A Response to Tolstoy’s *God Sees the Truth, but Waits* for Character Building by the Students of English Study Program of Sriwijaya University

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**Abstract**

Reading and responding to literary works do not only function at entertaining, but also give moral values to influence students’ behavior and to strengthen the establishment of character and personality. Literature is an important subject in learning and becomes a compulsory subject in Language and Arts Education Department (LAED) in Indonesia. The objectives of this inquiry are to elaborate the students’ appreciation towards literary works by applying a valid appreciation instrument and to measure their change of behavior after reading some works. By employing a descriptive study, this investigation was implemented at the Teachers’ Training and Education Faculty of Sriwijaya University with 45 students as the respondents. The findings of the study are the students can respond Tolstoy’s work as profoundly as possible with very good category and 98% respondents consider that their characters become better due to the literary work response.

**Keywords:** literary works, response, character building, appreciation instrument, aesthetic stance

**Introduction**

Literature instruction had ever been strongly debated in the 38th International Seminar of TEFLIN in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in 1991. A part of participants hesitated the relevancy of literature course to secondary school curriculum because students would not touch English literary works. It is a reality that secondary school teachers should have knowledge about literature and ability to appreciate literary works in order to rehearse the students to be good readers of the literary works (Alwasilah, 1994:13). Apparently, teachers find difficulty to conduct it since they are absent from having the literature knowledge and method of teaching.

Literature is taught for students in primary school up to high school only in language and literature subject in Indonesia. When continuing study to higher education, there is no chance for the students to read and appreciate literary works. However, at least some still keep on reading for pleasure without appreciation. There is no exact data that those who read literary works get any contribution cognitively as well as affectively in their life. Nevertheless, those who study at language or letter faculty keep learning literature by reading and appreciating the literary works. Unluckily, instructors adopt the old paradigm of literary appreciation; they have presented literature both conventionally and tediously in the classrooms (Rudy, 2005).
The conventional teaching inevitably takes place in English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. It seems that such teaching is far from it is expected to be. It is not easy to generate students’ interest in appreciating literary works if the teacher lacks of literature knowledge and teaching strategy as cited in the foregoing discussion. They fail to provide the students with adequate knowledge of appreciating literary works.

In English Language Teaching (ELT) or EFL in Indonesia context, Zughoul (1986) and Rosenblatt (1991) find that literature is avoided to teach as it is assumed that literature contributes nothing to students’ language skills and is subject of recitation merely. The ignorance toward the subject is also strengthened by the fact that teachers lack of literature knowledge and literature teaching strategy. In Rudy’s observation (2000:2), the students are only asked by the teacher to read, to answer some related questions, to summarize or to retell a literary work. Similarly, Beach and Marshall (1991:219) put forward that questions dealing with characters, settings, plot, or theme are the favorite menus to be identified by the students in order to check whether or not they have read the story.

The assumption toward literature cannot contribute anything to the students’ language skill development make it powerless in ELT context. Purves (1993:348) proposes three anomalies that take part to trivialize the literature teaching, namely: (1) the anomaly of the text and the textbook, (2) the anomaly of idolatry of ‘naive readers’ whose heads have been stuffed, and (3) the anomalous roles of reader and writer in school programs. These are also strengthened by Rosenblatt (1991) that it is a public discourse that literature has been neglected in schools in the past.

The state of being tiresome of literature instruction leads Rudy (2000, 2005) to observe, to interview, to try out, to conduct experiment, and to analyze teachers and students in EFL classrooms. Ethnographically, a study dealing with literature instruction in EFL classrooms has been conducted in 2000 and the result is that not only does the students’ literary appreciation develop, but also their language skill. In 2005, an experiment study was conducted to primary school pupils concerning with the model of verbal responses and non verbal responses in developing the pupils’ writing ability. The finding of the study is that there is a significant increase in their writing before and after treatment or their pretest 60.95 in average becomes 74.2 in average in the posttest.

Furthermore, by employing R & D method, Rudy (2007, 2008) collaborates reader response strategy proposed by Beach and Marshall (1991) and visual symbol responses put forward by Purves, et al (1990) to enhance speaking and writing ability of English study program’s students at Sriwijaya University. Moreover, in 2009, Rudy discovers that the collaboration between the two responses can be used as a model of local literature performance art that can be useful for the development of creative industry.

