

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE CHARACTER IN *DEMON SLAYER MANGA (KIMETSU NO YAIBA)* BY KOYOHARU GOTOUGE

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Abstract: This study focused on the characterization of the character in the comic or manga Demon Slayer (Kimetsu No Yaiba) by Koyoharu Gotouge. The theory of this study is about character characteristics from Burhan Nurgiantoro and Edgar Roberts. The research method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method. Based on the results of the research, the author identified eight characters who played an important role in the development of the Demon Slayer manga story, namely Tanjiro Kamado (main character, protagonist, complex, developing, neutral), Nezuko Kamado (main character, protagonist, static, neutral), Sakonji Urokodaki (minor character, protagonist, simple, static, typical), Muzan Kibutsuji (main character, antagonist, simple, static, typical), Giyu Tomioka (supporting character, protagonist, simple, static, typical), Tamayo (minor character, protagonist, simple, static, typical), Yushiro(minor character, protagonist, simple, static, typical) and Zenitsu Agatsuma (supporting character, protagonist, complex, typical);2) furthermore, each character has its own characteristics.

Keywords: *characterization, manga, demon slayer*

INTRODUCTION

According to Kh. Amalia and Fadhilasari in their Indonesian Literature Textbook (2022:3), literary works can be divided into two types based on the era in which they were created: old literature and new literature. Examples of old literature include pantun, gurindam, fairy tales, myths, legends, poetry, fables, tales, and so on. New literature has many genres according to social realities, for example, novels, comics, and short stories. One new literary work in the form of prose is cergam (illustrated stories), also known as comics.

The word 'comic' in the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, Ministry of National Education (2005) is defined as an illustrated story found in magazines, newspapers,

or books. Comics, according to Will Eisner in his book entitled *Comics and Sequential Arts*, as quoted by Maharsi (2011:3) is defined as an arrangement of images and words to tell a story or dramatize an idea. This opinion is further clarified by Scott McCloud in Maharsi (2011:4) who states that comics are images arranged in a certain order, aimed at providing information to generate an aesthetic response from the reader. Comics utilize space in the image medium to place image after image to form a storyline. The collaboration between text and images that weaves together the storyline is the strength of a comic.

Comics in Japan are known as manga. Manga has a variety of themes so that children and adults can read according to their respective needs and tastes. Manga based on the type of reader is divided into 5 types, namely: Kodomo (children), Josei (adult women), Seinen (adult men), Shōjo (teenage girls), Shōnen (teenage boys). In addition to having a variety of themes, manga also has various forms, such as comic strips, magazines and tankobon (manga in the form of a regular book whose stories are taken from collected magazines). Tankobon is a form of manga that has been widely translated into world languages such as English and Indonesian. (Jubaedah, 2018: 3-5).

Manga can be categorized as literature because it contains messages, similar to those found in novels, short stories, and other literary works. These messages are conveyed through images and text. Manga depicts the lives of characters considered special, such as those who are kind, brave, and have strong principles. (Latif, 2017: 4)

One of the most popular manga currently among manga and anime fans is Demon Slayer, or *Kimetsu no Yaiba* in its original Japanese version. The word "Kimetsu no Yaiba" consists of two elements and one particle in Japanese. "Kimetsu" means "murder," which in the context of the manga refers to the act of killing or destroying demons. "Yaiba" means "sword," which in the context of the manga refers to the sword used to slay demons. The particle "no" in Japanese means possession. In the context of the manga's title, it is used to describe that the yaiba (sword) is a tool used for kimetsu (killing). *Kimetsu no Yaiba* is lexically interpreted as a demon-killing/demon-destroying sword, and this title fits the manga's theme, which depicts the struggle to hunt and fight demons. Meanwhile, the word "Demon Slayer" in English means "demon slayer." In this case, the words "Demon Slayer" and "Kimetsu no Yaiba" can be considered synonymous because they refer to the same concept: the role of a demon hunter who kills and exterminates demons.

The Demon Slayer (Kimetsu No Yaiba) manga tells the story of a boy named Tanjiro Kamado who lives in the Taisho era in Japan. Tanjiro Kamado, a boy with a gentle heart and loves his family very much. At a very young age, he sells charcoal to help his parents. However, the peace of his family's life is suddenly shattered when demons slaughter all members of his family and leave only his younger sister named Nezuko. Tanjiro also has to accept the fact that Nezuko has turned into a demon. In order to return Nezuko to human again and avenge his family against the demon group, Tanjiro learns from Sakonji Urokodaki and is determined to pursue the path of life as a demon slayer.

