

Social Character through Poetry for Children in Rehabilitation

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Abstract

Social character is the key for someone to interact with the surrounding community. Interaction and socialization need to be introduced early by parents. If the results turned in reverse, then there must be other ways to be learned and practiced in family life. This study aims to cultivate social characters to children in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution through poetry learning. Changes continue to occur in handling and coaching juvenile delinquency in Indonesia. Regulations for the management of coaching continue to be carried out from Law No. 3 of 1997 concerning the Law on Juvenile Justice, then it was changed to Act No. 11 of 2012 concerning the System of Juvenile Criminal Justice. Characteristics of this relatively new law contain the main mechanisms of protecting children, who have problems with the law and following the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Education in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution has been carried out with all the limitations and can bring changes in the correctional behavior of children to be better that makes education restore the child's identity. Education held at this institution is expected to be able to achieve the ideals of children to be more beneficial after completing a kind of inclusive education. By applying a pragmatic approach, the study expects that there will be a change in children since they can learn the contents of poems, and at the same time, they are able to express their feeling by writing poems as well. From the process of learning, social characters in children such as honesty, openness, tolerance, cooperation, will be growing step by step.

Keywords: *cultivate, juvenile, poetry, rehabilitation, social character*

I. INTRODUCTION

Children are the future of a nation. As the next generation, children must be adequately educated about the norms applied in the family and community lives. It is the duty of parents to introduce how the norms are applied. When the time comes for children to interact with their environment, parents need to guard them socialize outside the home. Parents have to control their children's social character. It might be quite difficult for parents to do this. When the children have involved in the community, parents still have to monitor everything that affects them. The position of the child, in this case, is critical, because the child, by nature, is born like pure white paper. If, in the first period of the age, a child got something wrong with his/her social character or got a negative influence from his immediate environment, the consequences would be fatal.

Children who get less attention from their parents, or who get bad influence from their environment tend to violate the prevailing norms. Their behavior tends to be negative, for example, lying, wanting to have other people's belongings by taking it without the permission of their owners, temperamental, wanting to be the most powerful among their peers, and so on. Concerning education, the *Undang Dasar* 1945 (Constitution) of the Republic of Indonesia has

mandated that education in Indonesia aims to educate the nation. The goal is certainly to produce a positive, educated generation. In terms of children's intelligence, it can be seen from three domains, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Hence, children's strengths and weaknesses will be distinct. Certain children are strong or good in the cognitive domain, but they might be a lack in two other domains.

On the other hand, they might be weak in the cognitive domain but strong in affective and psychomotor domains. Parents and teachers should be able to observe the strengths and weaknesses of children, and then it can be directed to certain construction activities. Nevertheless, if the negative influence comes very strongly, and the child becomes naughty and criminal, it needs specific guidance called a child-centered approach (Gunarsa 2004, 50).

Criminal children undergone special guidance are not entirely due to the lack of parents' nurture and education. Their involvement in the social relationship can bring them to act criminally as well. For those who have problems with the law and have been convicted through a court decision, according to the law, to get them back to be 'good' children who have a positive social character, they are handed over to Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution.

The development and education of children in this institution are stipulated in Law number 11 of 2012 concerning the juvenile justice system. The law states that every child in the criminal justice process has the right to be treated humanely by taking into account the needs of his age, separated from adults, obtaining legal assistance, and other assistance effectively, given recreational activities, free from torture, punishment or other cruel/ inhumane treatment. The child must also get appropriate health, education, and assistance services while in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution. Hence, the writer wants to offer a small contribution to shape and restore the children's behavior as they should through learning poetry.

