

The Study of Historical Values and Character Education in the Laskar Pelangi Novel By Andrea Hirata

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Abstract. This study aims to find out and describe (1) historical value, (2) social problems, (3) the values of character education of Laskar Pelangi by Andrea Hirata. This study analyzed document data in the form of a novel, Laskar Pelangi, by Andrea Hirata as the research object. The method used was the descriptive qualitative method with the sociology of literature. The data were collected by listening and note-taking techniques with a case study strategy. The data were validated using triangulation before being analyzed using a semiotic model reading technique, namely heuristic and hermeneutic reading. Based on the results of data analysis, it was found that (1) Laskar Pelangi was created by the author to appreciate his teacher in the form of a book; (2) the social problems are poverty, education, work, and economy, which are interrelated as the problems in the life of the characters; (3) the value of character education in this novel is relevant to literary learning.

Keywords: historical values, character education, laskar pelangi novel

1 Introduction

As social beings, humans cannot be separated from society nor live individually without others. Social life and their nature as social beings require them to continue to interact in their lives. They use language to interact and communicate with each other because it is the most suitable and fundamental tool in interaction. The use of language is always needed in human interaction. Therefore, language has a very important function for human relations as a means of communication in everyday life.

The variety of languages in everyday life are classified into two, namely spoken and written languages. Spoken language is an expression of inner experience in speech; the relationship that arises from the use of this language is between the speaker and the listener. Written language is an expression of inner experience in written form; the relationship that arises is between the writer and the reader. The manifestations and relationships caused by these two types are different but share a similar function as a means of communication to express thoughts and

ideas. In its development, the variety of written language emerged as a means of expressing thoughts, opinions, and ideas in detail, even more detail than the variety of spoken language. This variety includes scientific works in the form of journals, papers, magazines, newspapers, etc. Literary work is one type of written language in language learning.

Literature develops with the changes of life and times. Literary books add up not only in number but also in style, nature, differences in thought, and form. This is also seen in the history of the development of literature over time. Every generation has its special characteristics with interesting themes and storytelling styles. Nowadays, there are many novels with the themes of youth, love, and sex. These themes are popular but less educative for readers. However, some novels do not have such themes but other themes that are well packaged for quality reading. One of them is a novel that makes education its theme. It has a good storytelling style with detailed viewpoints and settings that make this novel enjoyable and worth reading. This novel is mixed into an imaginative, suggestive, and educational reading for the reader. It is *Laskar Pelangi* by Andrea Hirata. This novel has also been used as research material for theses at various universities.

The social problem contained in this novel is a reality in education in Indonesia. It tells about poverty and its relationship with education, how difficult education is on one of the richest islands, Belitung, in Indonesia. However, the people are still struggling and trying hard to get an education. They want to eradicate poverty through education. This shows that literary works are a reflection of society at the time it was created. Literature has an important influence on the learning process. Research related to literature also needs to be done. Literary research is important and needs to be done because literary works are a social mirror in the societies in their time. Literary work is the essence of intersubjectivity, where people find their image.

Literature is all forms of human expression with language as its basis. One example of a literary work is a novel. Besides having a beautiful, interesting, and entertaining story, a serious novel should be educative, teach religion, and socio-culture. This, a serious novel has a social function to foster the readers, especially students, for their social lives.

Education is oriented towards changing one's attitude, personality, or character. Education can make a person mature, responsible, and honest with a good character. Thus, character education is a conscious effort that is planned and directed through a learning environment for the growth and development of all human potentials who have good character, good moral character, and positive and constructive effects on nature and society. Lickona states that character education aims to shape one's personality to be a virtuous human being and citizen [7].

Education, both as a system and as a process, is a form of human culture because the human understanding of the world and life is different, which then gives birth to a system of values and different mindsets, so there is also a diversity of educational styles in human life, both in the system and in its goals. Educational activity cannot be separated from the value system adopted by society because it is only with educational activities that the mindset of a community group can develop and be manifested in real life.

Regarding education, character education instills good habits so that students become aware of what is right and wrong (cognitive), good values (affective), and can practice them (psychomotor). Therefore, good character education must involve all aspects, good knowledge and good behavior.

