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Humanity Values in *The Oyster and The Pearl* and *The Case of Crushed Petunias* Drama

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Abstract

This study aims at examining humanity values in drama scripts used as teaching materials in drama class. The use of drama scripts with humanity values was considered as the implementation of Indonesian education regulation about character building implemented from elementary to higher level of education in Indonesia. The source of the data are the drama scripts of *The Oyster and the Pearl* by William Saroyan and *the Case of Crushed Petunias* by Tennessee William. This study analysed the sentences and words in the narration and dialogue indicating humanity values, the theme, and conflict as data by referring to semiotic theory. This study used descriptive analytical study as a research method. The result reveals that these drama scripts have humanity values in terms of altruism, honesty and integrity revealed by the main characters as shown by Harry, Ms. McCutcheon, the writer and Clark in *the Oyster and the Pearl* and Dorothy and the Man in *the Case of Crushed Petunias*, in responding to other character's conflict. The attitudes revealed by the characters indicate humanity values which help resolving the conflicts, and which also reflect good values in the drama.

Key words: Humanity Values, Altruism, Honesty and Integrity

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti nilai-nilai kemanusiaan dalam naskah drama yang digunakan sebagai bahan ajar di kelas drama. Penggunaan naskah drama dengan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan dianggap sebagai implementasi peraturan pendidikan Indonesia tentang pembangunan karakter yang dilaksanakan dari tingkat pendidikan dasar hingga tinggi di Indonesia. Sumber data adalah naskah drama *The Oyster and The Pearl* oleh William Saroyan dan *Case of Crushed Petunias* oleh Tennessee William. Penelitian ini menganalisis kalimat dan kata-kata dalam narasi dan dialog yang menunjukkan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan, tema, dan konflik sebagai data dengan mengacu pada teori semiotik. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian analitik deskriptif sebagai metode penelitian. Hasilnya mengungkapkan bahwa naskah drama ini memiliki nilai kemanusiaan dalam hal altruisme, kejujuran, dan integritas yang diungkapkan oleh karakter utama seperti yang ditunjukkan oleh Harry, Ms. McCutcheon, penulis dan Clark dalam *Oyster and The Pearl*, Dorothy, dan The Man dalam *The Case Crushed Petunias*, dalam menanggapi konflik karakter lain. Sikap yang diungkapkan oleh karakter

menunjukkan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan yang membantu menyelesaikan konflik, dan yang juga mencerminkan nilai-nilai baik dalam drama.

Kata Kunci: Nilai-nilai Kemanusiaan, Altruisme, Kejujuran, dan Integritas

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian education system is now set based on character building as stated in AU No. 20, 2013, indicating that Indonesian government highly focuses on nation building. This policy has been deployed in educational system started from basic to high level of Indonesian Education system. As stated by Ruseno (2012) in www.researchgate.net/publication (2012), character is derived from three main aspects; *moral knowing*, *moral feeling*, and *moral behavior* integrated in a whole. Habits and repetition are needed to internalize good characters in mind and action.

The main concern of Indonesian government gives impacts on high education system by preparing a supporting curriculum. In English Literature Study Program, the curriculum is arranged by referring to the standardized indicators to support the government policy. One aspect in the curriculum which needs to be considered is the subjects' arrangement which particularly does not only assists students' needs but also support their character building. This means the study program has a commitment to have humanity and moral values as focal plane in setting character building. One of the main source of humanity and moral values is in literary texts in terms of drama, prose and poetry, with aesthetic and artistic attributes which distinguish them from texts of everyday use, as stated by Klarer (1998, p.1). These literary texts enable intrinsic values to be attached to readers' emotion and expectation once they are engaged with such texts. A play can be analyzed from the language aspects used in the dialogue, (Burton 1980; Herman 1991), politeness strategy used by the characters in the dialogue (Simpson 1989; Leech 1992), and characterization used to characterize the characters (Short 1989), besides symbols used to reveal the message, theme and ideology.

