

Conference Paper

Fictional Characters in Asma Nadia's Novel *Surga Yang Tak Dirindukan*

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Abstract

This paper is concerned about fictional characters in Asma Nadia's novel *Surga Yang Tak Dirindukan*. A fictional character is a character that comes from a work of fiction and also divided into two types, simple character and complex character. The research was based on the existence of the dilators by fictional characters contained in the novel. The problems of this research cover types of fictional characters and how they are depicted in the novel. Thus, the aims of this research are to identify the types of fictional characters and to describe how the fictional characters depicted in the novel. The theory used in this research is adopted from Kenney (1966). The research method used is descriptive qualitative method proposed by Sugiyono (2017). From the analysis, it is found that various types of fictional characters in the novel are vividly portrayed. The moral lessons revealed in the novel are expected to be useful to be implemented in real life to identify types of fictional characters.

Keywords: fictional characters, complex character, simple character.

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1. Introduction

Character is one of the intrinsic elements in a literary work. It constitutes important aspects because it carries the author's message that can bring various values in human life such as morality, education, and many others. In order to understand the character's attitude and behaviour, it is necessary to understand the aspects of physiology, psychology, and sociology of the character itself. According to Kenney (1966), the character is expected to be natural or life like. Human being is free but the fictional character is never entirely free because it is a part of an artistic whole and must always serve the needs of the whole.

In analyzing a literary work, it is important to know the relation between the story and the characters along with their social life. This study uses Kenney's (1966) theory of fictional theory. Character is imaginary people that writers create. Fictional characters possess the kind of reality that dreams have, a reality which has no less intense for being imagined, or a kind of reality equivalent to our own. Character of the story is

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characterized by human being, but sometimes animal or other creatures. In short, characters are human and non-human who take part and are involved in the events of the story that is described in the plot. The characters who are involved in a fiction are called fictional characters.

A fictional character is a person, persona, identity, or figures derived from a work of fiction. The process of creating or developing a fictional character is called characterization. A character is considered as an important element in a work of fiction. A fictional character is generally made on the basis of the main characteristics of a particular type. The types of fictional characters are complex or round character and simple or flat character. In this study the fictional characters discussed are important characters featured in the novel as complex characters and simple characters which play important roles in the flow of the story of the novel.

Nadia's novel *Surga yang Tak Dirindukan* 'The Unwanted Heaven' is adopted as the main source of data in this study the flow of the story is interesting and it conveys a number of philosophical ideas which can change the readers' mind mature and hearts tender. The interesting storyline and the inner conflicts highlighted in this novel can make the readers drift and feel it. This novel is suitable for all ages ranging from teens, adults and even elderly people and also for all levels of society. This novel gives us a lot of inspiration, message and impression that can flow down to the heart and mind. Thus, the problems which are going to be revealed in this study cover two aspects: to find out the types of fictional characters found in the novel and to analyze how fictional characters are depicted in the novel. The result of this study is theoretically significant as it provides some theories of fictional characters which may be applied to other research data. Practically, this study is also significant as various moral lessons are conveyed in the novel so that the readers may adopt it to be practiced in real life.

2. Literature Review

As the topic suggests, this part consists of some theories about character, characterization, and fictional characters.

2.1. Character

Character is an imaginary person that fills up the story. Kenney (1966) stated that character is the major importance of a theme. Character is expected to be natural or lifelike. There are different kinds of character in stories, and different ways to describe

them. Kenney categorizes character into two, namely simple (flat) character and complex character. Simple character is a character that represents less human personality shown in the lack of emersion of attitude or obsession (Kenney, 1966: 28). Complex character is a character that is more lifelike as they represent a full state of human personality in their attitude or obsession (Kenney, 1966: 28).

Abrams (1981: 20) claims that character is a person presented in dramatics of narrative work who is interpreted by readers as being endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say and what they do in action. The relation between character and its personal quality depends on the readers' acceptance. The readers can get the personality of a character through its utterances (verbal) and actions (non verbal). Further, he notes "Characters are the persons, in a dramatic or a narrative work, endowed with morals and qualities that are expressed in what they say, the dialogues, and what they do, the actions." (Abrams, 1981: 20).

