

## Interpretation of The Characteristics of The Novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*

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**Abstract:** Literature is a reflection of the reality of people's lives that need to be understood and taken advantage of by many people. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study or analysis to take the benefits in literary works. The novel of *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* is a literary work that presents a person's life with society and highlights the character or nature of each actor. This study aims to interpret the characters and characterizations contained in the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* by Ahmad Tohari. The method used in this study is a qualitative research method. Collecting data in this study using observation techniques and documentation techniques and the data analysis technique used reading technique. The results showed that the character in the novel, namely Rasmus, had various characterizations. So, understanding the story in this novel, the reader will benefit from studying a person's character from his tone of voice in order to be able to understand situations and conditions in social life.

**Keywords:** character, qualitative, reading techniques

### INTRODUCTION

Literature is a form of culture that describes human life. Literature provides general insight into human, social, and intellectual problems. In a unique way, it is possible for literary readers to be able to interpret literary texts according to their own insights. Literature is not just a language art, but a skill in using language that is in the form and has literary value and has aesthetic value. Literature always deals with the broad human experience, literature also involves thoughts with patterns of social, moral, psychological, and religious life. Literature in each society and group of people has different meanings, is used differently, and is positioned differently according to their respective goals (Rokhmansyah, 2016).

A novel is a complex, unique organism, and expresses something indirectly as a result of a literary work. This definition makes the reader find

it difficult to interpret a novel and for the purposes of interpreting a novel, so an effort is needed to analyze accompanied by evidence that can support the work. According to Rafiek (2013:3), literary studies require sufficient mastery of literary theory and literary history. The analysis and discussion will feel less comprehensive and meaningful without sufficient knowledge of both, of course. Therefore, several theories and references are needed to convince the reader to study a literary work such as a novel, especially the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* by Ahmad Tohari.

The benefit of the study is the reader can read and explore the literary works studied constantly, and they will feel the difference (Nurgiyantoro, 2018). The difference found something new contained in the literary work as a result of the complexity of the work in question. Consequently, readers can enjoy and understand more about the stories, themes, messages, characters, language styles, and other things that are expressed in the works being studied. Characters and characterizations are one of the intrinsic elements that have an important role in a story. Because with the characterizations, the story will be more lively and tense. Characterization is the depiction of a person who is shown in a story (Wicaksono, 2017). Meanwhile, story characters are people who are shown in a narrative work or drama, which the reader interprets as having certain moral qualities and tendencies as expressed in speech and what is done in action (Fitriani, 2019). Through these characters the reader can see firsthand the attitudes and expressions that are being felt by the characters in the story, and through these characters the events in the story become intertwined. These events make up a whole story.

Simega (2013) explains that interpretation is a verbal communication process or movement between two or more speakers who cannot use the same symbols, either simultaneously (known as simultaneous interpretation) or sequentially (known as simultaneous interpretation). sequential interpretation). This interpretation is only used as a method where necessary. If an object (artwork, speech, and many other examples) is also quite clear in its meaning, the object will not be able to define an interpretation. The term interpretation itself can refer to the process of interpretation that is currently in progress or the result.

Interpretation of an object from one person to another can be different (Sayuti, 2002). This interpretation is very dependent on the point of view and background of the person who interprets. However, it can be a very positive thing because people can see and understand an object from several points of view. One of the most important factors in interpreting the object is the background of the person concerned. People who interpret something should have a foundation of knowledge and qualified experience that is closely related to the object to be interpreted, so that the results of the interpretation can be

justified.

The authors employed the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* by Ahmad Tohari as the object of study. The novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* by Ahmad Tohari has a storyline that is full of psychological conflicts, namely a deep disappointment in the main character. Then, the characteristics of the characters in playing their roles really touch the hearts of the readers, so that the readers feel carried away into the atmosphere described in the story. Ahmad Tohari deliberately characterizes a ronggeng dancer, Srintil, who is naive and both part and symbol of the tradition that raised him. In fact, Ahmad Tohari is an individual (who is pious) whose world must be very different from the world of ronggeng (javanese dance). This reason makes the authors examine more deeply about the character of Rasus as the protagonist in the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* by Ahmad Tohari.

## **METHOD**

In conducting this research, the researcher is not inevitable by the place of research because the object under study is a literary text, namely the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* by Ahmad Tohari. The activities carried out are reading, reviewing, and analyzing novels, then recording and describing in the form of sentences. This research is a library research, it requires library materials as the basis for the study to obtain data and sources that can be accounted for this research (Danandjaja, 2014). The time setting in this study is not secured to the activities of a program that has been prepared by a particular institution or service in the field, the time setting in this research is more determined in the process of researchers carrying out research. Furthermore, the time setting for this research was carried out from February to July 2020.