Oyster and the Pearl by William Saroyan and The Case of Crushed Petunias by Tennessee Williams are dramas with humanity values which provoke wistful in the narrative. Main characters in Oyster and the Pearl are portrayed in integrity characteristic in resolving the conflict. They conduct an honest and helpful attitude to support Clay, the main character, as the central point of the story. Some other characters are also shown in a balanced portion to show integrity as part of the story. The Case of Crushed Petunias by William Saroyan also reveals the human nature through Miss Simple and the Man as main characters. These characters depict life, death, and the way to negotiate with them in their dialogues. The characterization of Miss Simple as a naive but honest woman is supported by the Man as another main character in the drama. The Man introduces Miss Simple to another color and nuance of life, one that Miss Simple has no idea outside her petunias barricade. Honesty and integrity are shown in the order of events which could lead to an agreement that humanity values as integrity and honesty could help resolve the conflict, in particular internal conflict of the character.

The drama scripts are used as main sources in Drama class in English Literature study program to enhance students' awareness of humanity and moral values by relying on semiotic analysis to reveal them. Barthes semiotic concept is

used to uncover how the connoted symbols lead to values as the main message in the dramas. Signification process can be used to reveal the hidden meaning in the symbols and signifiers so meaning is transformed to the connotative one and myth. This semiotic concept operates at denotative and connotative level, to produce the contextual meaning even a myth, as what Barthes defines in Culler, 2000, as a delusion to be exposed, because it reveals the ideological implications of what seems natural. Humanity values is commonly perceived through literary texts in pragmatic perspectives. As stated by Abrams (1955) that pragmatically, literary texts are signaling positive moral values so readers get enlighten after reading these texts. This study then was aimed at investigating how humanity values are revealed in the *The Oyster* and *The Pearl* drama, by referring to altruism, integrity and honesty concepts.

Humanity values like altruism, honesty, and integrity are derived from Comte's philosophy and Sorokin's sociological concept. Altruism is described as attitudes in helping others without any personal motives (P. Darlington, Jr, 1978; Pop, 2001; Jeffreys et al, 2006; Wuthnow, 1993; Schenk, 1987). Integrity as moral values is defined as attitude in having a commitment in what someone believes (Shauber, 1996). People with integrity tend to show a commitment and honesty. The values that a text shares could reflect human experience and expectation.

Research Problems

The research problem to be investigated in this research is;

- a. How is humanity values in terms of altruism, honesty and integrity revealed in the *Oyster* and the *Pearl* and the *Case of the Crushed Petunias* drama?
- b. In what circumstance do the humanity values resolve the conflict in the stories?

The objective of the research

This research aims at investigating how humanity values revealed in the dramas and in what circumstance the values help resolving the conflict in the stories.

Significance of the Research

This research is contributive to literary field of study especially in terms of applying the semiotic theory to uncover the meaning of symbols of humanity values in drama as literary texts.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applies descriptive analytical method to reveal the humanity values. The data in the narrative as narration, dialogue and conflict, are identified and analysed by referring to Barthes' semiotic concept and integrity, honesty, altruism defined as humanity concepts by referring to the theories (P. Darlington, Jr, 1978; Pop, 2001; Jeffreys et al, 2006; Wuthnow, 1993; Schenk, 1987). The data is interpreted at the denotative and connotative level by referring to the signification process, before concluding the result.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of this study reveals that honesty, altruism and integrity are the main values revealed in *Oyster* and the *Pearl* drama, as revealed in the *Case of the Crushed Petunias*. The values are reflected in the characters' actions revealed in the narration

and dialogue, the plot structure reflecting the chronological actions, and also the conflict that the characters resolve.

Integrity, altruism, and honesty in Oyster and the Pearl

Situated in OK by-the-sea location, with barber shop as the centre of the play, this play surrounds the characters revealing integrity, honesty and altruism to each other. Harry van Duysen, an old fashioned and humble barber, used to have an intimate chit chat with Clay Larabee, a nine year old boy who often stop by at the barber shop to give practice on a haircut to Harry or just to play around. The intimacy indicates the care of an old man as Clay is a good smart boy though he was left by the father, Clark Larabee.

Harry as the main character in the Oyster and the Pearl, manages to be very helpful and concerned to Clay Larabee. The conflict, Clay' s desire to have more money to have an advertisement to ask for his father to go home, is responded by the main character like Harry, Miss McCutcheon, Carl, the writer, and Clark, by showing a deep concern, altruism, honesty and integrity in resolving Clay' s problem through the symbolism of actions and verbal expressions.

