

Conference Paper

Bravery in Felix Siau's Novel *Muhammad Al-Fatih 1453*

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Abstract

This study examined the causes and effects of the bravery exhibited by this novel's protagonist named Muhammad Alfatih or Mehmed II. Descriptive qualitative methods were used. The analysis was conducted by classifying the obtained data into two subchapters related to the research problems. The findings of this research focused on the causes of the protagonist's bravery in believing *hadist* of *Rasulullah*, in conquering Constantinople, and spreading Islam by *Jihad*. The Prophet's promises were the reason for his bravery in conquering Constantinople, and for his own strength. The protagonist's bravery was shown when he decided to drag 72 ships into Galata Hill, and when Mehmed conquered Constantinople by *Jihad* as the way to spread Islam throughout the world including Constantinople. The protagonist's bravery also resulted in two effects: converting *Hagia* as a mosque and making Ottomans the center of Islamic civilization. It can be inferred that the protagonist had tremendous bravery.

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1. Introduction

Muhammad Al-Fatih 1453, published in 2013, is a work of inspirational biography and factual history. It is written by a nonfiction, renowned, and talented author, Felix Y. Siau. He succeeds in bringing the readers to imagine the reality which occurs at that time and he can explain how the main character expresses his bravery distinctively. It can be seen while the author explains how the main character conquers Constantinople in his 21 years old. By that age, he masters the strategies to defeat the enemies, surrounding the city and shooting the bullet out from the great gun to destroy the giant gate.

In this novel, Mehmed shows bravery to fight the enemies. Appropriate with *Rasulullah*'s promises uttered eight centuries ago "Verily, Constantinople shall be conquered, its commander shall be the best commander ever and his army shall be the best army ever" In other words, *Rasulullah* has informed his followers long time ago before Mehmed II is born that Constantinople would be conquered by a wonderful conquerer and wonderful

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army. Furthermore, Mehmed is brave to build Rumeli Hisari fortress opposite to Anadolu Hisari. The fortress is intended to monitor in and out going of war commodity. He also shows the bravery and the superiority of his troops that dominate the land and ocean. Moreover, Mehmed orders his people to drag seventy two ships into Galata hill to destroy the gate of Constantinople which has never been conquered by any other empire.

Bravery is a trait which will triumph over our inner fear. It flames our self-confidence and lights up our strength to do something good or even great. Bravery is the important nature to confront the hindrance and danger, without bravery human can not be brave to determine attitude. Moreover, when hope and purpose must be realized, people must have bravery to make it happen. Those are things which become the main reasons why the writer has chosen bravery in the novel to be the topic of her analysis.

The study examines bravery maintained by the protagonist's named *Muhammad Al-fatih* or Mehmed II. Mehmed's bravery is because of his God, he must take the brave action for spreading Islam to the whole world by *dakwah* and *jihad*, even the risk is to be killed by the enemies. Furthermore, when the belief is filled for God, the bravery is getting more powerful. It can be seen when the ocean territory has been blocked by the enemies, Mehmed is very brave to decide the unbelievable plan to drag 72 ships into Galata hill, in order to destroy the gate and to embed the flag onto the highest minaret to signify the victory of moeslim people.

The study is aimed to reveal the causes and the effects of the protagonist's bravery in the novel. Therefore, the scope of the research focuses on the protagonist's bravery. There are two causes of protagonist's bravery. The first is believing of Hadist of *Rasulullah* to conquer Constantinople and the second is spreading Islam by *jihad*. The effects of the bravery result in converting Hagia Sophia as a *masjid* and Ottoman the center of Islamic civilization.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Protagonist

According to Wiehardt (2018) the protagonist is the main character in a story, novel, drama, or other literary work. He or she is usually a character that the reader or audience empathizes with, or at least cheers for, whether it is rooting for that person's success or demise. More importantly, however, this character acts as a catalyst to the story's plot by making or causing an action that moves things along.

According to Willay (2010) protagonist is a person who plays a leading or effective part. Hull (2010) says that protagonist is whom the story is about. He also states that the protagonist pursues the goal of the story. A protagonist represents the audience's eyes into the story because he or she will affect the audience emotionally.

According to Purwarno and Sari (2019) a protagonist can be defined as the first character in a literary work, who is always prioritized by audience or the reader of literary work that can cause sympathy for the audience or the reader. A protagonist is a very important tool used in developing a story. There are different terms used for a protagonist such as a hero, focal character, central character, the first character, etc. Regardless of what title you give a protagonist, she or he remains the key ingredient in the development of the story, which is why the story revolves around him or her.