According to Rachmad Joko Pradopo in Suwardi Endraswara, literary research has a purpose and role to understand the meaning of literary works as deeply as possible, meaning that literary research can be useful for the literature and other fields if the research is related to aspects outside of literature, for example, religion, philosophy, sociology, morals, etc. It is useful for the literature to improve the quality of literary creativity [5]. Literary research is expected to reveal the phenomena behind literary objects as human expressions and explain clearly to anyone about the intentions behind literary works [5]. In short, literary research will be a bridge between the writer, the text, and the reader.

Based on the explanation, historical values or the history of the author can have a differentiating impact in making literary works that also contain the value of character education or moral messages. Thus, this research seeks to describe the historical value, social problems, and the value of character education in *Laskar Pelangi* by Andrea Hirata.

A novel is a fictional work because it is the result of fantasy or something that does not exist. Besides novels, there are also romances and short stories [15]. Burhan Nurgiyantoro that the terms *novella* and *novelle* have the same meaning as the Indonesian term *novellet* (English: *novellet*) which means fictional prose of medium length [4]. In line with this opinion, Abrams states that the term *novel* comes from English [4]. The Italian term *novella* (German: *novelle*) comes to Indonesian.

Novella literally means *a small new thing* which is then interpreted as a short story in the form of prose. Novels are new literary works because they appeared later than the other types such as romance or poetry [13]. Etymologically, the word *novel* comes from *novellus* which means *new*. The term *novel* comes from the Latin *novellas* which then becomes *novies*, which means *new*. This new word is associated with the fact that the novel is a type of fiction that appears later than short stories and romance [14]. Therefore, the novel is the newest form of fiction. According to Robert Lindell in Herman J. Waluyo (2006:6), the first novel came from England, namely *Pamella*, which was published in 1740. Initially, *Pamella* was a form of a diary of a housemaid, then it developed and became the fictional prose form that we know today.

Atar Spring states that the novel expresses a concentration of life in a tense moment and a firm concentration of life [1]. Novels are works of fiction that reveal deeper aspects of humanity and are presented subtly. Goldmann in Ekarini Saraswati states that the novel is a story about the search for truth values by a character who has a problem in a degraded world [10]. The root of the theme that implicitly appears in the novel contains the values that organize the theme according to the existing life. Based on this definition, Goldmann further classifies novels into three types, abstract idealism novels, psychological novels (hopeful romance), and educational novels (pedagogical).

The history of the author provides an illustration that the literary work produced is based on its background conditions or events, telling various interesting things or points of view for research material. The value contained in the history or event is special so that the literary work, when studied or read, can bring the reader deep into the story or character.

Character education in the 2013 curriculum aims to improve the quality of educational processes and outcomes, leading to the formation of the noble character of students, integrated and balanced, following the standard competence of graduates in each educational unit. Through the implementation of the 2013 curriculum, which is competency-based as well as character-based,

with a thematic and contextual approach, it is hoped that students will be able to independently improve and use their knowledge, examine, internalize, and personalize character values and noble character to be manifested in daily behavior [9].

2 Method

This research is literary research so that there are no special place and time limitations. The research object was the *Laskar Pelangi* novel by Andrea Hirata consisting of 533 pages published by PT Bentang Pustaka in 2005. The research was carried out for three months, from September to December 2021.

The research method used was descriptive qualitative. The researchers describe the data obtained in a systematic, factual, and accurate manner regarding the facts and causal relationships of the phenomena studied. The existing data are in the form of document records that explain the structure and social problems of the novel, its background of creation, as well as the reception of literary works in the form of questions and answers with the readers in words. A sociological approach to literature, an approach in analyzing literary works by considering social aspects to determine the totality of a literary work, was employed. The sociology of literature approach also seeks to find the interrelationships between authors, readers, and socio-cultural conditions in literary works.

This research used the descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative research that is often used is not related to the level of research. Qualitative research always presents its findings in the form of detailed, complete, and in-depth descriptions regarding the process of why and how something happens [12].

In general, qualitative research is a case study design. A case study is a strategy in research to uncover a particular case. This research used an embedded case study research. In embedded research, these boundaries are becoming clearer because this research is not exploratory grounded research but has focused on certain boundaries targeted [12].

The data collection technique used was the library technique, listening, and taking notes. The Library technique is the science of sources used in research. Documents are used to find data on variables in the form of notes, transcripts, books, magazines, pictures, and data that are not numbers [8].

