

Understanding the Urgency of Human Relations with Nature in the Pandemic Era through Yusei Matsui's *Assassination Classroom* Comic

Amri Fadhilah Ahmad^{1*}, and Sukarjo Waluyo²

¹Master of Literature Program, Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia.

²Master of Literature Program, Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia.

Abstract. *Assassination Classroom* tells the story of students who are victims of discrimination who take advantage of the nature around them to hone their abilities in academic and non-academic fields. This study aims to describe students who are taught how to utilize natural resources appropriately. The method used in this research is contextual. The contextual method is a method that can help assess a work based on the historical and cultural context in which it was created and based on its textuality. There are several key results of this study: (1) class 3E students were taught to use springs on the mountain as a shared swimming pool during the summer. (2) students were taught to utilize animal and vegetable resources for the school festival. Class 3E students made a tavern with a food menu in which raw ingredients are taken directly from the mountain where their class is located. The conclusion of this study is to show how important the relationship between humans and nature is. The utilization of natural resources still must pay close attention to natural ecosystems to maintain the balance of nature.

1 Introduction

2020 has been a rough year for most of humankind in all corners of the world. The COVID-19 outbreak has hampered various social activities in various fields, one of which is education. All direct teaching and learning activities from primary to university levels have been completely stopped and replaced with an online learning system.

Indonesia is one of the countries that did not escape the COVID19 outbreak. On March 17, 2020, the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture issued an order relating to the temporary suspension of face-to-face learning and replacing it with distance learning. However, such a system is not without its own set of problems. For example, the internet network has not yet been adequately distributed in several regions. In addition, there are also

* Corresponding author: amrifadhilah19@gmail.com

not a few school students who do not have smartphones or other devices to carry out online learning. These problems undoubtedly hinder students and teachers from conducting formal online learning.

Various problems in the learning system that arise do not mean that all educational activities for children must be stopped. Under existing limitations, teachers and parents must remain active and creative in providing education to children. Teachers and parents must work together to find ways so that children do not get bored of learning from home and still gain knowledge. Various kinds of things around us can be used as a medium for learning, one of which is comics.

Yusei Matsui's *Assassination Classroom* comic is one of the comics that can be used as a medium for children's education. In addition to training children to love reading, it can also train children's analytical skills on events that occur in the storyline in the comics. This comic tells the story of junior high school students at Kunugigaoka class 3E who were discriminated against by their teachers and other students. The students in class 3E are considered a bunch of hopeless students who do not have a bright future. Their classroom is in the middle of the mountain behind the main building of Kunugigaoka Middle School. The classroom is in such a sad condition because it is in the middle of a mountain and far from the main school building; not all teachers can withstand the students' attitudes. However, things changed drastically when Koro-sensei or Mr Koro became their homeroom teacher. With a heart-to-heart approach, Mr Koro can embrace all 3E class students to have a close relationship between students and teachers. Class 3E students also experienced improvements in academics and non-academics, making those who had belittled them before feel jealous.

Many things can be learned through the comic *Assassination Classroom*, especially about the relationship between teachers and students and how Mr Koro educates 3E students so that they have relationships with humans and nature. This study aims to describe how Mr Koro provides knowledge about how to make maximum use of natural resources without damaging the existing ecosystem to educate 3E students.

2 Method

This research is a literature study. The material object used is a comic titled *Assassination Classroom* by Yusei Matsui, translated into Indonesian. The method used in this research is the contextual analysis method. Contextual analysis analyses written works that can help us assess the work based on the historical and cultural context of the era in which the work was created. It is also based on its textuality, namely the factors that can classify a text as a work. The application of this method combines internal elements that exist in literary works or what are called intrinsic elements with elements that are outside the literary text, namely extrinsic elements. The approach used in this research is the ecocritical approach.

3 Result and Discussion

The previous explanation described that students of class 3E at Kunugigaoka Middle School received discriminatory treatment from their school. Students do not get proper educational facilities from schools both in learning activities and other facilities such as classrooms, sports halls, etc. This discriminatory treatment causes students to feel insecure and have difficulties improving their abilities in both academic and non-academic fields.

The arrival of Mr Koro, who is their homeroom teacher, slowly changes the situation of the students of class 3E. He teaches various things in the academic and non-academic fields to the students of class 3E, which causes the ability in the academic and non-academic fields

of class 3E students. As for the non-academic field, Mr Koro teaches his students how to build human relationships and make good use of natural resources so that nature is preserved.