Based on the definition of the protagonist, we can conclude that a protagonist is the first actor in a literary work. Therefore, he or she must play the leading part of the story. So the protagonist has great influence in the story, short story, novel or other literary work because protagonist is an important character story.

2.2. Bravery

According to Castrey (2014) bravery is action. It is most often thought of as an impulsive act to protect others at one's own expense, in the face of an imminent threat or danger. It carries a sense of physical threat and is usually accompanied by adrenaline-activated feats, commonly referred to as heroism. Our culture tends to focus on bravery since it hovers around physical courage. Physical courage is one of many facets of courage such as spiritual courage, leadership courage or moral or ethical courage.

Harrison in Kugel (2017) states that bravery is often described as "overcoming fears for no purpose other than the act itself". Thus, crossing a rope bridge over a deep gorge is considered to be a brave behavior, but it does not have any additional components that are commonly inherent in courage and heroism.

According Franco & Zimbardo (2006) behavior is explained by understanding, not only personality, but also how people react to the environment and social context. It may be possible that one-time heroes find themselves in a state of heroism, which lends itself to the idea that everyone is a hero-in-waiting and that everyone has the potential for heroic acts of bravery.

In conclusion, many people fear things or people, the opposite of bravery. Everyone must stand up to their fears. When we get rid of our fears, then that is the first step to bravery.

3. Research Method

The method of research which is used in this study is descriptive qualitative method. Data collection describes how the writer collects the data that will be analyzed systematically. The data are obtained from the contents of the novel as the main source of the research. The procedures taken by the writer to completely collect the data consist of the following steps: Reading the novel carefully, rereading the novel along with identifying any accounts (data) from the study that are categorized in the subject matter of the study, and classifying the data into some points included in the study problems.

The analysis is conducted by classifying the obtained data into two subchapters related to the research problems of the study. To analyze the data needs some procedure, important to do, they are: analyzing the data carefully, organizing the data based on the subject matter of the study, and making conclusion of the analysis.

4. Discussion

4.1. Causes of the Protagonist's Bravery

There are two causes of the protagonist's bravery. First, believing in *Hadist of Rasulallah* to conquer Constantinople and second spreading Islam by *jihad*.

4.1.1. Believing in *Hadist of Rasulallah* to Conquer Constantinople

Muhammad Al-fatih does believe in *hadist of Rasulallah* because it is one of five pillars in Islam. In other word, Moeslims should believe of what their Prophet does and what he says and what he bans. Mehmed spends all his time to learn much in order to materialized the vision of *Rasulallah* to conquer Constantinople. Mehmed works very hard and studies some strategies and consults them with the experts. He is tireless day and night to think the way to conquer Constantinople. It is the reason why Mehmed is getting braver and having more visions to fight the enemies, because he does believe of *Rasulallah*. It can be seen in the following sentences:

Sultan Mehmed embarked on his grand plan to realize his dreams from childhood. It has come to the story of his closest people that the young sultan had very little rest for spending his time in front of the map to devise conquest strategies and consult with experts.

.....

Mehmed's II vision is far from just a geographical approach, he grew up with his dream of conquest of Constantinople, his whole life dedicated to the efforts of realizing the promise of *Rasulullah*. For Mehmed II, Constantinople was not only a strategic city and much of its wealth. For him Constantinople is a gamble on the oral truth of the Prophet, the main inspiration in his life.

(Siaw, 2013: 58, 59)

The quotations above shows that Mehmed does believe the vision of *Rasulullah*. He learns much, thinks the strategies and consults with the expert to prove the promise of *Rasulullah*. Mehmed is full of confidence and proves to conquer Constantinople. There is no doubt about the promises of the Messenger of Allah. This is one of the causes of Mehmed's bravery to conquer Constantinople.

In addition, Mehmed's bravery can be seen as Constantinople has been defended by the enemies. It is impossible for Mehmed to break through conversional way, then he orders his troops to drag seventy two ships from the sea into Galata hill. When the offences from the ground and the sea suffer defeat, Mehmed persists and takes another path for them to enter into Constantinople. The strong conviction of the promises of Messenger of Allah continues burning his spirit and he could conquer Constantinople throughout his life. His strong belief has made Mehmed a great leader and conqueror also capable of seeing the future. The quotations below show Mehmed's bravery:

The ships continue to move, like a split hill with an average height of 60 meters above sea level.