2.2. Fictional character

Fictional character is the part of an artistic whole which must serve the needs of that whole that makes them never entirely free (Kenney, 2001: 30). Human being is free but the fictional character is never entirely free because it is a part of an artistic whole and must always serve the needs of the whole. A fictional character is a person or creature that interacts with others within a story. Kenney (1966: 91) states that theme in fiction is what the author is able to make of the total experience rendered. In presenting the character in fiction, Kenney (1966: 34) proposes five methods of characterization. The proposed methods are discursive method, dramatic method, character on other character method, contextual method, and mixing method. Discursive method suggests the writers simply tell the readers what the characters are like. Furthermore, the character and his approval or disapproval are mentioned or told by the writer (Kenney, 1966: 34). Dramatic Method has the writers show the character to the readers rather than telling them. The writers allow his characters to reveal themselves through their own words and actions (Kenney, 1966: 35). Character on other character Method is a method in which the character in a story is described and explained by another character through their actions and words. Thus, the characterization of character is revealed by the other character, e.g., through their thought (Kenney, 1966: 35). Contextual Method is a method in which the character is described by the verbal context surrounding the characters, e.g., setting description (Kenney, 1966: 36). The last one, the Mixing Method is a characterization method in which the character is described through more than one of the methods above (Kenney, 1966: 36).

2.3. Types of fictional characters

A fictional character must be other things beside lifelike, and the standard of lifelikeness does not help us to understand very much about the ways in which character is presented in fiction. For, unlike the real human being, the fictional character is part of an artistic whole and must always serve the needs of that whole (Kenney, 1966: 25). Kenney also divides the characters of fiction into *flat* and *round* characters.

2.3.1. Simple (flat) characters

Kenney (1966: 27) defines that the simple or flat character is less the representation of a human personality than the embodiment of a single attitude or obsession in a character. We must recognize that the simple character can perform many important functions in the work of fiction. However, the simple character is not limited in fiction to use as a minor character, part of the background against which the main action is played out. He calls this kind of character flat because we see only one side of him.

2.3.2. Complex (round) characters

It is called round character because we see all sides of him. The complex character is obviously more lifelike than the simple one, because in life people are not simply embodiments of single attitudes. We need to remind ourselves that the complex characters are not human beings. The complexity of characters tends to produce lifelikeness in the work of fiction. There are a number of methods available to the author to analyze the characters. The first is discursive method in which the author simply tells us about his/her characters and enumerates their qualities and may even express approval or disapproval of them. The advantages of this method are simplicity and economy and it is relatively mechanical and discourages the reader's imaginative participation. Round character is a character with a complex and realistic personality; is often called *three-dimensional* or *multifaceted* characters. Generally, these are major characters; usually, they are round because they are dynamic. Flat character is a character with a very simple personality; is often called *one-or-two-dimensional* characters.

3. Research Method

This paper is the result of a descriptive qualitative study. It observes the object of the study through observation and then analyzes the object into a research centre.

According to Sufiyan (2017) in the qualitative study, the research instrument or the research tool is the researcher itself. Therefore, the researcher as an instrument must also be validated how qualitative researchers are ready to do the next research into the field. The research was done by analyzing the fictional characters in Nadia's novel *Surga yang tak Dirindukan*. The purposes of qualitative descriptive research are to describe, summarize various conditions, various situations or various phenomena of social reality that exist in the society that becomes the object of research and attempt to draw the reality to the surface as a characteristic, character, nature, model, certain situations or phenomena. The main source of data in this study is the novel *Surga yang tak Dirindukan*. Some additional data were derived from other sources such as books as the foundation of theory, articles in the websites, and other sources related to the subject matter of this research. Data collection procedure used in this study is the technique of reading and note-taking. The steps taken to collect the data are by reading the novel repeatedly and carefully, searching and quoting sentences related to the topic of analysis, categorizing the sentences adopted, analyzing the general descriptions of the fictional character, and finally drawing conclusions.

4. Discussion

This section provides the analysis of the data on the goals of fictional characters in Nadia's novel *Surga yang Tak Dirindukan*, which are classified into two aspects: simple (flat) character, complex (round) character.

4.1. Simple (flat) character

According to Kenney (1966: 27), the simple character is not limited in fiction to use as a minor character, part of the background against which the main action is played out. This kind of character is said to be flat because the character represents only one side. The simple character can perform many important functions in the work of fiction. This novel tells the life of a girl named Arini who likes to fantasize that someday there will be a handsome prince who proposes to her and lives happily ever after. Finally, she marries a man named Andika Prasetya who is her childhood friend.