3.1 Utilization of Springs for Swimming Pools

As previously mentioned, class 3E is in the middle of the mountain behind the school, which is about 1 km away and is not accommodated by adequate facilities like those in the primary school building. When summer arrives, they cannot enjoy the swimming pool facilities in the primary school building because the long-distance travelling will be exhausting. In addition, if they want to borrow swimming pool facilities, the process will be deliberately made difficult by the school administrators. Mr Koro as a homeroom teacher who has special abilities at his disposal found a solution to this matter by utilizing the flow of springs in the mountain to turn it into a swimming pool.

- Mr. Koro : *Nah anak-anak, tadi sudah kubilang kan? Ada yang tidak bisa aku lakukan dengan mach 20-ku. Salah satunya adalah membawa kalian ke kolam renang. Sebab, itu akan memakan waktu seharian penuh.*
- Maehara : *Seharian penuh? Ah, itu berlebihan! Kolam renang di gedung utama kan cuma berjarak 20 menit dari tempat kita.*
- Mr. Koro : *Lho? Siapa bilang aku sedang bicara tentang kolam di gedung sekolah utama? Untuk membendung mata air itu sampai terkumpul air sebanyak ini, membutuhkan waktu 20 jam. Aku sudah membuat kolam renang dengan jalur 25 m. Kalau tidak dipakai, tinggal membuka pintu air ini dan mata airnya akan kembali seperti semula. Dengan mengatur level air, kita juga bisa membuat penelitian pembudidayaan ikan di sini.*

(Assassination Classroom Volume 5 Page 173)

Based on the conversation above, we can see that Mr. Koro indirectly taught students to use natural resources as needed without destroying something that already existed. The quote above also shows that Mr. Koro does not only focus on making a playground for class 3E students, but he also designs a concept so that this place can also be used by children as a media for learning.

3.2 Utilization of Animal and Vegetable Resources for the School Festival

Every November, a school festival is a routine held yearly in Japan, especially in junior and senior high schools. Every class from class 1 to class 3 is required to participate in these activities. There are various kinds of activities that can be displayed or included in school festivals, such as music, drama, haunted house, food stalls, etc. This school festival is also serving as an arena for competing innovations and creations from each class. For 3E class students, participating in the school festival is difficult due to the location of their class being quite far from the main school building.

Of the many activities that can be included, both arts and culinary, students from class 3E chose to open a food stall. Based on the advice given by Mr Koro, they can take advantage of the various kinds of plants, fruits, and animals that are on the mountain where their class is located.

Mr. Koro : *Kalau kalian membeli ini semua, dan membuat menu makanan lengkap, sepersi harganya bisa lebih dari tiga ribu yen. Omong-omong, dipedalaman, kalian bisa mendapatkan semua ini dengan mudah. Jadi, lokasi ini bukanlah kekurangan tapi merupakan kekuatan terbesar kalian. Bahan makanan ini sama dengan kalian, tersembunyi di hutan, tanpa ada yang menyadari kekuatannya.*

(Assassination Classroom Volume **13** Page 186)

The quote above is a motivation given by Mr Koro, so that class 3E students do not need to be pessimistic about the situations and conditions they receive. He conveyed that something they have seen and felt as a deficiency has more value if students can see the potential and innovate. With the motivation conveyed, the 3E class rushed to collect various kinds of plants, seeds, fruits, fish, etc. They shared tasks from cooking, providing utensils, promotions, services, and others. Mr Koro also helps sort out which plants can be used as food and which are poisonous plants.

The school festival takes place on the weekend of mid-November. The small 3E class building in the middle of the mountain is converted into a food stall. Initially, many doubted the plans of this class 3E student. However, thanks to their relationships with many people outside the school alongside Mr Koro's upbringing, their shop began to be visited by many people.

Pelanggan 1: *Di puncak gunung kan tidak ada lemari es atau semacamnya. Jadi, bagaimana dengan kebersihannya?*

Toka Tada : *Oh, soal itu bukan masalah. Untuk bahan yang mudah rusak, bisa kami ambil langsung di gunung begitu ada pesanan masuk. Jadi, kalau kakak-kakak memesan di sini, akan bisa langsung makan dengan bahan-bahan yang segar begitu sampai di atas. Selain itu, untuk yang kakinya lemah bisa kami bantu sampai setengah jalan. Tapi, kakak-kakak terlihat kuat jadi pasti itu bukan masalah.*

(Assassination Classroom Volume **14** Page 009)

The above conversation shows that the students of Class 3E have prepared everything carefully and thoroughly to deliver the best service to customers. All the doubts from customers were replaced with satisfaction after the first customer tried to taste the 3E students served the food menu. Their ingredients were obtained from the natural environment around them.