Through a multi-year research funded by Indonesia Higher Education General Directorate, the Ministery of Education and Culture, since 2010 up to 2012, Rudy combines the two responses with psycholiterature and conditioning theory in order to develop students’ character through R & D method in a multi-year research. It initiates with the development of a valid appreciation instrument from the model of teaching literature by collaborating reader response strategy and visual symbol response that contributes to character building and 91.5% of the students from all
faculties of Sriwijaya University positively perceived the role of literature as the finding of the first year. Meanwhile, the second year research finds that 100% of the students in every faculty perceives that literature is very important in building students’ character and 91% of students from 12 study programs, 100% English literature, and 70% high school teachers agree that forum literature for all is a good place for all students to develop their character through questionnaire distribution after they identify the aims of the forum establishment. In 2012, Rudy develops an instrument for measuring intellectual through reading literary works and the collaboration theories of responding literary works. It is still in process.

By employing the the valid appreciation instrument created in 2010, this current study dealing with the appreciation towards Leo Tolstoy’ short story God Sees the Truth, but Waits, one of the English stories read by English study program students. Besides, this scrutiny analyzes the respondents’ consideration whether their characters become better after responding some literary works by the help of instrument in guiding them to write their personal response.

**Literature Review**

To strengthen the background of the study, some relevant theories are obviously depicted. The single appreciation instrument used in this study was collaborated from the theories. First of all, Beach and Marshall (1990) propose seven responses which is called reader response strategy. This response emerges in literature circle due to the criticism from some experts that appreciating literary works cannot only identify the intrinsic and extrinsic values or the elements of fiction, but also to respond aesthetically by exploring profoundly what are in the literary works by describing, explaining, conceiving, interpreting, engaging, connecting, and judging. By describing, students can identify the characters and their characterizations whether the characters are good or bad, whether they like or dislike the characters and give reasons for their choice, and the settings and the plots whether they like or not and give reasons for the choice. The students also explain why the characters behave so and conceive what happens to the character. In interpreting, the students choose one important word from the story and give reasons for choosing it. The students must also connect the content of the story to their own experience, other stories, films, books, culture, social life, and religion. They engage what happens to the characters to their own feeling, imagination, and thought and judge whether they get moral values from the story and whether the author can tell the story well. The reader response strategy can facilitate the students to enhance their cognitive and affective aspects.

Barr (1991) in his book, Handbook of Reading Research put forward a lot of research has focused his research on reader response. In a study by Hansen, he found that the Engaging "include" committed more passive readers responsive to poetry is optimistic and emotional content affect the emotions of literary texts. While the Shedd found that attitudes influence the reader's participation in strategy Engaging emotions. Therefore, readers with a positive attitude towards literary texts show inclusion of emotions than those with negative attitudes. The attitude of a reader's interest in literary texts tend
menghantarnya to the application of emotional and higher intellectual power is a study conducted by Purves.

Next, the theory of visual symbol responses put forward by Purves, et al (1991) that there are four dimensions of the symbols: graphic, performance art, illustration, and film. From the dimensions, this recent study makes use of three symbols in appreciating literary works, namely: sociogram, picture, and tableau. According to the proponents, sociogram is a connection among the characters that is connected by arrows in order to see their relationship. For example, after reading Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, the students can make two circles to put the to names of the famous characters of the story and they relates the connection with an arrow with a verb above the arrow, such as loves, engages, or protects which is appropriate to the relationship. While picture will be drawn by the students by selecting which paragraph or stage they like to depict through pictures. For instance, after reading Kafka’s *The Bucket Rider*, they draw a picture concerning with the poorman was riding the bucket. The picture drawn depends on their interest to which part of story attracts their mind. The last symbol used in literary response is tableau. It is so called “still picture” that the students performs without movement and other students have to guess the performance. The tableau must be discussed before bringing it into performance. It can be exemplified when the students makes a tableau of Tan Bunn Ann, a King from China who wanted to jump to Musi River and Siti Fatimah, his wife, a daughter of Palembang King, also tried to jump after the China King. Other students have to guess the performance. It apparent that these three symbols have something to do with psychomotoric activities.

In social life, many problems faced by both individuals and groups. Anarchic violence and action, especially students at higher education level is very common. Students are the leaders in the future. They are young people who should have been aware of and identify the values in carrying out activities on campus. In line with this reality, Husniah and Arifani (2010) suggest the following.