.....

Desperately, the defensive forces witnessed 72 ships descending into their lights, without being able to do anything.

.....

Indeed, the faith of Sultan Mehmed had brought him to an achievement beyond his time, his conviction in the words of the Messenger of Allah that Constantinople would surely be conquered by the best leader and his strong desire for leadership had made him mentally become a great conqueror. To look beyond the eyes can see. (Siauw, 2013: 178, 179, 185)

4.1.2. Spreading Islam by Jihad

The second cause of the protagonist’s bravery is spreading Islam by jihad. Spreading Islam throughout the world is Mehmed’s goal, as a proof of his obedience and submission to Allah.

Fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah. Fight those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war, do not embezzle the spoils; do not break your pledge; and do not mutilate bodies; do not kill the children!(HR Tirmidzi). (Siauww, 2013: 8)

The words “fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah” is the reason of Mehmed’s bravery to fight the enemy. There is no other reason that Mehmed’s jihad during his lifetime other than because of Allah SWT and in the way of Allah for spreading Islam.

In addition, the promise of conquest of Constantinople further makes Mehmed braver and he prepares various strategies from his infancy and Mehmed also understands very well that Islam has a rule in jihad, that it is not permissible to kill women and children, a servant, oldster, monks and nuns, prisoners of war, sick people, animals and plants.

Mehmed prepares not only to be the best leader who conquers Constantinople but also forges his troops to be the best troops ever. Mehmed trains his troops well; they are trained to use arrows, spears and swords. His troops are called Yeniseri, a military group with the function for spreading Islam.

Yeniseri troops were recruited from children aged 8-20 years, then they were collected in special military barracks to be trained and shaped into the best soldiers.

.....

Islam is the essence of their morality and motivation and this division was formed in order to spread Islam.

(Siauww, 2013: 110, 118)

The training which is taught to Yeniseri is the preparation to be the best troops to conquer Constantinople. Mehmed always encourages them to keep in mind that they are Ghazi, the fighters of Allah to spread Islam. Also Mehmed calls his troops to mobilize all they have to fight and jihad in Allah’s path.

“From father to son, the flames of jihad are continually ignited in the hearts of the Ghazis for jihad in the way of Allah!, The Prophet has promised of

conquered Constantinople and this must happen in our time. we must mobilize everything for this expedition, do not leave anything from our soul, our possessions, weapons and whatever it is. (Siauw, 2013: 310)

The quotation above explains that in his oration Mehmed gives the spirit to his troops, to mobilize whatever they have, such as soul, treasure, weapon and etc. Mehmed's determination to conquer Constantinople was very strong. In order for the promises that had been fought by the Muslims before, it would happen in Mehmed's time.

4.2. Effects of Protagonist's Bravery

There are two effects of bravery resulted in converting Hagia Sophia as a *masjid* and Ottoman the center of Islamic civilization

4.2.1. Converting Hagia Sophia as a Masjid

Hagia Sophia is the largest church of the time. Its sturdy and towering buildings become the icon of the splendor of Constantinople. After winning the wars that takes place between the Ottomans and Constantinople, Mehmed reminds his troops not to kill civilians and to behave gently and do good to the inhabitants of Constantinople. It can be seen in the following quotations:

After congratulating his troops, the Sultan once again reminded his people of his ban on killing civilians and calls for gentle and good deeds to the inhabitants of the city of Constantinople. Then he rode to the church of Hagia Sophia, he past the Church of the Holy Apostles, the Tauri square, and headed for the Constantine square, before him the greatest building of his time, the most prestigious landmark in the world, the Church of Constantinople.

.....

When the Sultan approached the door of the Church, the Christians who were gathered in it felt very frightened. However, there was no other choice for them, one of the priests then opened the door for the Sultan and spotted the civilian crowded in the church of Hagia Sophia with fear and hysterics in front of him. Then the Sultan requested the minister to appease the inhabitants and return to their respective homes on his bail.

(Siaw, 2013: 256)

Based on above quotations, Mehmed is very obedient to the commands of Allah and His Messenger; those are not to kill the inhabitants of the enemy territory and to give the freedom and security guarantees without torture. Then, he starts heading to the church of Hagia Sophia, the most expensive building and the most prestigious landmark in the world.