Harry accentuates his concern not for the sake of a mere courtesy but because he really cares of the boy, when the boy told him that his father left the family without any penny. Harry' s attention is revealed in the dialogue, " *Now, wait a minute, Clay, let me get this straight. Where is your father?*" . His curiosity indicates a deep concern, which later leads to impact on other characters in helping to resolve Clay' s conflict of being left by his father and needs some money to have an advertisement in a newspaper to ask for his father to come home. Harry' s concern is also revealed in the following dialogue:

HARRY : What do you mean, he went off?
CLAY : He just picked up and went off
HARRY : Did he say when he was coming back?
CLAY :No. All he said was, enough's He wrote it on the kitchen wall

Harry' s integrity was connoted through his previous decision he made about life, as shown in his following dialog with Miss McCutcheon, a cynical but sincere character:

HARRY : Depends on what you are looking for. I stopped here twenty-four years ago because decided I wasn't looking for anything more. Well, I was mistaken. I was looking, and I've found exactly what I was looking for?
THE GIRL : What's that?
HARRY : A chance to take my time. That's why I'm still here. What are looking for, Miss McCutcheon!

Harry' s integrity was symbolised by the decision to stay, to take his time. Taking his time signifies his willing to take part in blending with the people in the town, Ok-by the sea, California. It connotes willingness to help them and to concern with their problems, as poverty. His integrity is represented in living and joining the people in the town, who all have simple mind set about life. Harry even gives a

free-of-charge haircut, because he knows that the people are living in poverty, as what he tells to Ms. McCutcheon:

HARRY : Miss McCutcheon. The people of O.K-by-the-Sea are all poor. Most of them can't afford to pay for the haircuts I give them. There's no excuse for this town at all, but the sea is here, and so are the hills. A few people find jobs a couple of months every year North or South, come back half dead of homesickness, and live next to nothing the rest of the year. A few get pensions. Every family has a garden and a few chickens, and they make few dollars selling vegetables and eggs. In a town of almost a thousand people there isn't one rich man. Not even one who is well-off. And yet these people are the richest I have ever known.

The people are incapable of affording their needs and necessity because most of them are jobless, but they have a great integrity. Though they try to find jobs out there, still they come back to the place because of homesickness. They have a bond to each other. The children are not really aware of their future, and tend to choose to be part of the nature, the beach and the sea, while playing and enjoying their childhood time. This situation is connoting a simplicity, a traditional way of life, a natural one. This is signified by the people's choice to be in such a way, and that what makes an outsider like Harry to stay. His decision shows his integrity to be part of the community and to be part of their way of life. He also wants to help them by providing free hair cut that the people cannot even afford as seen from the following dialogue;

CLAY : I guess I'd never get a haircut if you weren't in town, Mr. Van Dusen
HARRY : Nobody would, since I'm the only barber.
CLAY : I mean, free of charge.

Miss McCutcheon, a new teacher in town, also shows a great concern to be part of the community in the beach after previously planned to change the people's simple mind set about life.

THE GIRL : One week at this school has knocked me for a loop. As a matter of fact, I want to quit and go home to San Francisco. At the same time I have a feeling I ought to stay. What do you think?

HARRY : Are you serious? I mean, in asking me?

THE GIRL : Of course I'm serious. You've been here a long time. You know everybody in town. Shall I go, or shall I stay?

She is urged to be part of the community because the people's purity and they have no enthusiasm about money except for major needs. They have no ambition in life, and quite happy enough with it. As a new teacher, Miss McCutcheon was symbolised as a difference, in terms of a person and a thing, which the people would not want or need, because she is different from them. This is indicated in the following dialogue between her and Harry:

THE GIRL : I'm new here.

HARRY : You'd be new anywhere-brand new, I might say. Surely you don't live here.

THE GIRL : As a matter of fact, I do. At any rate, I've been here since last Sunday. You see, I'm the new teacher at the school.