The research method is a scientific way to obtain data with certain purposes and uses (Gunawan, 2013). The method used in this research is a qualitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2016: 8), qualitative research methods are often called naturalistic research methods because the research is carried out in natural conditions (natural settings). It is also called ethnographic methods because this method was used more for research in the field of cultural anthropology. Furthermore, it is referred to as a qualitative method because the data collected and the analysis is more qualitative in nature.

The forms of data used in this study are divided into two categories, namely primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources are data sources that directly provide data to data collectors, and secondary sources are sources that indirectly provide data to data collectors (Sugiyono, 2016: 225). There are two types of data in this study, namely the primary data in this

study using the novel "*Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*" by Ahmad Tohari. Meanwhile, the secondary data in this study used references related to the characterizations in the novel "*Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*" by Ahmad Tohari. The technique used in this research is the technique of observation and documentation. On the other hand, the data analysis technique used in this study is the reading technique (reading quickly or at a glance and rereading with understanding).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The discussion of the findings of the characterization research in the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* by Ahmad Tohari is presented below. The Rasmus character has characterizations such as loyal friends, clever, hard to believe, honest, caring, angry, vindictive, loyal, hardworking, responsible, brave, steadfast, stubborn.

### **Analysis of Rasmus Character**

#### ***Loyal friend***

The young character of Rasmus is always together with his friends in various activities. They are small children in general who always spend their time playing and looking for something to eat when they feel hungry.

Data (1) : Loyal friend

The three child ends of the pole are pointed at the same point. Then Rasmus, Warta, and Dursun looked at each other. The three of them rubbed their palms together. They tried to pull the cassava stems back with the last determination. (RDP, 2003: 10).

According to data (1) above, it is explained about the efforts they have achieved to get what they want, without feeling tired they always look for ideas so that they can get cassava which is embedded in the soil even though they have to use unusual methods even beyond the minds of children their age. This finding is in line with Shapovatova (2021) who states a loyal friend is someone who remains firm in their friendship or support for a person or thing.

#### ***Clever***

Data (2): "Stop it. You idiots," said Rasmus impatiently. "We pee together at the base of this cassava stem. If it fails, it's really a bastard." (RDP, 2003: 11)

In data (2) above, it is explained that among his friends, Rasmus is the clever character with all his bright ideas on the current situation when they have difficulty getting cassava because it is too dry and the soil is barren. So finally, the thought emerged that making the soil wet by urinating together would make the cassava tree easy to uproot. This statement is supported by Nicol (1988) who states that smart characters are people who have the

answers and showing the others to correct or help out other characters is a good way to show they're equipped for the job

### ***Honest***

Data (3): "Anyway, at fourteen I dare say Srintil is beautiful. Maybe, the idea I use to judge Srintil is only appropriate for Dukuh Paruk's perception. But at least my confession is an honest one. So this confession continues and I don't feel guilty for acting like that." (RDP, 2003: 36).

In data (3) above, it is explained about the honesty that exists in children aged fourteen years about the meaning of beauty that is in a woman. Even though Rasmus was only a child, he could already say what was in his heart. Although he regretted telling the truth, at least he had the courage to admit it. For a child of Rasmus' age, it is not possible to really understand the meaning of beauty that a woman has in general. However, the story clearly explains the thoughts of the character Rasmus who is able to understand the meaning of beauty in the character of Srintil. The Rasmus character has already felt the strangeness about himself when he sees the Srintil character, not only the sense of friendship that appears, but other feelings beyond that that the Rasmus character has not realized. Bobak (1981) defines honest character as an individual that can present herself or himself in a genuine and sincere way, without pretense, and take responsibility for her or his feelings and actions.

### ***Caring***

Data (4): "I come forward. I want to be the first person to save Srintil from her fear. Knock his shoulder.  
"Are you all right, Srin?" I asked. Srintil just shook her head. Her body felt cold. Her hands are shaking. (RDP, 2003: 49).