In addition, Mehmed imitates the Messenger of Allah when he moves to Medina, the first building that he is built is a *masjid*. Thus Mehmed decided to convert Hagia Sophia as a *Masjid*.

Hagia Sophia is a beautiful building, it has a big and high dome, with upon the windows spills the golden glow and enters to the interior, it exudes a mystical charisma that is not owned by any building in Constantinople, its greatest building at the time. Therefore, the Sultan immediately decided to convert Hagia Sophia as a masjid in the city, imitating his Prophet when he migrated to Madinah al-Munawwarah then the first building he was inaugurated by the Sultan is a masjid. (Siau, 2013: 258)

From quotations above, it is seen that the grandeur of Hagia Sophia and its interior is very amazing which is not owned by other building at that time. In addition, Mehmed requires his people to make a call of prayer in Hagia Sophia. Before beginning the prayer, Muslim people close the painting and change it by verses of Qur'an.

Immediately, Sultan asked to his people that adzan was voiced in Hagia Sophia. After that, adzan always voice on the sky of Constantinople. Sultan also asked that every pictures of Christianity in each walls were closed and was changed with the verses of Qur'an, the creature living statue, the cross and all Christian symbolism immediately were removed and the structure of building was cleaned, for preparing prayer. (Siau, 2013: 256)

The effect of protagonist's bravery is converting Hagia Sophia as a Masjid. Every symbols of Christianity and the statues are removed, before beginning of praying.

4.2.2. Ottoman Becomes the Center of Islamic Civilization

After conquering Constantinople, Mehmed moves the Ottoman to become the capital of Constantinople.

After conquering the Constantinople, Sultan Mehmed moved the capital Ustamni to the city and ruled justly citizens. (Siau, 2013: 261)

From the above quotation, Mehmed moves the Ottoman to become the capital of Constantinople. The Ottoman will regulate the affairs of the people who live in Ottoman territory dispassionately and become the state to apply the rules of Islam totality in every line. It can be seen in the following sentences:

The Sultan arranged everything with detailed laws, in the fields of education, government, civil service, judiciary, health, military, arts and culture, commerce, and civil law. No wonder when during his reign, many of the Greek population were chosen Islam as a new religion for them. (Siau, 2013: 261)

Mehmed regulates all the laws in detail. It is a practical method to apply Islamic rules as the way of life, because the government is the place to take care of the affairs of society and the rules applied to human beings must be rules of Allah rather than others. Thus Mehmed places Ottomans in the region of Constantinople as the capital of the Islamic region. The applications of all the rules of Allah as well as the practices done justly and indiscriminately make the Greek population converge to Islam.

In addition, the urban population becomes fourfold in 30 years after the falling of Constantinople, as Mehmed has mastered the state of administration.

The next attention of Sultan is to build Constantinople and restore it to the center of civilization. For his skill in governing the state administration, in less than 30 years since the fall of Constantinople, Sultan Mehmed has doubled population of the city fourfold and became the foundation for later rulers to make it the grandest city in the world. (Siau, 2013: 261)

Only 30 years after the falling of Constantinople, Mehmed raises the population up to fourfold and this is none other than Mehmed's masterful administration of the state. After that, in military, Mehmed makes his ground and sea troops the largest and most powerful army in the world.

In the military field, Sultan emphasized the importance of control the sea and also revitalized his ground troops and made his land and sea troops become the largest and strongest in the world. (Siau, 2013: 262)

These are the effects of Mehmed's bravery. After conquering Constantinople, Ottoman becomes the center of Islamic civilization in the world and the most powerful state ever.

5. Conclusions

The above discussion leads to the conclusion of this research that the protagonist of the novel has tremendous bravery. Then, the conclusions are as follows: the protagonist can show bravery to fight the enemy. There are two reasons why the protagonist of this novel takes the brave actions to conquer Constantinople: a strong belief in *hadist of Rasulallah* to conquer Constantinople and a spread of Islam by jihad. The protagonist implements the bravery to prove the noble promises of *Rasulallah* to conquer Constantinople. The protagonist's bravery results in two effect. They are converting Hagia Sophia as a *masjid* and Ottoman the center of Islamic civilization. The protagonist succeeds in conquering Constantinople and converting Hagia Sophia as *masjid* and he orders his people to close the pictures with the names of Allah and the verses of Allah.

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