Miss McCutcheon' perception of life is very much different for the one that the people have. She symbolises modernity and new ideas, through her thought, attitude and even the way she dresses up, as written in the narration ' *Clay goes out. Harry takes off a derby, lathers his face, and begins to shave with a straight-edge razor. A pretty girl in a swimming suit comes into the shop, clothing a colorful parasol. She has long blond hair.* Her appearance is a city-look, as she is from a big city San Fransisco, with a modernised thought. Harry even responded to her look in a praise:

HARRY : Miss America, I presume.

THE GIRL : Miss McCutcheon

Her profession as a teacher refers to knowledge, education and civilisation, which is not in line with the people' s traditional life in the town, which is symbolised by natural sea objects. This can be seen from the way she describes the children in the town:

THE GIRL : But this town! The children just don't seem to care about anything-whether they get good grades or bad, whether they pass or fail, or anything else. On top of that, almost all of them are unruly. The only thing they seem to be interested in is games, and the sea. That's why I'm on my way to the beach now. I thought if I could watch them on a Saturday I could understand them better.

HARRY : Yes, that's a thought.

THE GIRL : Nobody seems to have any sensible ambition. It's all fun and play. How can I teach children like that? What can I teach them?

From the dialogue, Miss McCutcheon reveals her disagreement about the way the children spend their time. She apparently wants to change the way they undergo life, because she thinks these children have no future if they do not go to school seriously. She is a person valuing happiness by materialism. Harry at first responded to Ms McCutcheon' s doubt, about whether she needs to stay or leave, by proposing a tempting prediction that she is not eligible to live in a small poor town like Ok-by-sea town:

HARRY : The answer is, go back while the going's good.

THE GIRL : Why? I mean, a moment ago I believed you were going to point out why I ought to stay, and then suddenly you say I ought to go back. Why?

HARRY : *(after a pause)* You're too good for a town like this.

THE GIRL : I am not!

HARRY : Too young and too intelligent. Youth and intelligence need excitement.

THE GIRL : There are *kinds* of excitement.

HARRY : Yes, there are. You need the big-city kind. There isn't an eligible bachelor in town.

Harry told Ms.McCutcheon that the town wouldn' t need the typicality she has, as they are simple people. What they need is simplicity and integrity to make them happy. Ms.McCutcheon is challenged and getting more urged to be part of them, to prove that she is not the typical one which Harry presumes.

However, she responded sinically when Clay gets into the barber shop and telling everyone there that he gets a big oyster. He thinks there must be a big pearl in it. He hopes to sell the pearl and gets much money to have an advertisement to find his father. Harry, knowing Clay' s hope, responded to Clay positively, saying that there could be a big pearl in it. The following dialogue reveals how Ms McCutcheon insists to tell Clay the truth that what he thinks is just a nonsense, but other characters like Harry, the writer, and Clay' s friends think differently:

CLAY : Well, I did, Mr. Van Dusen. It's shut tight, it's alive, and there's a pearl in it, worth at least three hundred dollars.
GREELEY : A bid pearl
MISS McCUTCHEON : Now, you children listen to me. It's never too soon for any of us to face the truth, which is supposed to set us free, not imprison us. Is, Clayc the truth you want money because you need money. The truth is also that you have found an oyster. The truth is also that there is no pearl in the oyster.
GREELEY : How do you know? Did you look?
MISS McCUTCHEON : No, but neither did Clay, and inasmuch as only one oyster in a million has a pearl in it, truth favors the probability that this is not the millionth oyster the oyster with the pearl in it.
CLAY : There's a big pearl in the oyster.
MISS McCUTCHEON : Mr. Van Dusen, shall we open the oyster and show Clay and his sister Roxanna and their friend Greeley that there is no pearl in it?

Ms.McCutcheon' s honesty leads her to tell the children the truth that hoping something unusual is too good to be true. She wants them to face the reality, not to manipulate it to be as what it is expected, as revealed in the following dialogue;

MISS McCUTCHEON : Open the oyster, of course, so Clay will see for himself That there's no pearl in it. So he'll begin to face reality, as he should, as each of us should.
HARRY : Clay, do you mind if I look at the oyster a minute?
CLAY : (*handing the oyster to Harry*) There's a big pear in it, Mr. Van Dusen
HARRY : (*examining the oyster*) Clay. Roxanna. Greeley I wonder if you'd go down the street to wozzeck's. Tell him to come here the first chance he gets. I'd rather he opened this oyster. I might damage the pearl.