Prasetya's good and faithful behaviour always comforts Arini. Various stories of infidelity around him, including his close friends, does not once disturb Arini's belief in her husband. Arini also tries to devote himself wholeheartedly as a mother and wife. Arini and Andika Prasetya's life suddenly changes. Three months after marriage

Arini becomes pregnant. Their marriage has been attended by three children. There are two flat characters found in the novel namely Sulastri and Nadia.

4.2. Sulastri

Sulastri is Arini's mother who is a patient and steadfast woman and she is always thinking about her daughter. She does not show her anxiety to the household problems she experiences with Arini. She continues to play her role as a mother to educate and give affection fully to Arini. The advice given by Sulastri including household problems is experienced by Arini. She says that Arini should not be selfish to herself. She must think of Nadia who still needs affection from Pras. When she hates Pras, it will cause a psychological impact to Nadia. Arini feels her life like having a polygamous husband but she does not accept such destiny to happen to his mother. She feels annoyed at her husband because their harmonious family is destroyed. Arini blames the circumstances that she was born from a widowed mother so she must feel the same way as her mother used to be.

4.3. Nadia

Nadia is the daughter of Arini and Andika Prasetya. She is pious and devoted to her parents. As a good wife, Arini always tries her best to perform her obligation to educate all her children including Nadia. Arini has become a good wife for her husband and a good mother for her children and she is also pious and has a good religious character. All her children are really pious and observes all their obligation as good Muslims.

4.4. Complex (round) character

As noted earlier round character is a character with a complex and realistic personality. It is often called *three-dimensional* or *multifaceted* characters. Generally, these are major characters; usually, they are round because they are dynamic. There are three characters which are involved as complex characters in the novel: Arini, Prasetya, and Mei Rose.

4.5. Arini

Arini is a pious, smart, beautiful woman who works as a teacher in a kindergarten school in Yogyakarta. Arini teaches her students with a fairy tale method packed in an

interesting way. Arini who loves a world fairy tale and shares this spirit to the children to achieve what she dreams of. Arini is a clever storyteller about *Madani* 'an ideal peaceful country or *heaven* created on earth'. The tale of *Madani* tells about vice and virtue wrapped in funny stories. The message is delivered to her upbringing children according to their condition. The tale tells about a girl who has a father and mother who loves their son very much. They lead beautiful life like in the paradise as they dream of together. They love one another with the blessings of the Almighty.

Arini is a character who patiently obeys the religious commands particularly not to date with a boy before marriage like most teenagers. She patiently awaits a man who approaches her with the intention to marry her, not just to get the warmth of her youth. In the Islamic religion, dating or love affairs before marriage is strictly restricted and she sincerely adheres to it.

Arini's religious character is also seen from her words that she believes in destiny which is determined by the Almighty. She is sure that one day Allah will send a spouse to her without having to go out first. She has made up her mind to a pious *Muslimah*. Arini yearns to get a husband who is pious, observing all Allah's commands and avoiding all His restrictions.

Arini is a writer who is successful to get an award as the best woman author in the international competition of authorship. She also receives several awards of national level for her works as an author. Her work as a writer has proved successful and she is considered as a creative author. Besides as a career woman, she is also a good wife and a responsible mother. She always expresses her gratitude to Allah the Almighty for all His blessings and endowments for she is granted a responsible husband and good children. Her behaviour indicates that she has a religious character.

In addition Arini is also a good housewife. She cares for her neighbour Ina and helps her who always suffers a shortage to suffice her family needs. Ina suffers financially because her husband remarries another lady and does not take care of herself and her children. Arini feels pitiful to see her condition and so she cares for her and helps her when she wants to borrow money. Thus, Arini's attitude towards Ina indicates that she has a social caring character.

4.6. Andika Prasetya

Andika Prasetya, always called Pras, is Arini's husband. He has a high posture and brown eyes. He is a figure of a faithful and responsible man. His profession is a lecturer in a university. Pras loves his wife very much and he feels happy and lucky to have a beautiful wife like her. He always remembers his wife wherever he is as she always

looks beautiful, neat and interesting. Unlike his work-mates' wives who look drastically different after they give birth to a baby, Arini remains beautiful although she has given birth to three babies. However, Allah has predestined the story of life. Pras is teased by a third person and he marries a second wife. The presence of a second woman has destroyed the harmony of their household. In fact, Pras has married a second wife for long but he does it without Arini's knowledge. Finally, she witnesses herself how Pras and his second wife Mei Rose go together intimately. After seeing Pras's togetherness with his new wife, Arini wants to talk to Pras about their household but she feels unable to deal with Pras anymore. She considers her husband love his new wife more than he loves her. When her disappointment has reached to its peak she decides to go to Mei Rose's house and meet Pras. What happens is that Arini realizes another fact. The facilities in Mei Rose's house are better and more luxurious than those in her own house. Pras tries to explain to her about the difference in the matter of providing facilities in his two houses but Arini does not listen to him because she herself watches the fact and she realizes that Pras has violated the fair concept that a man should have as a the basic principle for polygamy.