On the first day of the school festival, the 3E's food stall did not get too many visitors. Most of the visitors on the first day were people who had been helped by students from class 3E and Mr Koro. However, on the second day, the shop's visitors increased dramatically. The visitors on the first day turned out to be a well-known culinary blogger, and he helped promote the food stalls of the 3E class students until they finally got flooded with visitors. On the second day, the number of visitors made their ingredients run low, and Mr Koro asked to close their shop early even though they had only opened their shop for half a day.

Kimura : *Stoknya masih bisa ditambah kalau kami masuk lebih dalam lagi ke gunung.*

Mr. Koro : *Tidak! Sebaiknya kita akhiri sampai di sini.*

Nagisa : *Tapi, kalau begitu kita bakal kalah.*

Mr. Koro : *Tak masalah. Sebab kalau diambil lebih banyak lagi, ekosistem gunung akan rusak. Tumbuhan, burung, ikan, artropoda, mamalia. Berbagai tindak-tanduk makhluk hidup membentuk "ikatan" yang membawa berkah.*

Pasti di festival sekolah ini kalian sudah merasakan sendiri, betapa banyaknya berkah yang kalian terima dari “ikatan” tersebut. Dari orang yang mengajari, orang yang ditolong, orang yang sudah merepotkan, yang direpotkan, juga orang-orang yang saling meningkatkan persaingan sebagai rival kalian.

Okano : *Haah. Jadi akhirnya hari ini pun bertujuan untuk mendidik kita, ya!?*

(Assassination Classroom Volume 14 Page 049-051)

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that Mr Koro is not only providing moral education to students through mere theories, he directly teaches them how to turn disadvantages into strengths and make maximum use of natural resources while still maintaining the stability of the ecosystem. In addition, he implicitly made his students aware of the importance of a good relationship between humans and humans with nature. Because despite all the discrimination and other bad things the class 3E students have received, they, without realizing it, we are able to learn many things from the environment around them.

Student 1 : *Padahal, tadinya aku kira kelas E itu seperti neraka.*

Student 2 : *Tapi, di tengah alam begitu mereka justru bisa menghasilkan produk dengan usaha sendiri. Aku jadi mendadak merasa iri pada mereka.*

(Assassination Classroom Volume 14 Page 056)

The above conversation occurs after students in the main school building saw the results of the announcement of the sales on the information board. They were shocked when they saw that class E was ranked 3rd despite having finished early. They were amazed by the abilities of the E class students, and the negative views of other students towards E class students gradually turned into admiration.

4 Conclusion

Based on the discussion results above, we can conclude that through the comic *Assassination Classroom* by Yusei Matsui, we can understand the importance of bonds or relationships among living things, especially with nature. Because if humans respect nature, take good care of nature, use natural resources sufficiently and not in excess, then nature will protect humans and provide everything for humanity, be it water, land, air, plants, animals, and so on.

Yusei Matsui, through his work, intends to campaign about how people in Japan live side by side with nature to his readers in various parts of the world. From the quotations above, it can be seen that education about the importance of humans bonding with nature and their surroundings has been taught from an early age by parents and teachers in Japan; children in Japan are accustomed to being disciplined in maintaining the cleanliness of the surrounding environment. So, when the child grows up, these habits are already inherent in him. Until now, Japan has been one of the cleanest countries in the world because of its people who always obey by keeping their environment clean.

References

1. Y. Matsui, *Assassination Classroom: Waktu Untuk Bakat*. Volume **5**, Jakarta: PT. Elex Media Komputindo, (2016)
2. Y. Matsui, *Assassination Classroom: Waktu Untuk Pilihan Masa Depan*. Volume **13**, Jakarta: PT. Elex Media Komputindo, (2016)
3. Y. Matsui, *Assassination Classroom: Waktu Untuk Akhir Semester*. Volume **14**, Jakarta: PT. Elex Media Komputindo, (2016)
4. S.D. Damono, *Alih Wahana*. Editum, (2012)
5. Sujarwa, *Model & Paradigma Teori Sosiologi Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, (2019)
6. S.A. Masthuroh, Prihantoro, *The harmonious relationship between human beings and nature in traditional song lyric during sintren ritual*. In Proceedings International Conference on Energy, Environmental and Information System, ICENIS, 12-13 August 2020, Semarang, Indonesia, (2020)
7. B. Mulyadi, *Early Childhood Character Education in Japan*. In Proceedings International Conference on Energy, Environmental and Information System, ICENIS, 12-13 August 2020, Semarang, Indonesia, (2020)
8. A. Teeuw. *Sastra dan Ilmu Sastra*. Bandung: PT. Dunia Pustaka Jaya. (2013)
9. B. Nurgiyantoro. *Teori Pengkajian Fiksi*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press. (2015)
10. S. McCloud. *Understanding Comics*. Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia. (2001)