

AN ANALYSIST OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF NIM ROUSE CHARACTER IN *NIM'S ISLAND* FILM

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ABSTRACT

Children's literature is considered as one of the most prominent doorways for children to experience and expose the real world. Its influence on the child's development and shaping of ideologies has been brought to the attention of many intellectuals and educationalists. Therefore, the researcher analyzed a main character's moral development in this study. Moral development is important in children's literature, where stories do not only focus on bizarre events, but, also on the individual personalities. The researcher analyzed the main character in the *Nim's island film*, because the main character, Nim Rouse, was the only child who lived in an isolated island. The researcher used three different theories: the character identification by Jacob, moral development by Kohlberg, and cognitive theory by Piaget to analyze Nim Rouse character. These three theories helped the researcher in analyzing Nim Rouse's moral and character development. This study showed that of all the six stages in Kohlberg's moral development, Nim Rouse character only got through the first to the third stage due to the condition of the fourth to the sixth stage that only for the children who are having the social interaction with the outside world, which for Nim Rouse, she lived in an isolated island. Even so, the researcher saw that Nim Rouse character having well moral growth and development. She was able to develop emotions such as love, attention, and compassion for others.

Keywords: children's literature, character identification, moral development, cognitive, character development

ABSTRAK

*Sastra anak merupakan salah satu media yang paling penting dan populer bagi anak-anak dalam mengalami dan menjelajahi dunia nyata. Pengaruh sastra anak itu sendiri dalam perkembangan anak dan pembentukan ideologi mereka telah diteliti sekian lama oleh para intelektual dan pendidik. Oleh karenanya, penulis menganalisa perkembangan moral dari seorang karakter utama dalam studi ini. Mengingat perkembangan moral sangatlah penting dalam sastra anak, dimana cerita-ceritanya tidak hanya berfokus pada peristiwa-peristiwa menakjubkan tetapi juga pada sikap-sikap para individunya. Penulis menganalisa karakter utama difilm *Nim's Island* bernama Nim Rouse, seorang anak yang tinggal di pulau terpencil. Penulis menggunakan teori identifikasi karakter Jacob, teori perkembangan moral Kohlberg, dan kognitif teori dari Piaget untuk menganalisa karakter Nim Rouse. Ketiga teori ini membantu penulis dalam menganalisa perkembangan moral Nim Rouse dan perkembangan karakter Nim Rouse itu sendiri. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa dari keenam tingkatan perkembangan moral Kohlberg, karakter Nim Rouse hanya mengalami perkembangan moral dari tingkatan 1 sampai 3, dikarenakan tingkatan 4 sampai 6 hanya bisa dilewati bagi anak-anak yang mengalami interaksi sosial*

dengan dunia luar, sedangkan pada kasus Nim Rouse, ia hidup di pulau terpencil. Meskipun begitu, penulis melihat bahwa Nim Rouse mengalami pertumbuhan dan perkembangan moral yang baik. Ia mampu mengembangkan emosi-emosi seperti kasih sayang, perhatian, dan simpati terhadap orang lain.

Kata Kunci: sastra anak, identifikasi karakter, perkembangan moral, kognitif, perkembangan karakter

A. INTRODUCTION

“Children’s literature is considered as one of the most prominent doorways where a child is first introduced and exposed to the real world” (Yara 1). Based on this statement, its influence on the child’s development and shaping of ideologies have been brought to the attention of many intellectuals and educationalists. Children’s literature can affect children’s development such as their behavior, character, the way of thinking and moral. Moral can be influential in the development of children which is owned in a child’s world individually or socially. Basically, a person’s moral (good and bad) is mostly influenced by that person’s childhood. Therefore, in this study the researcher wanted to analyze a moral development Nim Rouse character in *Nim’s Island* film. This study focused on two research questions: the portrayal of Nim Rouse character in *Nim’s Island* film and the way her moral developed that was portrayed in this film. In order to answer the two questions, the researcher used three theories which were character identification by Jacob, moral development theory by Kohlberg, and cognitive theory by Piaget.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. CHARACTER IDENTIFICATION BY JACOB

In order to identify what kind of a character is in the film or novel, it can be done by identifying the character itself through several considerations as follow (Jacob 65):

- a. By the action, especially when the character reacts towards serious situation.
- b. By the utterance from the character’s utterances.
- c. By the physical description of the character, such as the way the character dresses, etc.
- d. By thinking based on the character’s thought of things around him in developing their characterization.
- e. By direct application viewed on the way the author explained the character directly.

In answering the first question about the portrayal of Nim Rouse character in *Nim’s Island* film, the researcher used this identification to identify Nim Rouse character first before analyzing her into Kohlberg’s moral development.

2. MORAL DEVELOPMENT BY LAWRENCE KOHLBERG

According to Kohlberg, he develops six stages of moral development, and he groups these six stages into three, higher-order levels of development:

Level one: Pre-Conventional Level

In this level, the children recognize that there are rules to separate good and bad things. They also realize that the rules are not coming from themselves, but it comes from society and argument from the other. Children in pre-conventional level are around 4 – 10 years old.