Children already have innate good qualities. This trait if followed by positive and robust social behavior, it will build a strong personality as well. Atkinson (2010, 2) stated that personality is built from the results of interactions with the environment (family, neighbors, friends, nature, and others) brought since humans were born. Social behavior is behavior that is built from the results of socializing with the surrounding environment (Gunarsa et al. 2004, 63). Specifically, social behavior is divided into six types, namely imitating, competing, cooperation, sympathy, empathy, sharing (Hurlock 1980, 118). Children, individually, will develop their social behavior by showing which side of the six types is the strongest. If what develops but whose behavior appears distorted, it can be said to be anti-social (120).

Poetry, as a literary genre, can be used as a psycho-diagnostic examination to assess unhealthy conditions, personality functions, and behavior modification. Poetry therapy tries to bring to the awareness that underlies the emergence of tension and anxiety. Thus, the science of psychology offers comfort in accelerating the healing process.

This study is an interdisciplinary study that combines the sciences of literature, education, and psychology. The object of this study is children who are in coaching at the Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution. The approach that the writer used is a pragmatic approach by using two ways to do therapy, namely by reading poetry and writing poetry. Selected verses are poems/lyrics that contain tolerance, cooperation, honesty, responsibility, et cetera. Which can be read by children. As for writing, it is left to them to pour out their hearts and minds. In this case, children's poetic experience plays an essential role in the process of forming and

restoring behavior to become a normal persona. The author wants to see how strong poetry is able to cultivate social characters to children in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution.

Some studies show that poetry has the power to shape a child's social character, such as caring, compassion, responsibility, leadership, creativity, tolerance, honesty, openness, et cetera. Conducted by Sukalima, Putrayasa, and Rasna (2019), Ritonga and Halimatasha'diah (2019), and Livermore, Wedderburn, and Gibson (2019). Besides poetry, another study uses prose literary works to instill children's social character, as it was conducted by Almerico (2014) and Harsanti (2018). Related to providing proper education for children in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution, there are results of researches conducted by the Legal Review Team chaired by Nurini Aprilianda (2014), Hartono (2018), and Biafri (2019). In essence, children who are undergoing the process law has the right to guidance and education. The results of the study recommend the existence of an un-absolute individual treatment model as has been done in several Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Japan as a model of proper education for these children. The above study at least illustrates the extent to which these children are treated properly at the Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution, while this study was conducted to see the behavior of fostered children after studying poetry.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The pragmatic theory emphasizes the reader's relation to the work. The work is treated as something that is constructed to achieve specific effects on the audience. Even though pragmatic criticism originated in Roman times, Sir Philip Sidney, a Renaissance critic, is one of its most influential theorists. For Sidney, poetry has a clear-cut purpose of achieving a certain effect in an audience (Abrams 1976, 14). In this case, the poem is treated as something that is constructed to achieve certain effects on the audience.

Effects may be for aesthetic pleasure, instruction, or any kind of emotion—the poets' desire to improve, please, or to unite the agreeable and the profitable. Therefore, a pragmatic approach is an approach that views literary works as a means to convey certain goals to the reader. In this aspect, the goal can be in the form of education, morals, tolerance, cooperation, or others. Danziger and Johnson (1961) wrote that a pragmatic approach is an approach that views a literary work as something that is created or designed to achieve or convey certain effects on connoisseurs of literary works, whether in the form of pleasures, aesthetics or the effects of moral teaching, religion or education and other effects (11). This approach tends to judge literary works based on the success or failure of the achievement of those goals for the reader. This approach emphasizes aesthetic strategies to attract and influence the reader's responses to the problems raised in literary works.

III. METHOD

This pragmatic research uses an experimental approach through poetry read by a certain group of readers in a certain period.

- a. The readers are individuals or groups. The reader population is the children living in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution, which contains 60 school-age students of elementary, secondary, and high school levels. The samples were determined by taking two students drawn from each level (D1 and D2); (P1 and P2), and (A1 and A2).

