

**Students' Perspective Toward the Indonesian National Characters in  
Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Short Story Entitled "Inem"**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research examines readers' perspective of 18 Indonesian national characters in Inem, a short story by Pramoedya Ananta Toer. The sample of this research is 34 students of XI Akuntansi Keuangan dan Lembaga of SMKN 1 Pujon. The aim of this research is to analyze whether the students' perceptions toward Pramoedya Ananta Toer's short story, entitled Inem match to their understanding on 18 Indonesian national characters. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. The finding of this research states each student has different perception of the Indonesian national characters in the Pramoedya Ananta Toer's short story entitled Inem. However, most of the students have the same perceptions of the Indonesian national character in the short story entitled Inem. Their perception depends on how they understand the meaning of each of the 18 Indonesian national characters. Therefore, the researcher claims that the students' perceptions toward Pramoedya Ananta Toer's short story, entitled Inem match to their understanding on 18 Indonesian national characters.

**Keywords:** Students' Perspective; Short Story; Indonesian National Character

**INTRODUCTION**

According to Permendikbud (2018) the character education in the primary or secondary education units are organized through Intracurricular, Co-curricular and Extracurricular activities, which are implemented creatively and in an integrated manner. As we know, character education is education that develops cultural values and character to the learners themselves, therefore it becomes the basis for them in thinking, behaving, acting in the development of themselves as an individual, a member of society, and a citizen. Innana (2018) explained that in order to develop

high integrity moral values and have respect for others, be honest, and have a sense of environmental care, the students need character education from their early childhood. It would be better for teachers to insert the character education in every part of the lesson, for instance, students are given short stories text for their extensive reading materials and asked to give their perspective of the Indonesian national characters of their reading materials. Literature is a mirror of the society, culture, and the circumstances happening in that time as Dubey (2013) states whenever literature combined with other aspects of socio-cultural, it will reflect the issues that have happened in the past, such as historical issues, politics and social. As the Indonesian famous author, Pramoedya Ananta Toer wrote a short story entitled 'Inem' takes a setting in the Indonesian national movement era, in which there was injustice in gender equality and social status.

Septiningsih (2015) states young generations in Indonesia will come to moral and character degradation and lose their national identity whenever the Indonesian national characters are weakened. Therefore, the character education cannot be ignored, it should be incorporated into all lines of education in Indonesia. She also states literatures concern with human endeavour to the development of characters needed in a proper life as a good human being. According to Kanzunudin (2010) literature and character are inseparable. He also states literacy works in which have intrinsic factors such as characterization and setting can be used as the examples of the character education for the readers or viewers.

In this research, the researcher uses short story entitled "Inem" as the object. Inem is a short story that have been written by Pramodya Ananta Toer. Pramodya Ananta Toer is one of the famous author in Indonesia. In this short story, the author recounts Inem's journey from the house of her employer, Gus Muk's mother, until she was founded as a bride, living her hard life as a wife, then widowed, until finally experiencing rejection by Gus muk's mother when she wanted to return to work. Then, Her history that could not be saved as a woman as well as a human being when her humanity was abused by those closest to him. The author introduces the several characters in his Inem's shor story is that Gus Muk, Markaban, Gus Muk's mother, Inem's mother, Inem's father, and Inem's sister. Those the characters will be analyzed by the researcher using reader's response of literature view.

Reader response or reader perspective is simply a term to associate the criticism of a text particularly related to the readers' responses as the valued interpretation. My Van (in Ningrum, 2015:4) also supports the notion by stating that a work, or a text, may be interpreted differently because each reader has distinctive feelings and experience. This means that the theory of the reader's response recognizes the possibility of interpreting a text differently, provided there is evidence that the interpretation is relevant.

The researcher chooses "Students' perspective toward the Indonesian National Characters in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's short story entitled "Inem" as the title. It is significant to know students' response toward 18 Indonesian national character in the Pramoedya Ananta Toer short story, entitled Inem. Pramoedya Ananta Toer is a famous Indonesian author who also famous as an International litterateur in which his works' setting is in the era of Indonesia movement. In this study, the researcher eager to analyze whether the students' perceptions toward Pramoedya Ananta Toer short story, entitled Inem match to their understanding to 18 Indonesian national characters.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Previous Related Study**

Lustanti Septiningsih (2015) from The Center for Development and Protection of the Agency for Language Development and Development of the Ministry of Education and Culture. In this journal entitled "Building National Character Based on Literature: A Study on Literary Works in Secondary School". Her research uses descriptive method. This research focuses on the analysis themes of literary work. According to the findings of the research, the teaching materials depict the themes of love, care, hard work, helpfulness, education, cooperation, and leadership. It concludes that literary works in Indonesian teaching materials for senior secondary schools can be used to help students develop their character.