Harry wants the pearl to be examined by the sea-object expert, Wozzeck, whom he expects to agree with him to play a trick on Clay, to tell him that there' s a big pearl in it, to make Clay happy.

HARRY : Well, maybe it is a trick. I know Wozzeck's got a few pretty good- sized cultivated pearls.
MISS McCUTCHEON : You plan to have Wozzeck pretend he has found a pearl in the oyster when he opens it, is that it?
HARRY : I plan to get three hundred dollars to Clay.
MISS McCUTCHEON : Do you have three hundred dollars?
HARRY : Not quite.

He just wants Clay to believe that what he expects is true, and Harry plans to give Clay the money he needs to put an advertisement to ask for his father to come back home again. What Harry does indicates his integrity to help Clay and to make him happy. Ms. McCutcheon's honesty makes her disagree with Harry, as what he wants to do is telling a fake reality to Clay. She wants him to tell the truth that there is no pearl in it, *'What pearl? What in the world do you think you're trying to do to the minds of these children? How am I ever going to teach them the principles of the truth with an influence like yours to fight against?*

But Harry insists that these people have been miserable with the poverty they have, that is the only way they could enjoy a temporary happiness. He knows exactly that what Clay wants is not money, except to get back his father home. His father, Clark, even chose to be away from home for a while because he gets a job in Salinas, to get money for his family. He has a strong connection with the family, as seen from what Harry tells to Ms. McCutcheon;

Harry : Clay doesn't really want money, as you seem to think. He wants his father to come home, and he thinks money will help get his father home. As a matter of fact his father is the man who stepped in here just as you were leaving. He left thirty dollars for me to give Clay, to take home. His father and his mother haven't been getting along. Clark Larrabee's a fine man. He's not the town drunk or anything like that, but having four kids to provide for he gets to feeling ashamed of the showing he's making, and he starts drinking. He wants his kids live in a good house of their own, wear good clothes, and all other things fathers have always wanted for their kids.

When Wozzeck came, he told Harry that he did not even believe what Clay told him. But he came to make sure. Anyhow he honestly told Clay it is impossible.

WOZZECK : O.K., give me the oyster. I'll open it. Expert watch repairer, to open the oyster!

HARRY : How much is the big pearl, Louie?

WOZZECK : Oh, a hundred. Two hundred, maybe.

HARRY : A very big one?

WOZZECK : Three, maybe.

What Harry, Clay, his friend Greely, Wozzeck and Ms. McCutcheon discussed was interfered by a customer in Harry's barber shop, a writer who stopped by to get a hair cut. Having a deep sympathy knowing Clay's problem, and wants to support Harry to pretend that there is a big pearl in the oyster, he indicates altruism. He decided to buy the oyster and gives money to Clay, without opening it out;

THE WRITER : I've looked at that oyster, and I like to buy it. *(To Clay)* How much do you want for it?

CLAY : I don't know.

THE WRITER : How about three hundred?

GREELEY : Three hundred dollars?

CLAY : Is it all right, Mr. Van Dusen?

HARRY : *(He looks at the writer, who nods.)* Sure it's all right. *(The writer gives Clay the money.)*

CLAY : (looking at the money and then to the writer) But suppose there ain't a pearl in it?

THE WRITER : There is, though.

When Wozzeck came and examined the pearl, the writer agreed with Harry. He told Clay that there's a big pearl in it. What he did is not revealing dishonesty, but in this context, an integrity to keep Clay's hope. The writer does not really care about the pearl, he cares about Clay and wants to help him. His integrity makes him decided to give three hundred dollars that Clay needs. Finally, Clay gets the money he wants, to put an advertisement to bring his father home, and to buy a gift for his mother. What is connoted by the pearl is the whole integrity and good value. The writer appreciated Harry's effort to boost up Clay's hope, he respected on it, like what he said to Wozzeck;

WOZZECK : Three hundred dollars! How do you know there's a pearl in it?

THE WRITER : As far as I'm concerned, the whole thing's a pearl.

