerald Durrell. Those three works use lower class society background. It is relatively easy to find out the suitability of the narration with the real life of the readers (students).

Next, the students were given questionnaire contains some questions that reflects their daily life that are familiar. For example, *pada tokoh siapa kamu dapat menemukan karakter yang baik? jelaskan alasannya. Bagaimana umumnya sikap orang kaya kepada masyarakat di lingkungan mereka? Dan apa yang kamu lakukan apabila menjumpai seseorang yang menganggap harta adalah segalanya di dunia?* When the students found difficulties, they asked and got accepted explanation about social context in the questionnaires. The answer of the students is categorized as open answer so there are no definitive assessment as right or wrong. From those questionnaires that had been handed over, it could be concluded that they understood the context and moral value and could find similar social symptoms in their daily life. Orally through open discussions session, the students in the class could deliver the things that had to be done as good society members, for instance by not assessing other people from social status, must having moral responsible towards people around us because human is social creature that could not live alone but depended to others.

By this literary activity, the students are trained to implement character values that they get from those short stories. If this kind of simulation often being done by the teachers, whether in the Bahasa or English's class, it is possible that positive character values will be crystallized on the students' unconscious mind so it would be the references in their daily behavior. Through literary appreciation, teacher and another related element such as family (parents), the students could be persuaded to know more, understand, adopt

character personality, and then be guided by teachers or parents to the better character quality. The characters that appear in the narration of the story could be made as a model to assess the character level that appears. Thus, once again the character values of the students will be formed and actualized in daily life.

## V. CONCLUSION

The literature is very useful in character education, especially to high school students, in their language, cognitive, personality, and social development. The literature works could be made as a media for the students as a reader to care more towards the surrounding environment and proportionally in putting themselves in society life.

Through literary appreciation activity, the students could be persuaded to describe various type of characterization of the characters so it could be made as character educational media for them after they know and understand personal character quality. Eventually, the good characters that appear in literature works could be made as a role model for the students who appreciate it.

## References

- [1] Croce, Benedetto. *AESTHETIC*. New York: Noonday Press, 1965
- [2] Dickie, George T. *AESTHETIC, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA AMERICANA*, New York, 1976
- [3] Humar Sahman, drs. *Estetika telah dan historik*, Semarang: IKIP Semarang Press, 1993
- [4] Fananie, Zainuddin. *Telaah sastra*. Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2000
- [5] Kanzunudin, Mohammad. *Bahasa Indonesia untuk perguruan Tinggi*. Rembang: yayasan Adhigama, 2011
- [6] Mulyadi. *Kritik Sastra, Diktat* Surakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Universitas Sebelas Maret (UNS) Surakarta, 1986
- [7] Nuryatin, Agus. *Sastra sebagai mata Pelajaran Vokasi dan Media Pendidikan Watak*. Pidato Pengukuhan Guru besar tetap dalam bidang Ilmu Sastra Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni Universitas negeri Semarang, Semarang 6 mei, 2010
- [8] Osborn, Harold. *Aesthetic and Criticism*, Toronto: Oxford, University Press, 1970
- [9] Parker, DeWitt H. *The Principles of Aesthetics*, Second Edition, New York: Appleton Century Crofts Inc
- [10] Primadi. *Proses Kreasi, Apresiasi Belajar*, Bandung: ITB, 1978
- [11] Reading, Hugo F. *Kamus Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*. Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986

- [12] Tarigan, Henry Guntur. *Dasar-dasar Psikosastra*. Bandung: Angkasa, 1995
- [13] Wadjiz Anwar. *Filsafat Estetika*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Nur Cahaya, 1985
- [14] Wellek, rene & Austin Warren. *Teori Kesusastraan*. Terjemahan melani Budianta. Jakarta: Gramedia, 1990