Citra Hadiyati Ningrum (2018) from English Language Teaching, Language and Art Faculty, State University of Surabaya. The research entitled "The Use of Reader-Response Theory to Teach Reading Narrrative Text for Tenth Graders of Senior High School". In this research, the researcher describes the use of reader-response theory to teach reading narrative text and to describe the students' responses toward the text. From this research, it could be said that the reader-response theory was used in the form of spoken and written activities.

Novita Aynun Aldila (2018) from University of Jember. The research entitled "Resepsi Pembaca Terhadap Novel Bukan Pasar Malam Karya Pramoedya Ananta Toer dalam Situs Goodreads dan Pemanfaatannya Pembelajaran di SMA". In this research, the researcher uses novel "Bukan Pasar Malam by Pramoedya Ananta Toer" as the object. The method of research is qualitative reception of literature. The research data are readers' response, which indicate the reception on the website and the answers from interviews of the intrinsic and sociological aspects of the Bukan Pasar Malam's novel.

## **Literature**

There are many definitions of literature because every people have different definitions about Literature. Every country has different words to say literature. British uses “literature”, France uses “littérature”, in Germany uses “Literatur” and in England using “letterkund”. According to Culler (in A’yunin, 2016:11) Literature is a practice in which authors attempt to advance or renew literature and thus is always implicitly a reflection on literature itself. Literature is reflection of the author’s thought, feelings, and desires through a distinctive language. According to (Fananie in A’yunin, 2016:11), in global, literature is fiction which is as the result of creation based on spontaneous emotion that is able to esthetic aspect based on language or meaning aspect. In addition, according (Bressler in A’Yunin, 2016:11) states that the definition of literature from the concept is simply a written work that contains certain qualities to a definition that must include the dynamic relationship of the actual text and the readers.

Literature as a subject is part of Bahasa Indonesia subjects. Based on the Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP) (Ministry of National Education, in Septiningsih 2015:3) language subjects' objectives Indonesia is designed so that students can: 1) communicate effectively and efficiently in accordance with applicable ethics; 2) appreciate and be proud to use Indonesian as a language unity and state language; 3) understand The Indonesian language and use it appropriately and creatively for a variety of purposes; and 4) use the Indonesian language to improve intellectual capabilities as we grow older.

## **Short Story**

Mustofa (2018) states that short story is branch of literary work. A short story is a piece of fiction that is typically written in narrative prose. According to the short story, which evolved from earlier oral story-telling traditions in the 17th century, has become a popular form of literature in the modern era. A short story contains almost all of the characteristics and elements of a novel, but they are used in a different and limited way to achieve the desired effect. A short story focuses on a small group of characters who work together to create a single effect or mood. It is simpler than the novel. A short story typically focuses on a single incident, has a single plot, a single setting, and spans a short period of time. For short stories, there is no set length. The order of exposition, conflict, intensifying action, crisis, climax, resolution, and so on may differ from one writer to the next. In modern times, writers may or may not follow such an order. Each writer can use the short story form in a unique and innovative way.

In essence, a short story is a literary genre in which a single significant event or scene involving a small number of characters is presented. There is no set length

for short stories. There is no formal distinction between an anecdote, a short story, and a novel in terms of word count. Rather, the form's boundaries are determined by the rhetorical and practical context in which a given story is produced and considered, so what constitutes a short story can vary across genres, countries, eras, and commentators. The short story has been regarded as both an apprenticeship from preceding longer works and a crafted form in its own right, collected in books of comparable length, price, and distribution.

### **Reader's Response**

Reader Response Theory is one of the literary critique theories in which students criticize the text on the basis of their own experiences, emotions and thoughts and quote wording to prove critical thinking and text conformity. Reader-Response theory values the readers' role the most. According to Rosenblatt as cited (in Ningrum, 2018:3), reader-response theory usually leads to the esthetic reading, in which it is the reading process that the readers play an active role to create meanings of the text by connecting their experience and emotional competence. Tomkins as cited (in Ningrum, 2018:3) states that reader-response theory is simply a term to associate the criticism of a text particularly related to the readers' responses as the valued interpretation. My Van (in Ningrum, 2015:4) also supports the notion by stating that a work, or a text, may be interpreted differently because each reader has distinctive feelings and experience. This means that the theory of the reader's response recognizes the possibility of interpreting a text differently, provided there is evidence that the interpretation is relevant.