- b. The poems/lyrics are in Indonesian and Javanese because readers are children in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution in Indonesia. Those poems/lyrics are "*Hidup Butuh Perjuangan*" (Life Needs Struggle) (romadecade.org), Wulan Yulia Putri's "*Ibu Bak Mutiara*" (Mother like a Pearl), Ariel Maulana Wibowo's "*Pemuda Bangsa*" (Nation's Youth), and *Kidungan Kirun/Kirun's Rhymes* (Henri Supriyanto, 2004).
- c. The data were collected by asking children to read poems/lyrics. Then, they have to answer several questions in the form of a questionnaire based on the content of the poems or lyrics. Researchers used an interview to complete the data, which contains responses, impressions, and acceptance of the works being read.
- d. The answers were tabulated and analyzed qualitatively. Social character values were classified following the responses.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1 General Description of the Poems

1.1 "*Hidup Butuh Perjuangan*" (Life Needs Struggle) (romadecade.org)

This poem seems to remind us that life is not always good. Life is full of everything good and bad. We are always reminded to be careful because people around us are not always kind. Sometimes we live quietly and happily, but we should not be too preoccupied with the situation. Therefore, we must fight in this life.

The language used in this poem consists of tactile imagery and internal sensation. Personification and metaphor are respectively used once. The poem contains a piece of advice.

1.2 Putri's "*Ibu bak Mutiara*" (Mother like Pearl)

In this poem, Putri talks about the love of a child to his mother. The mother is compared to pearls, compared to all that is beautiful. The speaker is committed to safeguarding his mother's happiness because he is one of his most valuable possessions in the world. The figurative languages used are personification, simile, hyperbole, and metaphor.

Mother is figured as a significant person and decisive for the life of the speaker. Mother is compared to a precious treasure. Therefore the speaker is very respectful and even promises to keep her healthy and makes her not to be sad.

1.3 Wibowo's "*Pemuda Bangsa*" (Nation's Youth)

This poem is a heroic statement of a young man who is committed to safeguarding his identity as the Indonesian nation by absorbing the values of the *Pancasila* and maintaining diversity for the unity of the Indonesian nation. The speaker in the poem is characterized as a figure who has powerful will to be the nation's shield, pillar, and guard. It is a patriotic statement and sacrifice, at once.

Metaphors are found in poetry such as the comparisons of *batu karang* (rocks), *garda muda bangsa* (young guard of the nation), and *pilar bangsa* (the nation pillar) with the speaker, *Pancasila* with body and soul, identity with the hero, passion with the sun, et cetera. Smile is also used in comparing himself to the cloud, but overall, this poem is dominated by synecdoche.

1.4 *Kidungan Kirun* (Kirun's Rhymes)

The type of these rhymes is a piece of advice that was sung by using humorous expressions. The rhymes were quoted randomly because they are not in the form of a song

lyric but the form of fragmented rhymes. These rhymes contain pieces of advice:

- a. to be a friendly person in order to have much fortune
- b. not against the teacher; students must respect and regard their teachers
- c. to do good, because goodness is the primary behavior of a human being
- d. The rhyme gives information that the speaker is struggling through singing the rhymes (*kidungan*).

2. Participants' Responses to Poetry

Based on the pragmatic approach, poetry is written with a specific purpose. The writer chose short poems to be easily understood by the readers. Because participants have different levels of education, responses are based on their competence in understanding the content of the poems. To describe the response of participants, the writer makes a table so that the distribution of values is understood by the participants. The distribution of the values of each poem is as follows.

2.1 “*Hidup butuh Perjuangan*” (Life needs a Struggle)

As described in the general description of the poems on 4.1.1, the values caught by the participants are responsibility (by D1-2, P1), affection (by D2, P1), cooperation (by P2), and honesty (by A2). If the participants understand, the poem also contains tolerance value, but no participant chose it. Tolerance is implied behind *Tutur katanya yang menyakitkan* (line 6).