Stage1: *The Punishment and Obedience Orientation*

In Stage 1, “the individual relies on the physical consequences of action to determine good or bad, regardless of the human meaning or value of these consequences” (Kohlberg 10). An individual’s avoidance of punishment and unquestioning respect to power are valued in their own right, rather than out of respect for an underlying moral order supported by punishment and authority.

Stage 2: *The Instrumental-Relativist Orientation*

In Stage 2, “an individual determines right action as behaviors that satisfy one’s own needs and on occasion, the needs of others and sees that human relations as those that consist of their justice or reciprocity” (Kohlberg 10). For example that reciprocity is a matter of “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch your”, not loyalty, gratitude, or justice (Bertens 87). Therefore, in this stage of this level is characterized by a view that right behavior means acting in one's own best interests.

Level two: Conventional Level

The second level is usually found in society. This level is obeyed with the law and responding to the obligations of duty. Children start to move from pre-conventional to conventional around 10 – 13 years old. The children try to follow the others expectation.

Stage 3: *The Good Boy or Nice Girl Attitude Orientation*

In Stage 3, “individual may conform to stereotypical images of majority or natural behavior by considering good behavior as whatever pleases or help others and whatever behavior others approve of” (Kohlberg 15). In case an individual will judge behavior by the intention behind it. Therefore in this stage, the children realize to act following a certain well attitude.

Stage 4: *The “Law and Order” Orientation*

In Stage 4, “the individual considers right behavior as doing one’s duty or showing respect for authority” (Kohlberg 20). It means that if he or she becomes oriented towards fixed rules, authority, means that the children try to act not only for their family and around their society, but the children act to the world.

Level Three: Post Conventional, Autonomous, or Principled Level

According to Kohlberg, the individual attempts to define moral values and principles that have validity and application apart from the authority of the groups or person holding them, and apart from his or her identification with these groups (20). It means that this level understands about the responsibility to each other in the place or environment.

Stage 5: *The Social-Contract, Legalistic Orientation*

In Stage 5, “the individual defines right action as that which consists of the individual rights and standards that society has examined and agreed upon that makes them aware of how personal values and opinions relate, and of the process and rules for reaching consensus” (Kohlberg 40). Therefore at this stage, judging good or bad situation based on how the children think about it. Sometimes the rule can change, if any personal opinion allows to express the opinion each other, it is possible to change the rules.

Stage 6: *The Universal-Ethical-Principle Orientation*

In Stage 6, “the individual defines a right through a conscience decision about his or her ethical principles that are based on consistency, and universality. They are abstract, ethical, universal principles of justice, equality, and of respect for the dignity of all human beings” (Kohlberg 50). It means that people develop moral value depend on their feeling. This principle orientation is focusing on justice, helping each other.

3. JEAN PIAGET’S COGNITIVE THEORY

Jean Piaget’s cognitive theory explains how the children’s thinking are related with their moral development. Piaget uses the concept of stages to describe the cognitive as a sequence of the four following stages:

Sensory-Motor Stage: birth – two of age

The sensory-motor stage can be seen from birth until approximately the age of two. During this stage the senses, reflexes, and motor abilities develop rapidly. Intelligence is firstly shown when reflex movements become more refined, such as when an infant starts to reach for a preferred toy, and sucks on a nipple and not a pacifier when hungry. Understanding of the world involves only perceptions and objects with which the infant has directly experienced (Piaget in Hossein 30).

Preoperational Stage: two – seven of age

“The child in the preoperational stage is not yet able to think logically” (Piaget in Hossein 38). It means that if it is seen from the acquisition of language, the child is able to represent the world through images and symbols, but in this stage, these symbols are represented depend on his own perception and intuition. The preoperational child is completely egocentric. Although he begins to take greater interest in objects and people around him, he sees them only from his own view (40).

Stage of Concrete Operations: seven – eleven of age

The stage begins when the child is able to perform mental operations. Piaget defines “a mental operation as an interiorized action, an action performed in the mind”. Mental operations permit the child to think about physical actions that he or she previously performed. The preoperational child is able to count from one to ten, but the actual understanding that one stands for one object only appears in the stage of concrete operations (qtd. in Hossein 46). A child knows that something that he can add, he can also diminish. They can draw picture. A child at this stage is able to do simple mathematical operations. Operations are labeled “concrete” because they apply only to those objects that are physically present (50).

Stage of Formal Operations: eleven – sixteen of age

The child in the concrete operational stage deals with the present, the here and now; the child who can use formal operational thought can think about the future, the abstract, the hypothetical. Piaget's final stage coincides with the beginning of adolescence, and marks the start of abstract thought and deductive reasoning. Thought is more flexible, rational, and systematic. The individual can now conceive all the possible ways they can solve a problem, and approach a problem from several points of view (Piaget in Hossein 55).

In analyzing Nim Rouse character the researcher used Jacob's character identification, Kohlberg's moral development, and Piaget's cognitive. These three theories were used to answer the two research questions about Nim Rouse character.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used qualitative method because this research did not need a number or formula to be analyzed. The data itself were taken from the script of *Nim's Island* film which technically in the form of words. In conducting this research, the one who collecting and analyzing this research was the researcher that made this research instrument was the researcher herself. There were two steps done by the researcher obtaining the data needed: watching thoroughly *Nim's Island* film in order to get a proper and whole understanding of the story and selecting the data needed according to the research questions about Nim Rouse character.