Clay's father, Clark, as what Harry presumed, was actually never been away from the family. He once stopped by to Harry's shop to give money for Clay. He is not staying as he was in a work, especially after seeing the advertisement on newspaper asking him to come home. He finally decided to go back to the family;

CLARK : We were ten miles up the highway when I happened to see this classified ad in the paper. (*He hands the paper to Harry and sits down in the chair.*) I'm going out to the house, after all. Just for the weekend of course, then back to work in Salinas again. Two or three months, I think I'll have enough to come back for a long time. Clay come by?

HARRY : No, I've got the money here.

CLARK : O.K. I'll take it out myself, but first let me have the works – shave, haircut, shampoo, massage.

Ms. McCutcheon still insisted on disagreeing with Harry about telling the fake reality, but she decided to stay in the town to understand them better, and to be part of them. She wanted to teach the children and wanted to learn from them. What she did is revealing integrity in terms of doing good for others. She even decided to change her hair cut to be accepted in the community;

THE GIRL : I want a poodle haircut, Mr. Van Duysen.

HARRY : I'm sorry, Miss McCutcheon. In my sleep, in a nightmare, I would not cut your hair. (*The sound of the truck stopping is heard from across the street*)

THE GIRL : (*softly, patiently, but firmly*) Mr. Van Dusen, I've decided to stay, and the first thing I've got to do is change my appearance. I don't fit into the scenery around here. She wanted to have a poodle hair cut to look similar with the children, so the children could accept her to be part of them.

THE GIRL : You're just like children. They don't take me seriously either: they think I'm nothing more than a pretty girl who is going to give up in despair and go home. If you give me a poodle haircut, I'll look more – well, plain and simple. I plan to dress differently, too. I'm determined to teach here. You've got to help me. Now, Mr. Van Dusen, the shears, please.

HARRY : I'm sorry, Miss McCutcheon. There is no need to change your appearance at all.

What Harry van Duysen, Ms. McCutcheon, the man, Clark and Clay Larabee did was indicating integrity and care to each other. They did good values in different ways but lead to the same goal, to help others.

Honesty and integrity in the Case of the Crushed Petunias

This play show honesty and integrity especially reflected bby the main characters, Ms. Dorothy and a man. Miss Dorothy's petunias are symbolising barricades to her introvert character who feels comfortable to be excluded from others. The conflict arises when she found one day that her petunias are crashed by a footstep. She apparently reported this trespassing one to an officer who responded her seriously. While she was investigating the footsteps, a young man who fits the footsteps came to her and told her that it was him who crashed the petunias.

Dorothy : Quite muddy. It looks like you might have stepped in a freshly watered flowerbed last night.

Young man : Come to think of it, that's what I did.

Young man : Yes, Miss Simple. I am the man who did it.

His honesty makes Miss Dorothy impressed and get his advice to get out of the petunias barricade. The small shop where she lives with petunias barricade symbolizes her dull and monotonous life. When the young man invited her to join a new life 'outside' the petunias barricade, Dorothy supposed it was an interesting idea. Her naive and simple mind even never knew that tere is such life she deserves outside her shop and petunias barricades. The young man invitation indicates integrity of showing help and sincerety in helping Dorothy with her life, eventhough they did not know to each other before. Dorothy's honesty also reveals her authenticity about her life.

Dorothy finally accepts the young man's offer to step out of her place to come to a new place, and to find a new nuance. What the young man had done indicates altruism as he helped Dorothy to be out of her comfort zone but boring life inside the petunias barricade, and stepes into a new challenging life outside the petunias barricade.

CONCLUSION

The two plays reveal honesty, altruism and integrity through the verbal and actional symbol indicating the humanity values. The conflict in the Oyster and the Pearl, when Clay needs money to get his father come home through an advertisement, was resolved though the altruism, honesty and integrity revealed by the main characters; Harry, Ms.McCutcheon, the man, and even Clark. In the Case of the Crushed Petunias, the internal conflict of the main character, Ms. Dorothy Simple, was resolved through what another character, the young man, did. He helped Dorothy to be out of the petunias barricades, symbolizing her border with outside life. He offers Dorothy a new challenging life that she never experienced before. He taught Dorothy to be a new person, with a new look for a new life. Altruism, integrity and honesty help resolving the conflicts in the stories.

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