Indonesia is currently the nation's moral crisis is prolonged. If so, one might say that there is not quite right with Indonesia so that education becomes the nation's most anarchic nation, less tolerant in the face of adversity, and corrupt. In addition to religious instruction, one of the lessons that teach character is to literature. Read literature is to know the various characters, mostly a reflection of the realities of life. Thus, the reader will understand the motives that made each character either a protagonist or an antagonist so that the reader can understand the reason for the actors in each of his actions.

In addition, today's society requires a “strong role model” as stated by Yudi Latif, the launch of his book, "Literature also teach character without having to patronize through the stories that build the character of the nation." This statement is accompanied by expert’ claim that ignoring the role of education in building the character of the nation's literature, that the position and the portions are very small literature in the field of language education. Concerning to the fading character of the nation can be affected by the two languages that dominate this beloved Indonesia, the political language oriented winner (winner-oriented) and language-oriented economic benefit (benefit-oriented), but when the language of literature with a focus on ethics will be discussed? as Rushord
criticized by Kidder (ethicist). A country could lose a politician or economist it will be replaced by statesmen other, but if the state has lost its character as a nation then the nation's punahlah. statesman or organizing people and the nation should be an example to society, they must be role models. He further asserted that influencing the formation of three-dimensional character of the nation: awareness of differences as a nation, rigidity, and moral nation.

Since 1971, an expert of western literature L.B. Moody has described the literature in a very unfortunate position. Though the portion is so small, literary scholars have argued the importance of the theoretical literature to be taught. Literature helps to develop language skills, increase cultural knowledge, develop creativity and taste as well as supporting the formation of character (Moody, 1971; Carter and Long, 1991; and Tarigan, 1995).

The importance of literature in the presence of learning described by Rosenblatt in Rudy (2010b) as follows: 1) literary imagination in pushing the need for democracy, 2) literary imagination and diverting behavior, emotional behavior, and measures of social and personal values, 3) literature presents the possibility of differences view of life, a relationship patterns, and philosophy, 4) assist in the selection of literary imagination through the experience of reviewing the different works of literature, 5) the experience of literature allows the reader of his own personality and look at the problems objectively and solve it better, and 6) literature provides a reality to adults of different value systems so that they are free from fear, guilt and uncertainty.

Rosenblatt agrees with the above details, it can be concluded that the aspect of intelligence, virtue, morality, and wisdom can be improved through the literature. Emotional intelligence of learners can be empowered to enable the interpretation of literary works freely, wild, and to struggle, not the style (genre) of literature, or who the characters whom the author is to be the smart vehicle. In other words, appreciation and interpretation of literary works can be an effective driving force to improve these aspects.

The benefits of learning literature is very much advanced by literary experts. Ironically, the theories that discuss the benefits of learning have not been touched up on a practical level. To achieve a practical level, these theories should be explored and analyzed to the creation of an aesthetic literary learning, learning which develops cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.

Reader response was seven when excavated and explored in the literature so that learners can find the pillars of character formation that consists of: 1) honesty, 2) respect and courtesy, and 3) compassion, caring, and cooperation, 4) self-confident, creative, hard work, and never give up, 5) justice and leadership, 6) good and humble, and 7) love God and the universe and its contents, 8) responsibility, discipline, and self-reliance, and 9) tolerance, love peace, and unity (Megawangi, 2004).
Learning literature to develop the three important aspects have been researched and developed. Rudy has conducted experimental studies of the literature by applying depreciation reader response strategies to enhance the appreciation of literature and language skills of students (2001; 2010b). Further research is the development of research he did for collaborative learning literature with reader response and the response of visual symbols to contribute positively to the appreciation of literature by making use of local literature to contribute to preserving the local culture of Indonesia. Talib (2010) also gives emphasis on it as follows. By looking at the importance of local languages and literature in society, it is necessary to preserve as early as possible. Things that need to be done is to enable the re-establishment of local cultural inheritance that has meaning or noble ancestry through family lines, primarily education.

**Method of Research**

The method used in this research is descriptive method by collecting, processing, data concluded in accordance with the objectives of the study. This study is conducted at the Faculty of Teachers’ Training and Education, Sriwijaya University. The research subject consists of 45 students, the fifth semester of the academic year 2011/2012. The research data stem from the appreciation of students on short story written by Leo Tolstoy, *God Sees the Truth, but Waits*. Literary appreciation of students using the instrument consists of 26 questions was developed based on the theory guiding the reader response consisting of seven reader responses: describing, explaining, interpreting, conceiving, engaging, connecting, and judging (Beach & Marshall, 1991) and the nine pillars of the establishment of the nation's character consisting of 1) honesty, 2) respect and courtesy, and 3) compassion, caring, and cooperation, 4) self-confident, creative, hard work, and never give up, 5) justice and leadership, 6) good and humble, 7) love God and the universe and its contents, 8) responsibility, discipline, and self-reliance, and 9) tolerance, love peace, and unity (Megawangi, 2004). Meanwhile, data on student perceptions of the importance of learning in college literature obtained from a questionnaire comprising 25 items with response question "yes" or "no".