Reader's response or reader's perspective also has a correlation with sociology of literature because the object of the research is the reader's society. Endraswara states that the essence sociology of literature is to view literary work as socio-cultural products, and not the result of aesthetic alone (Novita, 2018:30). The reader's response has a correlation with literary sociology because the object of the study is the reader's society. Endraswara states that the essence of literary sociology is to view literary works as socio-cultural products, and not the result of aesthetics alone (2013:1). Endraswara's statement affirms the relationship between reception and sociology of literature because it is not just a vacuum but also a message that is presented as a social and cultural product of literary works. The reader will later receive the message and respond differently.

According to Wiyatmi in her book "sociology of Literature" divide three types of sociology of literature approaches. First is sociology of the author who blames social status, social ideology and others that concern the author as a procedur of literary work. Second is sociology of literary works that blame the literary work itself. Third is sociology of reader that blame the reader and the social influence of literary works. The above three approaches simply mention three study objects,

namely authors, literary works and readers. To appreciate a literary work, it takes the most appropriate approach. An approach to literature which can identify social aspects and vice versa. It describes literature based on social aspects and the relationship between society, readers and literary work themselves. A third approach, namely the reader as a respondent was used in this study.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Sample**

The researcher used qualitative descriptive as the method of this study. The researcher analyzes 18 Indonesian national characters based on the students' perception on it through the short story authored by Pramoedya Ananta Toer entitled *Inem*. The population of this research is the students of SMKN 1 Pujon. Then, the researchers took the sample in XI Akuntansi Keuangan dan Lembaga (AKL) that consist of thirty-four students.

### **Procedure and Instruments**

To collect data, the researcher employs an observational method. Students refer to *Inem's* Short story as the object of observation, which is a tool for collecting data. Aside from this approach, the researcher often collects data using a questionnaire. The researcher uses questionnaire to get accurate data. The procedure of the research is that the researcher do an observation in students of XI Akuntansi Keuangan dan Lembaga at SMKN 1 Pujon. After doing observation, the researcher gives the questioners to the students of XI Akuntansi Keuangan dan Lembaga at SMKN 1 Pujon. Then, the researcher gives a time for student around a week to read the short story "*Inem*". Next, the students answer the questions in the questionnaires in Google Form. After that, the researcher try to analyze the data from students' perspective. Then, the researcher gives the conclusion.

### **Data Analysis**

There are two phases of this analysis. First, giving questioneres in the form of Google Formulir to the students. Second, analyzing the students' perceptions from the collected data of the questioners given before about 18 Indonesian national characters applied in the short story.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The questioners were given to the sample to gather the perceptions about the characters in the short story written by Pramoedya Ananta Toer entitled *Inem*. The Ministry of National Education through the Curriculum Center, Research and

Development Agency defines the values of character education into 18-character values. Starting in the 2011 school year, all levels of education in Indonesia must include character education in their education process. The 18 values of character education are: religious, honest, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creative, independent, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love for the country, respect for achievement, friendly / communicative, peace-loving, fond of reading, environmental care, social care, and responsibility (Puskur-Balitbang, 2011: 9- 11).

The questioners are in the form of Google Formulir, the link of the formular gave to the sample a week after the short story given to them. It took three days for the researcher to gather the students' response to the Google Formulir given in the Google Spreadsheets. All of the target sample from 34 students are returned and they answered all of the questions. The students took one to seven days to read the short story. 29 of 34 students have understood about the 18 Indonesian national characters, that is 85% of the samples. While 5 of 34 students still unclearly understood about 18 Indonesian national characters, that is 15% of the samples. The following is an analysis of students' perceptions about 18 Indonesian national characters.

#### 1. Religious Character

The students perceive the religious character of this short story is in some advices given by Ndoro, Mamuk's mother. She advised Inem to pray for her husband in order to God gives his husband welfare. "*Kalau engkau menganggur, engkau harus berdoa pada Tuhan agar dia selamat selalu*" (Toer, 1952:50). The religious character also perceived by the students in Inem's wedding ceremony in which Inem's father serves Tayub to entertain the guests. However, the family of Inem's mother, some of them are Kyai, considers Tayub is contradict with Islamic teaching.

#### 2. Honest Character

The students perceive honest character in Inem in the part when Inem told Ndoro about her experiences with her husband who had hurt her and she told Ndoro to accept her back to serve in Ndoro's family.

#### 3. Tolerance Character

The tolerance character in this short story perceives by the students is in the character of Mamuk that she accepts Inem's decision to marry and leave Mamuk's house even though Inem is her only friend and always assist her in her home. The tolerance character of Ndoro seen when she comes and assists to prepare Inem's wedding ceremony in Inem's house even though Ndoro is Inem's employer and she

actually objected to Inem's marriage. Nodoro respects Inem's family decision although it is contrary with her will dan thoughts.