The poem is containing good advice to remind readers. The beginning is talking about how difficult life is. We have to be careful to face other people, for sometimes they can drop down us by using painful words. It means those words might be able to assassinate us. For example, using satire, irony, sarcasm, or direct expression, someone can be very ashamed because he/she felt offended. Those words as if a kind of bullying that makes someone heartache. On the other hand, the speaker in the poem gives a spirit to have a struggle in life if we want to live properly.

For participants, because they have suffered from law cases, two values are becoming critical, namely affection and responsibility. They have neglected these values due to their social problems. According to the interview, they did not consider those values, and even they did not understand them. They want to live as other people do, but they cannot afford it. They will be happy if they have enough money to buy everything they want. They do not like to be ruled, and they want to be free to do something.

From the interview, generally, all participants know the meaning of tolerance, for instance, but they do not know how to implement it. Their parents never teach them about affection. They may have done it, but they do not aware whether their children will imitate them or not. It is also the same as in any other behaviors such as cooperation, honesty, et cetera. for each participant.

2.2 “*Ibu Bak Mutiara*” (Mother likes a pearl)

The title of the poem is exciting. A mother figure is significant for children. Not only is this woman essential for her children, but she is also essential for the family as well. A family without a woman, either as a mother or a wife, tends to be disorganized since all details are under her control. Mother, as a family manager, has the authority to run everything in the

family. The mother, as a manager, has a task to unite family members and solve the existing problems. The mother arranges all needs, planning, problem-solving, finance, and many other things in the family.

In this poem, affection is chosen by all participants. They understand that they have a mother. They know how their mother is, even the one who always comes to see them in this place (Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution) is their mother.

This poem is talking about how worth their mother for their life is. The speaker is comparing a mother figure to the pearl, a valuable thing considered as jewelry. The comparison used by the poet is reasonable because the pearl is very beautiful and, of course, costly. The jewelry made of pearl is extremely beautiful and makes the wearer very elegant. That is why pearl is used as a symbol in this poem. However, when the writer asked one of the participants about his mother, there was a puddle of tears at his eyes when he answered the question. He seemed to feel guilty for not obeying his mother. Even some of the participants were also crying when reading this poem. They all remembered their mother.

Discussing the commitment not to make mother sad, all of them agree. They promised to make their mother happy. Honestly, they do not want to be left by their mother.

2.3 “*Pemuda Bangsa*” (National Youth)

This poem is long enough for them to read. The participants looked bored while reading this poem. Maybe this is the third poem they read in a few days, longer than the previous poem. The poem is full of repetitions that make the reader look bored. Seeing the condition of the readers, the writer postponed the next day. The writer then asked them to sing and play music to relieve boredom.

From the results of their reading, this poem contains the message and promise of Indonesian youth. Two of the participants were very enthusiastic about reading this poem and explained their intentions. They are D2 and P1. When the writer searched, it turned out that they were convicted of theft. They still want to go to school, but their parents could not pay for uniforms and shoes, so they were forced to steal and were caught. Incidentally, their punishment is quite mild when compared to other participants. It can be expected, and they have a responsibility to this country, the country they love, Indonesia. Nevertheless, why did they get trapped into violating the law, three persons (D2, P1, A2) stated that they were forced to do, two persons (D1, A1) followed their friends, and one person (P2) felt trapped and cheated by his friend.

In the interview, the writer asks whether they like being an Indonesian, and the writer also asked them to tell about Indonesia as they knew. Some smoothly told the situation of Indonesia, school, and their home environment. Some of them said that Indonesia is a legal country; people must not steal, kill, and violate regulations. The interview continues about their plans after leaving this institution. D1 and D2 cannot answer, but the other four answered clearly. P1 and P2 wanted to go to school again, A1 also wanted to continue their study, but A2 wanted to work to get money to pay for his sister's school. The writer was touched by their confessions. Actually, when we get closer, they are honest and competent. Just because they needed special attention, they could violate legal norms.