In data (4) above, it is Rasmus's way of showing his concern for Srintil when she was frightened by the attitude of the ronggeng shaman who asked her to dance Javanese dance. Rasmus wanted to be the first person to be near Srintil to give attention among the crowd of people who saw Javanese dance. Rasmus can get closer to Srintil even if only for a moment. The authors interpret that this action shows that Rasmus has a caring character. It is in line with Darbyshire (1995) who states caring character is an individual who feels and exhibits concern and empathy for others

### ***Loyal***

Data (5): " Indeed, I can't forget Srintil. The memories with her because I know her since childhood, the memories can't be lost easily ". (RDP, 2003: 87)

In data (5) above, it is explained about Rasmus' loyalty. Rasmus, who became Srintil's friend and companion, remained loyal to his feelings even though Srintil became a ronneng dancer. Every now and then Rasmus tries to get rid of his feelings for Srintil, but it's in vain because of the great love that Rasmus has.

### ***Hard Worker***

Data (6): " Cooking activity will be my part too. I am happy to do this part because besides cooking, I have the opportunity to go shopping at Dawuan market ". (RDP, 2003: 93).

In data (6) above, it is explained that Rasmus is a young man who has a hard-working nature. Because not only a soldier, but he is willing to take care of the kitchen that should be taken care of by a woman. He is also willing to do some shopping just because he wants to have the chance to meet Srintil at the Dawuan market. Putri and Fitri (2020) explain that a hard worker character is an individual who is full of effort and relies more on stamina than thinking.

### ***Responsible***

Data (7): So, I had the job of skinning a big snake, cutting it short, then stuffing it in three backpacks in the middle of the forest. I really don't like that kind of work. But for Sergeant Slamet's sake I did everything, even though several times I almost threw up. The rancid and suffocating smell tickles the stomach and stirs its contents. (RDP, 2003: 95)

In data (7) above, it is explained about the responsibility for the tasks given to Rasmus. Actually he did not like the job that had been given to him, but because of his great sense of responsibility, he was willing to do it. Even though he did the job holding back the urge to vomit, he still did it. This is line with Himmah and Sa'adiyah (2017) who said that responsible character is an individual who is accountable for one's actions and to know and follow various rules, laws, and conduct codes

### ***Brave***

Data (8): Two robbers stayed outside the house when they came to Sakarya's house. I was behind a tree, only a few steps away from one of them. I heard the door being knocked down. Screams and thumping sounds. The next moment I heard Srintil scream. I cursed fiercely why Corporal Pujo hadn't shown up yet. Then comes my courage. (RDP, 2003: 101).

In data (8) above, it is explained about the characterization of Rasmus that appears, namely brave. It can be seen in the character's way of thinking when he was spying on Sakarya's house which was visited by robbers with sharp weapons. Corporal Pujo was frightened because it was just the two of

them, that's when his courage emerged by killing several robbers with the weapon he had in his hand.

### ***Strong Determination***

Data (9): There are many reasons and promises that Srintil made to me. As a twenty-year-old man, I almost made her give up. As a Dukuh Paruk child who knows a lot about the outside world, I have a thousand reasons to consider, even to refuse Srintil's request. Srintil can get everything from me, except babies and marriage. I know this explanation is enough for a Dukuh Paruk woman. Srintil's excessive demands must be driven by a momentary desire that just happens to be in line with her instincts as a woman. (RDP, 2003: 105-106).

In data (9) above, it is explained about the characterization of Rasus who has a strong stand, as evidenced by the character's way of thinking. At that time Srintil experienced anxiety over the life choices she had to make with Rasus. A choice that makes Rasus confused between a life partner and a career. However, Rasus still remains in his position to continue to pursue a career as a soldier for an undetermined time.

### ***Generous***

Data (10): "Ah, you are the kids. What game season is it now?"  
No one answered. But a child holding a kite of yam leaves moved his hand.  
"Yes, it's dry now. Do you like kite flying?"  
"Yes, Sir."  
Rasus counts the kids. There are eight men, three women. The eldest boy was told to come forward.  
"You ran to Dawuan to buy eight kites with the strings... this is money. What do you girls like to play?"  
No answer.  
"Well. You can play the rubber ball. Buy three, here's the money."  
(RDP, 2003: 345)

In the data (10) above, it is explained about the generous characterization of Rasus. This data is evident from the conversation between Rasus and the Dukuh Paruk children who were playing in the courtyard. Then give some money for free to buy a game that they will play together.

## **Analysis of the Personality Typology of Rasus Characters**

### ***Theory Human Type***

Data 11: "The longer I lived outside my small homeland, the more critically I came to assessing life in the hamlet. The squalor is preserved sustainably because of the criticism and laziness of its inhabitants. They are satisfied to be farm laborers or small cassava farmers. There is little harvest liquor at every door of the house. The sound of calung and the song of ronggeng lull Dukuh Paruk." (RDP, 2011:86).