#### 4. Discipline Character

The students perceive the character of discipline in the character of Inem when she works in Gus Muk's house. Inem works in the kitchen, she is deft and diligent little girl. She also helps Gus Muk in the bedroom, and accompany Gus Muk when she needs to go to the toilet at night. Nodoro also advice Inem to have respect, filial and serve her husband well.

#### 5. Hard working Character

The students see the hard-working character in Inem character when the writer explains in the beginning of the story, 'Ia sopan, tak manja, cekatan dan rajin'. Inem is a polite, unspoiled, deft and diligent little girl. They also perceive Inem and her mother as hard-workers women. Right after her marriage Inem and her mother make batik all day and night. Inem's mother also works on the rice field to support her family needs. Although Inem's husband is rude to her, she always does her best to serve him.

#### 6. Creative Character

*"Perempuan-perempuan di kampung kami, apabila tak bekerja di sawah, membatiklah pekerjaannya."* From that sentence, students perceive the creative character of the people in Inem's village and the culture happen at that time. In the Inem's wedding ceremony, creative character also emerges in the description of Inem's house. *'Rumah pun telah diperbagus dengan pajangan daun beringin dan daun kelapa muda,'*

#### 7. Independent

*'Inem yang menjadi janda, dan menjadi beban keluarga sesekali dipukuli akan tetapi tidak pernah datang ke rumah bunda untuk mengeluh.'* Inem, who was a widow and a burden on the family, was occasionally beaten but never came to her mother's house to complain. From that sentence some students perceive Inem as an independent woman.

Some of them also perceive Markaban is an independent man from Inem's mother explanation about him; *'Apalagi si Markaban anak orang kaya – anak satu satunya. Dia sendiri sekarang sudah mulai turt berdagang sapi di Rembang, di Cepu, di Medang, di Pati, di Ngawen, dan juga di Blora ini.'* Moreover, Markaban is the son of a rich man – he is the only child. He himself has now started to trade cattle in Rembang, in Cepu, in Medang, in Pati, in Ngawen, and also in Blora. One of the



students also see Mamuk as an independent girl when she come to watch Tayub at Inem's wedding party, even it is forbidden by her mother to join in the crowd to watch it.

#### 8. Democratic Character

Most of the students cannot find the democratic character in the story. However, a student can perceive democratic character when Inem's family have to choose the entertainment to be served on Inem's wedding party, Wayang or Tayub. Meanwhile, some students do not understand the meaning of democratic character.

#### 9. Curiosity Character

Mamuk wants to know everything happen to Inem after her marriage. Therefore, students see that Mamuk has curiosity character.

#### 10. National Spirit Character

The national spirit character, according to the students, is in the character of Inem's father in which he was appointed to the police by the Dutch East Indies government to combat criminals, that is his friends.

#### 11. Love for the Country Character

Students perceive Wayang as a culture of the society explained in the short story as the representation of love for the country character.

#### 12. Respect for Achievement Character

According to the students as the reviewer in this research, the respect for achievement character expresses by Pak Inem, that he is appointed as police by the Dutch East Indies government to combat criminals. They also state that everyone does not have any courage to report bapak Inem's criminality to the police because many of emak Inem's families are police officers.

#### 13. Friendly and Communicative Character

According to the students as the reviewer of this short story a friendly and communicative character expressed by Mamuk when she regards Inem as her friend in the sentence '*Inem adalah kawanku di antara kawan-kawan perempuanku*' (page 39). Another student also state that the character can be seen from Mamuk's feeling. She feels lonely and lost Inem, her best friend, when Inem is not stay at Mamuk's

house anymore in the sentences *'Mulai saat itu Inem tak lagi diam di rumah kami. Terasa sekali olehku akan kehilangan kawan yang dekat*

itu' (page 44). Other reviewers find that character in the beginning of the story, in which Inem and Mamuk have a conversation as best friends expresses what they feel and want to know.

#### 14. Peace Loving Character

*'Inem menundukkan kepala. Ia sangat hormat terhadap bunda. Tak pernah satukali pun kudengar ia membantah'* (page 42). From the explanation above the reviewers state that Inem has peace loving character. Other expression of peace-loving character can be seen from Mamuk mother's advice to Inem, that Inem have to give respect and be devoted to her husband. Reviewers also see that character from Inem's body language when she speaks to Ngoro, Mamuk's mother, she always bows her head in front of her. Inem seems like she does not have any energy to argue to what others say to her. While other reviewer states that Ngoro, Mamuk's mother, always keeps and maintains the courtesy in her family.