2.4 *Kidungan Kirun* (Kirun's Rhyme)

Lyric of *kidung* (*Kidhung*) is usually sung in front of many people, on the streets, markets, or stages. *Kidhung* is part of *Ludruk*, which is a typical art show of East Java (Surabaya and surrounding areas) using the *Suroboyoan* language. *Kidhungan* is usually performed at the beginning of the performance, during the opening dance (*Remo*), and in the middle of jokes (*dagelan*). *Kidhung* means *uran-uran* or *tembangan* (Poerwodarminto in Supriyanto 2004, 1), in English, it is a song or rhyme. *Kidhung* was formerly sung by sailors who were longing for family and land to amuse themselves (Aribowo 2012, 82). *Kidhung* usually contains information or advice that is often expressed in-jokes. The vocabulary characterizes an agrarian society, usually using names of plants, time, markets, objects, cities, et cetera. (Supriyanto 2004, 22).

In this study, the writer chose *kidhung* often sung by Kirun, an artist from Madiun district. *Kidhung* that the writer quoted was taken from the transcription of the "*Depot Jamu Kirun*" recording (Supriyanto 2004, 181-183). Participants were asked to read the lyrics; at the same time, the researcher team sang the *kidhung*. The atmosphere in *kidhung*'s reading does not feel stiff because there are interludes by singing together. Participants look relaxed, and this is the appropriate time to observe them.

The participants' understanding of *kidhung* is quite good, because they, all, can speak Javanese. In the first verse, there is something that they do not understand the phrase, *cepat rejekine* (line 4). This phrase means that 'the fortune is available,' or 'easy to get a livelihood.' In this case, a livelihood can be in the form of material wealth or other fortunes. To explain to participant D, the language must be elementary. They do not understand the word fortune. What they understood that fortune is money.

Participants need to be explained the need to be friendly, greet each other, care, cooperate, and, ultimately, need a tolerant attitude. Such social character needs to be cultivated to the participants in order they can live together with community members in harmony without feeling suspicious or prejudiced to each other. Then, the result is natural to get a fortune, meaning easy to get a job because of good relations with other people.

The second part of this *kidhung* is very well understood since the language is reasonably known in daily life. However, they did not know the phrase *maremne ati* (satisfied), and the word *ngajeni* (to appreciate, to be polite). The millennial has not known, even heard it.

The message captured by the participants was advice that students must respect the teacher; students must not dare to the teacher. Even this teaching can be found in any religion that a teacher is a prominent figure who educates children in school. Parents educate children at home, while outside the home, there is a social environment instead of school, which also teaches them indirectly. In formal education, children are taught useful knowledge by teachers as the provisions when they live apart from their parents.

As informed by the Education staff of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution, there was a specific class, and when there was a new instructor, the class was uncontrollable. Nevertheless, when the former instructor entered, the class was calm. It can be inferred that participants' tolerance was unstable. They have not accepted newcomers to teach them.

The third part of this *kidhung* contains the words *ngarit*, *senik*, and *laku utama*. All participants have not known them. *Ngarit* (looking for grass) to feed cattle: cow, buffalo, and

sheep. While *senik* is a small container made of woven bamboo, usually for accommodating goods functioning like a basket, and a phrase, *laku utama*, is commendable behavior, a great social action. In social acquaintance, this behavior covers all types of social character.

This part contains a piece of advice to get used to doing well. The author asked participants to give examples of what good deeds are like. It turns out they can set an example and whether it has ever been done, they said, they have done it before. They also said that doing well will have rewards. Then they asked that they wanted to know what rewards if people do well. What they know is that reward is a gift. They did not know what right and good things are. This is becoming the writer's concern.

In the last part, there is a word never spoken by Millennials, *memehan* (line 2). It is a clothesline. The advice in this part is like an appeal to struggle using *kidhungan*. Usually, *ludruk* stories are old events, especially during the colonial era (Dutch, Japanese). The reader is encouraged to fight through *kidhung*, meaning its contents are messages of struggle or encouragement to live independently.