**Research Findings and Discussion**

**The results of students’ appreciation towards God Sees the Truth, but Waits**

Based on the dialogue actors, who do you think is the protagonist and antagonist in this story? The answer to this question, is the protagonist and antagonist are Ivan Dimitri Aksionov and Makar Semionich, responded correctly by 45 students or 100% can correctly identify the cast of the story.

How do you think the protagonist? What did he do so he called a good leader? Explain? This question is answered by generating a variety of indicators of good behavior
protagonist, is a good, patient, courageous, compassionate, caring, thoughtful, and fatherhood. This indicates that the student can easily identify with the characters behavior of the protagonist. At least there are five good behavior can be identified. Behavior that dominates the character is good, patient, religious, and compassionate.

Do you to him? Why?
Various reasons are put forward to realize the feelings of the characters are happy to: (1) character is a male lover, (2) man who was brave and unyielding to change his behavior, (3) hard-working man to meet and educate putrid, (4) properties owned characters are properties that must be owned by a father, and (6) a great human being. However, of 45 students found that they liked the characters apart, they also show a sense of excitement about the characters because the characters never disobey.

Are there any characters that you hate? Who? Why do you hate? What qualities in him that you do not like?
All students found only one character who they hate the Makar because he was not a good man, he was a criminal. He was identified as the man who was irresponsible and dereliction of duty as a human being. Character is observed as a figure that has properties that are not favored by the respondents as follows: treason, no matter, gamblers, drunks, hot-tempered, pleasure-loving, selfish, stubborn, ignorant, lazy, and likes to do mischief.

Where the story happens? Like it or not, do you like the background of story? Why?
All respondents identified that the story is mostly occurred at home, an inn, in jail and they love the background story for various reasons such as: a very clear picture of the story, where the aptly describes the relationship between people, also in jail.

What events do you think is important in the story? Why is it important?
The importance of a story is determined by each student is followed by arguments over the election. The events would be considered important and their arguments. When Aksionov became father in the jail, worship, and forgive Makar. When Makar regreted his bad action and sobbed due to the death of Aksionov.

Can you feel what is felt by the character? What did he feel?
All respondents said that they could feel what the characters felt. Based on their analysis of the main characters (Aksionov) can be deduced from the feelings that arise within the figures themselves. Respondents as a reader are: pain, sorrow, hate, resentment, disappointment, not appreciated, not harmonious, scared, angry, depressed, worried, indecisive, frustrated, guilty, tough, touched, happy, emotion, and longing for harmony in the family. Feelings last five appeared at the end of the story.

Are you going to do the same thing done the characters the protagonist? Please explain.
The average respondent would do the good things done by Aksionov because he is better and more communicative attention again to the child and forget about revenge on a partner. Here is a selection of tables and explanations of the characters feelings.
Can you imagine what has happened? Please give an explanation. All respondents can imagine what has happened in the stories they have read. They reveal things that are not subject such as family harmony, head of the family are not responsible, cracking mother and child relationship, the conflict is not harmony in the family, the way the story is easily understood and of concern, figures Aksionov received karma for defying Aksionov but he could through the karma that with patience, obstinacy of a father in the family who was in harmony, and conflict in the story is there in real life. Student response to question number #9, #10 and #11 in line with the results of Shedd in Barr (1991) that greatly influence the attitude of the reader's participation at the time of applying emotional responses include (Engaging). Respondents with a positive attitude towards literary texts show a higher emotional investment than those with negative attitudes. Similarly, the Shedd, Purves in Barr (1991) explains that the interest in the subject of a study of literary texts tend to the application of emotional and higher intellectual power is a study conducted by Purves.

Which properties appear in the characters that the protagonist? Virtues, humility, responsibility, discipline, and self-contained character recognized by all respondents. But honest nature which is owned by Aksionov can only be identified by 85% of the students.

Why is the protagonist character who acts this way? Actions of the characters are very appreciated by the whole subject of study as evidence that maternal affection unparalleled, a form of affection and responsibility of the prisoner to his friends.