Theoretical triangulation was used more than one perspective of theory in discussing the problems studied. To find the historical and educational values in *Laskar Pelangi*, a semiotic model reading technique, namely heuristic and hermeneutic reading, was used.

3 Results and Discussions

Historical Value

The presence of Andrea Hirata Seman, the author of the debut novel *Laskar Pelangi* [2], brings something new to the world of literature and novels in Indonesia. The novel, which tells about the lives of ten children fighting for their school, seems to bring fresh and quality works for the readers. Many people praised the memoir novel because the storyline was so neat and nice and

full of moral values. As a serious novel, this sales figure certainly places it in a row of best-selling books. The novel would never have reached the hands of the reader if no one secretly sent his memoir to a publisher. No wonder Andrea's novel is said to be lucky.

For the employee of PT Telkom Bandung, who is a post-graduate alumnus of Sheffield Hallam University England and the Universite de Paris Sorbonne, writing has a noble goal. The data were taken from the written interview with Edy Zaqeus from *Pembelajar.com* while others were taken from some of Andrea Hirata's discussions on the internet. The initial idea of this writing is the author's desire to give something valuable to his teacher, namely Ms. Muslimah, Mr. Harfan, and his ten old friends. Why does it have to be a book? Because books are something luxurious in their childhood, so by writing in a book, the author has given the readers a luxury. This can be seen from the interview excerpt below.

“Laskar Pelangi (LP) was not intended to be published. I had intended to write this book since I was in the 3rd grade when I was so impressed by the efforts of my two elementary school teachers, Ms. Muslimah and Mr. Harfan Effendi, as well as 10 of my childhood friends, called the “Laskar Pelangi” group. I wrote LP as gratitude and appreciation to my teachers and my friends. A friend accidentally found the draft in my boarding room and secretly sent it to the publisher. Until now, I am still surprised that LP is still the bestseller and has been printed three times in seven months. LP is my first novel.” (CLHW No. 1)

In fact, according to Andrea, he wrote the book just to pour out his heart about the struggles of his teachers when he was at SD Muhammadiyah, East Belitong, Bangka Belitung. (CLHW No. 2) This novel tells the story of the author's life journey. The background of the writing of this novel is the author's desire to give something valuable to his teachers, called a book. Books are considered valuable because, in their journey of education, books are considered luxury items. It is a form of respect and appreciation of the author to his teachers for their efforts in advancing education.

Social Problem

The main social problem in the novel is the people of Belitong who generally live in poverty. Poverty is the basis and the cause of various social problems contained in this novel. It makes people's lives miserable and suffering due to the lack of human resources and education they have. They do not think that education is important for their children because it cannot change the future of their families. This low education causes them not to have good jobs because they do not have anything to rely on.

The quality of their human resources is far behind the others. Their jobs are nothing more than low-level jobs, for example, low-level civil servants, porters, and fishermen with minimum pay. This minimum income makes their economy run stagnant. They cannot improve their economy. Thus, they still live in poverty, making a social problem like an endless vicious circle.

Sociology is the study of social problems and their solutions. This novel has several social problems as described above along with a solution. The solution is none other than quality education. This kind of education can be realized if there is interest and feeling of need, enthusiasm, and thirst for knowledge from the students. In addition, it is necessary for a

competent teacher with a strong personality. This is well described by the author through life in a poor Muhammadiyah school.

The Value of Character Education

Laskar Pelangi by Andrea Hirata contains the values of character education.