In terms of encouraging participants, the writer encourages them to be enthusiastic about learning, working, helping people, cooperating, et cetera., the point is to live better in the future. Currently, they are still in school-age; the highest class of participants is class 12. It is hoped that after leaving this institution, they can continue their education and get a job. Participants are expected to live a normal life and have an excellent social character, not violating legal norms anymore.

3. Poetry Writing in Cultivating Social Character on Children's Behavior

In this section, the writer is discussing the results of the participants' writing. The various themes they express in the form of poetry. In this paper, the writer gives examples of a task to make a short poem with a particular topic. Example: 'fate.' With the topic of fate, participants produced various themes. The following are examples of the poem written by two participants with the same topic but having different themes:

3.1 Someone is lamenting his fate

Nasib (P2)

*Di dalam ruang yang usang
kebahagiaanku mulai hilang
hidupku kini menjadi malang
aku butuh makan
namun ada halangan
itulah yang selalu aku katakan
aku sering merasa lelah untuk mencari
kebahagiaan untuk diriku sendiri.*

P2 is an 8th-grade student; among other participants, he looks introvert and less capable. The case alleged was theft with his friends, even though, according to his confession, he did not join the theft. He was caught at his friend's house when he was entrusted with guarding a

motorcycle. He did not know if it was a stolen motorcycle. He thought it was his friend's motorcycle. When he was at the police station, he was offered free by paying a certain amount, but his parents had no money. Finally, the decision went on, and he lived at this institution with a correcting period of 1 year while his friend who stole was free because his parent was able to redeem him.

The poem above, for a 13-year-old child, is very good. He dared to express his feelings through written work. From his poem, we can read what he wants. Observed from his daily habits while in this institution, he was diligent in helping to clean places of worship. He was diligently sweeping and watering plants. It might be a guest that he has a good social life, but because of disappointment, he looks moody and bored. He lamented his fate because he was in this institution.

3.2 A student is angry with himself

Maaf Bu (A1)

*Sengaja aku tidak masuk
Aku menahan lara
tersayat kejam
harga diriku tercabik
tak sanggup 'ku penuhi.*

*Lupakan saja dan jangan anggap aku ada
isyarat damai akan aku terima
Mata dibalik mata
Kenapa kau memandanguku
Jika baris terakhir menjadi penutup
Usaikan saja kelasku hari itu.*

*Aku tidak ingin lagi datang
Aku senang tidak akan kembali
Ku benci banyak yang mengawasi.*

The second poem was written by an 11th grade SLA student. Its content was full of anger. This participant is having problems with himself. He was accused of a drug case, not a user, but a seller. He felt innocent because he was just selling. When investigated by the police, he protested why he was arrested. He did not want to be said as a drug dealer because he was purely selling to get money. When the police said what was being sold was prohibited, he did not care. This supposed that it is necessary to socialize Law No. 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics to schools in order to know the dangers.

Those are examples of two among the six participants' writings. Psychologically, participants have good-base social characters. They need special attention. The writer is touched to participate in lifting them from this worst condition. By studying and writing poetry, their behavioral development can be controlled, then treated following their severity. It will

also guide children who have problems with the law and following the Convention on the Rights of the Child as mandated by Act No. 11 of 2012.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of the discussion above shows that it can be concluded, most of the participants' responses to poetry through the values identified from each poem about social characters are not the same for each of them. They have their perceptions about value. Honesty, for example, they know what it means, but they do not know how it is implemented. So from the set of values offered by the writer in understanding the poems above, some know the meaning of a word by word, but not all know the application in daily life.

In the activity of cultivating social characters, it can be concluded that participants who are assisted in this institution need special attention. It can be seen in their poems. Most of them expressed disappointment, anger, sadness, poverty, and neglect.

By the end of this study, the writer expects education in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution can be carried out wholeheartedly based on Act No. 11 of 2012 to achieve the ideals of children to be more beneficial in the following time.

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