How do you think the actions the protagonist in the story? This question is responded to with a brief that the action figures as the protagonist Aksionov good, extraordinary, and it is precisely because he has tried albeit slowly, but make him realize what he had done.

Agree whether or not the actions of the antagonist in the story? Why? All of the respondents did not agree to act as an antagonist, Makar because he had hurt the man who became prisoner due to his action, has been betrayed, causing him to be a wild child and causes of conflict. Respondents also identified him as though in the end he changed, they did not like his actions are at the beginning of the story often be disrespectful and snobby.

Do you have experience similar to the story? (If not, you should try connecting with the story content that may be experienced by siblings, parents, grandparents, even friends or neighbors?) Despite not having the same experience with what is experienced by the characters, the subject of research trying to connect with what is experienced by relatives and friends that defied words of parents, friends are hard to express feelings, similar to those experienced by friends and neighbors but different problem, a friend who became very angry after the divorce of his parents, and that experienced by the respondents are against the parents but the parents always succumb. That question requires that the subject of studies have linked attitudes, experience, and knowledge that exists within them into literary texts they read. This is in line with the results of Beach and Harstle in Barr (1991) that a high percentage can be obtained by connecting students to read literary texts with their personal experiences and attitudes. Other researchers in the Barr (1991) which also supports the Beach is researching the reader that includes the experience of his life and Lipson include cultural attitudes.
Have you ever watch a movie similar to this story or another story books you ever read? Let you tell it and connect with this story. Almost all respondents can link the story to the movie ever watched or book ever read. Films and books they connect is variation. Book of stories they relate are quite varied but on average but can not forget the title story describes the story as well.

Try to connect this story with a social life, culture, and religion. How to connect? Based on these questions, respondents connected with social life, namely how to communicate well with others, relating to the propriety of the culture of older people, the religion with regard to respect others as well as the criminal in Christianity.

Try to connect or tell me, how the characters that you think is a good figure indicate the following: a. compassion, b. matter, c. cooperation, d. confident, e. creative, hard work, and never give up, f. love of God and the universe, g. tolerance, love of peace, and unity (if not reflected in the story, you need not answer)

Are the characters the protagonist has the following properties:
a. Sincerely, b. courtesy, and c. justice and leadership. Mention the reason, can be found in the story.
According to the respondents acted by Aksionov respect nature while teaching it to his friends in jail, while the courtesy shown by him not to hurt his feelings. Meanwhile, the nature of justice and leadership played well by Aksionov figure in the jail.

Is it interesting story? Please explain.
All respondents indicated that they read the story has an interesting storyline. The reason they reveal is that a good story line and tell everyday life, there is a moral message delivered, easy to understand, there is learning about life, the end of the story that was not suspected, and educate and increase knowledge.

What are the benefits that you get after reading this story?
This question was responded to very useful by all respondents as the story reminded her in choosing a life companion, teaches readers to honor their parents, contain positive values, indicating the importance of harmony in the family, gave great wisdom, and help shape the personality,

What do you think the author of this story?
According to respondents, the author of the story is very creative as well be describing the conflict and teach obedience to parents, there is a moral message that makes students enjoy aesthetically as he emphasized the aesthetic perspective (Rosenblatt, 1987).

**Student Perceptions of Learning in Higher Education**

Questionnaires filled out by the appreciation of the learning of students after they read and answer the questions set forth in the instrument of appreciation as much as 25 questions with an option to answer yes (agree) or no (disagree).
Histogram showing the attitude questionnaire on student agreement to the questions given in appreciation test. Here's the summary on their attitude.

When responding to statement no. # 17, # 18 and # 19, 100% of respondents agreed that their hated antagonist, hostility and fighting hate, hate the characters are arrogant and dishonest. In the reality of living in the era of globalization, many found the events and anarchic acts committed by educated persons, persons who easily ignited emotions. It is true that the theory of Pavlovian conditioning is needed at this time. Time when the nation is experiencing a moral crisis prolonged, without any attempt to decide which one is the chain of crisis.

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NANTI INI MASUKKAN DITEORI SETELAH VISUAL SIMBOL RESPONSES


Teori psikosastra yang tersebar dalam butir-butir pertanyaan apresiasi sastra merupakan delapan operasi dasar yang dikemukakan oleh Strickland (1977:55) dalam Tarigan (1995:39) terdiri atas mengamati, membandingkan, mengklasifikasikan, menghipotesiskan, mengorganisasikan,