1. **Religiosity** Religion is a view of life and positioning oneself as a creature from the creator. The presence of religious elements in literature is the existence of literature itself. In Laskar Pelangi, Ms. Muslimah as a teacher at a Muhammadiyah school always advises her students to pray on time immediately. Hastening the prayer is the most important deed. It is as narrated by Ibn Mas'ud. He said, "I asked the Messenger of Allah about the most important deed." He replied, "Praying on time" (The History of Hadith of Imam Al Bukhari and Muslim). "Pray on time to get more rewards. That is what Ms. Muslimah always advises us." (NR/prg.1/h.31/001)
2. **Honesty** is the value of goodness as an acceptable positive trait for everyone. Thus, honesty is a universal virtue. Honesty is very important for every human being in building relationships with others, colleagues, and the family. Honesty has been ingrained in Sahara. This proves that the value of honesty instilled in the Muhammadiyah school provides a fortress for us not to tell lies. The excerpt below describes the honesty of Sahara. "Another character of Sahara that stands out is her incredible honesty and true respect for the truth. She does not lie. Even though she is threatened with being cast into the lake of blazing fire, not a single lie comes out of her mouth." (NJ/prg.2/h.75/001)
3. **Tolerance** A Liong is a Confucian who is very religious. He enrolls his son in the Muhammadiyah school because of the economic situation, and he believes that Ms. Muslimah and Mr. Harfan can teach him regardless of his race, custom, and ethnicity. This form of tolerance will have an impact on mutual respect for each religion. I do not know what got into the head of his father, namely A Liong, a true Confucianist when he enrolled his only son into this puritanical and poor Islamic school." (NT/prg.2/h.68/001)
4. **Discipline** In the Muhammadiyah school, discipline values are instilled. Ms. Muslimah teaches her students to always be disciplined like when she reprimands Mahar for being late in submitting his works. She prioritizes the discipline and punctuality of her students in collecting their works, not the quality of the works. "It's not that your work is of inferior quality, but that in any work, we must have discipline." (ND/prg.2/h.190/002)
5. **Hard Work** Hard work for Laskar Pelangi members is to continue to receive education no matter what like Lintang who does not complain in the slightest about the situation. He must ride a bicycle inherited from the family as far as 80 km away and back to get to school. He even feels proud because he can go to school even though he must travel a long distance. The excerpts are as follows. "At this school, I understand the meaning of sincerity, struggle, and

integrity. More than that, the pioneers of this school left a very valuable lesson about the great ideas of noble Islam, the courage to pass down the idea even though it was constantly plagued with difficulties, and the concept of living life with the idea of giving the maximum benefit to others through sacrifice selflessly.” (NKK/prg.3/h.84/001)

6. Creativity Being creative means thinking and doing something to produce new ways or results from what is already owned. Being creative in any field means breaking down the barriers like what Lintang did. He is a very genius child at the Muhammadiyah school. He always creates a different way of teaching his classmates. This is done for his friends to fully understand the lessons received previously from the teacher. Lintang's ideas have always been successfully applied to his classmates. After they can make sentences in English, Lintang then teaches them to understand the structure and tenses. The excerpt is as follows. “Learning words first, not learning the language. That’s the essence of Lintang’s version of the English learning paradigm. A brilliant idea that only people who understand the principles of language learning can think of.” (NK/prg.5/h.116/002)
7. Independence In the following excerpt of independent values, Ms. Muslimah always does her assignments without depending on others, including in the preparation of the syllabus as teaching materials in the Muhammadiyah school. She does the job without any help from anyone else. “She compiled her syllabus for character lessons and taught us from an early age the basic views of morals, democracy, law, justice, and human rights far from before people are now fussing about materialism versus spiritual development in education” (NM/prg.1/h.30/001)
8. Democracy Democratic values began to be instilled in the Muhammadiyah school from the beginning. Ms. Muslimah teaches her students to consult in making decisions like, during the election for the class captain, Ms. Muslimah invites her students to vote on who deserves to be class president. “She wanted to be fair, so she immediately asked us to write down the name of the new class captain that we wanted on a piece of paper, folded it, and handed it over to her. We wrote our vote seriously and kept it strictly a secret.” (NDs/prg.1/h.72/001)

Laskar Pelangi by Andrea Hirata can be read by not only students but also all people regardless of their education level and age. It means that this novel is good to be used as a literary learning material because it contains a lot of mindset and educational values that can be imitated. These values can be one of the learning materials for Indonesian literature at the senior high school level in the 2013 curriculum. Learning materials are prepared based on content standards that contain basic competence for the twelfth-grade students in the even semester. Basic competence referred to is KD 3.1 of understanding the structure and rules of novel texts both verbally and in writing and KD 4.1 of interpreting the meaning of novel texts both orally and in writing.

4 Conclusions

Based on the results of data analysis, it was found that (1) the historical value in the Laskar Pelangi novel was created by the author to appreciate his teacher in the form of a book; (2) social problems in Laskar Pelangi novel, namely poverty, education, work, and economy, which are interrelated as problems in the character's life; (3) there are eight values of character education in this novel, namely religious values, honest values, tolerance values, discipline values, hard work values, creative values, independent values, democratic values relevant to literary learning.

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