After obtaining the data needed, the researcher analyzed the data according to its research questions. First about the portrayal of Nim Rouse character in *Nim's Island* film. In this question, the researcher analyzed Nim Rouse character through two theories from Jacob's character identification to find out what kind of Nim's character was in this film along with the used of Kohlberg's moral development to find out her moral development as her characterization that had been identified before. Second about the way Nim Rouse character's moral developed in this film was answered through Piaget's cognitive theory. In order to make the result of this research valid, during the analysis the researcher used two types of triangulation which were the data triangulation and theoretical triangulation (Denzin 10). Data triangulation was used to validate the data by using the script of published film, *Nim's Island* in 2008. Theoretical triangulation was used to valid the result of this study by using more than one theory which were Jacob's character identification, Kohlberg's moral development, and Piaget's cognitive.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF NIM ROUSE THROUGH HER CHARACTERIZATION

a. Moral Development by the Action in Nim Rouse Character

By the actions which belong to Nim Rouse: she was forbidden to climb the tree and hiked the mountain. She realized that climbing and hiking would get her in a dangerous condition. Yet, sometimes she did it when her father was away. When she did it, Rouse also had consideration to protect her own self from the strangers who wanted to take the island over. She climbed because she just wanted to know which ship coming to the island. Even though she broke her father's orders not to climb and hike to protect the island, but

basically, she still disobey things her father told her not to. Yet, she realized that it was wrong and she broke her promise with her father. It was because she thought that she had to protect the island until her father came back and that she wanted to make her father proud and happy by her actions.

It was appropriate with the theory of moral development by Kohlberg's in the pre-conventional level stage one about the punishment and obedience orientation. That the individual responds to rules and labels of what is good and bad, or right and wrong in doing things. The researcher found out that Nim Rouse did climbing the tree to protect the island from strange people. Nim Rouse knew that by climbing the tree could save her from the danger situation. Also, Nim Rouse was able to accept the consequence of climbing the tree: that she might fall off the tree and getting injured and disobeying her father's words which would make him upset towards her action.

b. Moral Development by the Utterance in Nim Rouse Character

Nim Rouse's moral development by her utterances were included into the conventional level stage three about the interpersonal concordance or "good boy/nice girl". The researcher found out that Nim Rouse had an exact decision in her mind before deciding it out. It had shown by her decision when she stated that she *must stayed in island*. Rouse had a strong reason why she had to stay in the island even without her father's present. As following to Kohlberg, in the stage three that a child usually adopts her parent's moral values and wants to be taken as a good child by the parents. Nim Rouse convinced her father that her decision was good for both of them.

Rouse was also included in pre-conventional level stage two about the instrumental-relativist orientation. It showed when Rouse was in her state of needing someone else (Alex Rover) to help her find the way out of her problems. She wanted the similar action by Rover to help her just like when she helped Rover once. The stage two explains as that moral reasoning for the children based on reward and self-importance. Children will be obedient when they needed to be so. Things that they take right based on what they feel right and give benefit for them. This was the same with Rouse for she wanted the benefit from Alex Rover regarding the helpful effort she did once to Rover.

c. Moral Development by the Thinking in Nim Rouse Character

In this development, Rouse's thinking was included into level two a conventional level. It means the individual perceived the maintenance of the expectations of his family, group, or nation as valuable in its own right, regardless of immediate and obvious consequences. The attitude is not only one of conformity to personal expectations and social order, but of loyalty to it, of actively maintaining, supporting, and justifying the order and identifying with the persons or group involved in it. In this case, the researcher saw that Nim Rouse character did good things for other people and helped others when they needed her to. Rouse was also tended to act on her own not because of her selfishness, but because she did not want to involve other people into her problems.

During the analysis of moral development by Kohlberg, Nim Rouse character was only able to get through three stages within this development: stage one about punishment and obedience orientation, stage two about instrumental-relativist orientation, and stage three about good boy or nice girl attitude orientation. It was because the next stages (four: law and order orientation, five: social-contract, legalistic orientation, and six: universal-ethical-principle orientation) are intended for those who live and capable to socialize within the society which contrasted with Nim Rouse's circumstance of living.

E. CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded some points about the portrayal and the process of the moral development towards Nim Rouse character. First, Nim Rouse was portrayed as a child who lived in an isolated island that having the courage, responsibility, never gave up, smart, and diligent although she was only nine years old. The researcher saw that Rouse could be included as having good growth and moral development, although lived in an isolated island. She gained the sense of compassion, love, attention and affection. Nim Rouse was able to develop within such way because of the environment (love, kindness, justice and helping each other) she lived in that related to conscience. Second, the researcher concluded that Nim Rouse character got through only three stages of Kohlberg's moral development from stage one to three due to her circumstance of living in an isolated island that became the source she could not get through the other stages (available for those who live in society and having the interaction within).

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