The quote above shows the attitude of Rasus who is able to assess the life that exists in Dukuh Paruk. Rasus was able to compare the difference in values that prevailed in Dukuh Paruk and outside Dukuh Paruk. Rasus's attitude is to research, evaluate, and seek the truth of values.

### ***Religious Human Type***

Data 12: "Rasus smiled seeing Nyai Kartareja's actions walking fast and happy like a child. He draped the towel over the banana fronds in the yard. Changed his shirt and pants, and combed his hair. A sarong is held on the ground near the lincak. Rasus praying." (RDP, 2011:351).

The quote above tells of Rasus who did not forget to worship. Although the place used by Rasus was not a place of worship, he still carried out religious orders. Here Rasus shows an attitude of always worshipping God.

### ***Social Human Type***

Data 13: "You are my aunt, uncle, and all my family, are you all safe?" said Rasus to everyone around him. However, the word "family" that Rasus spoke sincerely had locked the mouths of all the people of Dukuh Paruk. They are touched that they are still recognized by Rasus who is a soldier." (RDP, 2011:257).

The quote above tells of Rasus who has not forgotten the people of Dukuh Paruk and they are still considered as family even though he has become a soldier. Rasus is also worried about the safety of the people of Dukuh Paruk. Rasus' attitude is caring for others, not arrogant, and humble.

### ***Analysis of the Effect of Internal Conflict on the Personality Typology of Rasus Character***

Data 14: "If only someone believed in the bitterness that engulfed my heart. If there is someone I want to talk to about this problem, maybe my sadness will be divided. But only I know and feel everything. In fact, I'm pretty sure Srintil doesn't know exactly what kind of misfortune I would feel when she was bought with a gold ringgit. As she once told me, Srintil was born in Dukuh Paruk to become a ronggeng." (RDP, 2011:62).

The quote above tells of Rasus who can only keep bitterness in his heart. Bitter because Srintil will officially become a ronggeng. Rasus felt that there was no longer any chance for him to have Srintil, because it was impossible. The sadness he experienced made him decide to look for a new job and experience outside Dukuh Paruk. However, the attitude shown by Rasus did not affect his personality. Instead, outside of Dukuh Paruk, he got new grades that he could compare with the values in Dukuh Paruk. Rasus's attitude that compares values in life and judges their good and bad is a characteristic of human theory. This personality emerged after he lived outside Dukuh Paruk.



Data 15: "Now in the morning sun, from where he stood at the height of the Dukuh Paruk graveyard, Rasus could see the whole big change. Piles of charcoal from burned houses, charred trees by the fire. Sakarya is silent, letting Rasus be tortured by the sight of the ruins of his world. The agitation that rages in silence, the obsession in anger suddenly ends. At the same time, the energy that had fueled the rebellion in Rasus' heart was exhausted. His head was down. His forehead was drenched in sweat and his hands hung limply like old banana fronds. Sakarya from the beginning noticed Rasus' inner battle through his facial expressions. The grandfather was satisfied because he believed that there was deep concern in the hearts of the young soldiers of Dukuh Paruk's children; concern as evidence of the intact primordial bond." (RDP, 2011:261).

Wiyanti and Laba (2020) define internal conflict in a novel as an event when a character struggles with their own opposing desires or beliefs. It happens within them, and it drives their development as a character. The data 15 describes the mental turmoil that Rasus experienced when he saw the fate of Dukuh Paruk. After leaving Dukuh Paruk for a long time, he now returns home to only the rubble of burnt charcoal. All houses in Dukuh Paruk were burned down by the masses because they were suspected of being involved in the PKI movement. The local people rebuild their houses with weeds and bamboo leaves. The sight made Rasus feel sad and concerned. He could only bow and weak with the fate that befell his small homeland. This inner conflict in Rasus doesn't change his personality.

## CONCLUSIONS

The writer concludes that the main character Rasus in the novel has various characterizations. So, understanding the story in this novel, the reader will benefit from studying a person's character from his tone of voice in order to be able to understand situations and conditions in social life. Meanwhile, there are suggestions for readers to be able to read and enjoy the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* by Ahmad Tohari and explore various life lessons including the characters and characterizations in the story so that the positive side can be taken and practiced in everyday life. On the other hand, there is a suggestion to the teacher that the *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* Novel can be used as one of the learning media in the material that has been determined in the curriculum.

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