4.7. Mei Rose

Mei Rose is a woman who has ever been hurt by a man because at the age of twelve years old, his father leaves her and her mother on her birthday. Mei Rose has also been abandoned by her prospective husband in the day of their marriage. Mei Rose's disappointment makes her determined to commit suicide. At the beginning of the novel Mei Rose is described as a weak and fragile figure when she is in the hospital. However, Mei Rose is a formidable woman because she dares to change her religion to become *Muslimah* in her marriage with Pras and finally she becomes pious and embraces the new religion obediently. Her maternal nature comes and can accept Akbar her step son from Arini under her upbringing and she cares for him as her own son. Mei Rose turns into a figure who is very *sholehah* 'pious' woman who sincerely accepts the condition. On the other hand, Arini feels cornered by Mei Rose's wellbeing.

One day, Mei Rose looks at Arini as the perfect figure and many experiences of happiness in her life. Rose thinks that she has nothing except Pras as her husband. The conflict between Arini and Mei Rose finally ended with indirect settlement. Arini finally succumbs and she is willing to turn off her fairy tale to make other woman's fairy tales alive. Fairy tale here can be defined as the life of a household that has been undertaken by Arini together with Pras for a long time. Arini finally gives up and she

is willing to budge to release Pras. She is finally the one who chooses to succumb to Mei Rose.

5. Conclusion

In accordance with the topic of this study, the conclusion is oriented at the fictional characters of Nadia's novel *Surga yang Tak Dirindukan*. Based on the theory proposed by Kenney (1966), fictional character divides into simple/flat character and complex/round character. The characters which belong to the former group are Sulastri and Nadia. Both of them are considered as simple characters because they play simple role in the flow of the story. Sulastri plays a role as simply Arini's mother who always hopes that her daughter will live happily and becomes a good *Muslimah*. Nadia on the other hand also plays a simple role as Arini's daughter who gets good religious education so that she also becomes a pious *Muslimah*.

The complex/round character is played by three characters Arini, Andika Prasetya (Pras), and Mei Rose. They play central roles in the whole flows of the story. Arini plays a central role of the novel from the very beginning when she is introduced as a writer who dreams of a good husband. Then she marries one of her childhood friends named Andika Prasetya who works as a lecturer in a university. But, their happiness is destroyed after she knows that her husband unexpectedly marries a second wife named Mei Rose. In the end she cannot stand living with a husband who has another wife and she proposes a divorce from her husband.

Pras, on the other hand, plays a role as important as Arini throughout the story. He is a lecturer who is very busy to attend seminars and other activities so that he seldom comes home, but he loves his wife Arini very much. They lead a happy and harmonious life until one day he marries a second wife because of his pity to a frustrated woman named Mei Rose who is going to commit suicide because the man who has promised to marry her in fact deceives her whereas she is pregnant from their love affairs. His harmonious life is destroyed after his first wife Arini knows that he has married a second wife. He plays a role until the end of the story when finally Aniri's jealousy reaches to its climax and she wants a divorce from Pras as she cannot stand living with a husband who has a second wife.

Mei Rose, the third complex character, does not actually play a role as important as Pras and Arini but she is involved in the important events when she wants to commit suicide because the man who has promised to marry her in fact deceives her whereas in her womb there is a seven-month-old foetus. Mei Rose is saved but is in a coma, while her son is born safely. Pras cannot bear to leave the baby and the

mother who turns out to live alone. Unexpectedly, Mei Rose tries to commit another suicide attempt. Luckily Mei Rose is saved by Pras again and finally she asks Pras to marry her. He has no choice except to marry her because of his feeling pitiful, because if he does not help her she is determined to commit suicide. The family conflict begins when Arini knows that Pras has married Mei Rose but she can finally win Pras as Arini urges him to divorce her as she cannot accept her husband to have another wife.

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