#### 15. Fond of Reading Character

Fond or love of reading character cannot be found in this short story.

#### 16. Environmental Care Character

Some students, as the reviewers of this short story state that environmental care character is what people in the surrounding perceive some cases and connect them to the cultural ethics at that time in the consideration that Inem is a young widow. From the last dialog between Inem and Mamuk's mother at the end of the story; *Tak bunda berbimbang-bimbang dalam menjawabnya. Berkata tegas: "Inem, engkau sekarang janda. Di sini banyak anak lelaki yang sudah besar-besar. Bukankah tidak baik dipandang mata orang lain?"* (Toer, 1952:52). From that statement, she refuses Inem when she wants to work and serve her family again. Other reviewers state the environmental care expressed by Ngoro, Mamuk's mother when she come and participate in the preparation of Inem's wedding ceremony. However, most of the students do not find any environmental care character in this short story.

#### 17. Social Care Character

The Indonesian national character of social care in this short story perceived by some the students that there are no other guests who wants to give more of their contribution in Inem's wedding ceremony. Other student states social care character is viewed from Ngoro, Mamuk's mother when she advice Inem who wants to serve in Ngoro's family again; '*Bukan. Bukan itu maksudku. Kalau di tempat yang banyak lelakinya ada seorang canda yang begitu muda seperti engkau, tidak baiklah dipandang mata orang lain.*' (page 52). Mamuk's mother tells Inem's mother that a little girl, like Inem, is forbidden to be married. Other reviewers also state that social care character in this short story can be assumed from the event that Mamuk's mother come to Inem's house to participate in the preparation of Inem's wedding ceremony.

#### 18. Responsibility Character

According to the reviewers of this short story, the responsibility character can be noticed in Inem's activities after her marriage that are devoted to her husband. They also review from the story that after her marriage, Inem grow more mature and become like a woman even though she is still 9 years old. While other students as the reviewers state the responsibility character in the event of Inem's wedding preparation, in which the family from Inem's future husband send some goods and needs for the wedding ceremony. Other reviewer also states that Mamuk's father is a responsible husband from the statement of Mamuk's mother; '*Ayahmu adalah orang yang paling baik di seluruh dunia, Muk*' (page 50).

The purpose of this study is to analyze whether the students' perceptions toward Pramoedya Ananta Toer's short story, entitled Inem match to their understanding of 18 Indonesian national characters. They perceive Inem as an honest, hard-working, discipline, creative, independent, friendly and communicative, peace-loving, and responsible woman. The students also find the character of religious, tolerance, discipline, peace-loving and social care through the character of Ngoro, Mamuk's mother. While Mamuk perceived by the students as a tolerance, independent, curiosity, friendly and communicative girl.

Inem's mother can be seen as a religious, hard-working, creative, democratic, respect of achievement, peace-loving woman while Markaban as Inem's husband has an independent character perceived by the students. Mamuk's father or Ngoro's husband has responsibility character and Inem's father seen by the students has national spirit dan respect for achievement characters. After analyzing the students' perceptions toward this short story, in fact, not all the 34 students understand all the 18 Indonesian national characters. The result of this misunderstanding of 18 Indonesian national characters is a misperception of the content of the story. In the

section of environmental care character, students, as the reviewers of the short story, perceive environmental care as the society around the neighborhood who care one to each other. Whereas, according to Asmani (2012) environmental care character is the human action to maintain the environment and prevent the damage of the environment surround him. Some of the 18 Indonesian national characters are unnoticeable in the short story by some students, whereas others can perceive those characters through the story clearly. some students misunderstood about some Indonesian national character dan disable to distinguish some Indonesian national characters, therefore they mismatched them with the events and the characters in the short story.

## CONCLUSION

The data analysis leads to the conclusion that each student has different perception of the Indonesian national characters in the Pramoedya Ananta Toer's short story entitled *Inem*. However, most of the students have the same perceptions of the Indonesian national character in the short story entitled *Inem*. Their perception depends on how they understand the meaning of each of the 18 Indonesian national characters. Therefore, the researcher claims that the students' perceptions toward Pramoedya Ananta Toer's short story, entitled *Inem* match to their understanding on 18 Indonesian national characters. As the suggestion, the researcher expects that this research will be useful for further researcher who wants to conduct the same research, especially in analyzing other author's works which uses reader's respond of literature. Then, the researcher obtains that this research is far for being perfect. The researcher expects that someone will give good comment to make this research becomes better. The last, if someone wants to discuss about literary work, particularly on analyzing the character in short story, they have to understand about the short story itself first. From that understanding, we can find the characters of the story comprehensively.

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