Characters are the most important intrinsic element in a comic story because they are the ones who control the creation of a story. Nurgiantoro himself differentiates characters into several types of names based on the perspective from which the naming is done. These character distinctions consist of: 1) main characters and supporting characters; 2) protagonists and antagonists; 3) simple characters and round or complex characters; 4) static characters and developing characters; 5) typical characters and neutral characters. The important role of each character is to control the course of a literary work. (Nurgiantoro, 2019: 246-274)

Tanjiro Kamado is not only an inspiring main character for his courage, but also for his extraordinary abilities. Tanjiro Kamado's life journey in Kimetsu no Yaiba is marked by an unyielding spirit and courage. In this case, the author focuses this research on one of the intrinsic elements, namely the character element. Nurafni (2004:29) stated that through characters, readers can enjoy the message the author wishes to convey, as each character displays distinct characteristics, giving rise to diverse conflicts. This demonstrates the quality of a literary work.

Characters and characteristics are crucial elements in a literary work. Each character has distinct characteristics. Characteristics are the distinctive traits a character possesses that distinguish them from other characters, as each person has a unique personality. Characteristics are descriptions of behavior (right-wrong, good-bad), both explicitly and implicitly. Examining a character's characteristics is interesting because by examining a person's characteristics, one can discover their true character. (Alwisol, 2005:8)

The author was interested in choosing Koyoharu Gotouge's Demon Slayer (Kimetsu no Yaiba) manga as the research object because it is very popular in Japan and has become well-known internationally, for example in Indonesia and the United States. This is evident from

the existence of translations of the manga into both Indonesian and English. In addition, the storyline is interesting with visualizations of great battles between good and evil characters and themes that are still relevant to everyday life, such as the manifestation of affection for family, the spirit of fighting evil, the sacrifice and courage of the main character Tanjiro to eradicate the evil of the demons who have taken the lives of his family. The depiction of the character's characteristics is interesting and reflects true Japanese cultural values such as the values of honor and responsibility as well as the values of toughness and fighting spirit.

These things are the reasons for the author's interest in studying the characteristics of the characters in the Demon Slayer (Kimetsu no Yaiba) *manga*. The problem discussed in this research is how are the characteristics of the characters depicted in the Demon Slayer (Kimetsu No Yaiba) manga by Koyoharu Gotouge? This research aims to identify, classify and describe the characteristics of the characters in the Demon Slayer (Kimetsu No Yaiba) manga by Koyoharu Gotouge.

METHOD

In this study, the author uses a qualitative research method. Qualitative research methods are methods used by a researcher to collect data, then analyze the data and draw conclusions based on the facts at the time of the research. This study will identify and describe one of the most important intrinsic elements in building a literary work, namely the element of character in the Demon Slayer (Kimetsu No Yaiba) manga. Therefore, the approach used in this study is an objective approach that has the closest relationship with modern literary theory, especially theories that use the basic concept of structuralism. The objective approach focuses solely on elements known as intrinsic elements, namely plot, characters, setting, point of view, and so on. (Masnuatul Hawa, 2017)

Data collection was conducted using reading and note-taking techniques. In addition to primary data collected from Demon Slayer (Kimetsu no Yaiba) manga volumes 1, 2, and 3 in the form of text and images contained in word balloons representing dialogues between characters and the characters' thoughts, the author also collected secondary data in the form of additional data obtained from other literary books and articles in journals via the internet related to this research. The author conducted a data analysis related to the intrinsic elements, especially the character elements, which reviewed the character characteristics based on

primary data obtained from the Demon Slayer (Kimetsu No Yaiba) comic. The collected data was then analyzed based on the theory of character characteristics according to Burhan Nurgiantoro and Edgar Roberts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Demon Slayer (Kimetsu No Yaiba) manga was written by a Japanese writer named Koyoharu Gotouge. In the Demon Slayer (Kimetsu No Yaiba) manga volumes 1, 2, and 3, there are several characters who play an important role in developing the manga's storyline so that it becomes interesting, namely: 1) Tanjiro Kamado, 2) Nezuko Kamado, 3) Giyu Tomioka, 4) Sakoji Urokodaki, 5) Muzan Kibutsuji, 6) Tamayo, 7) Yushiro, 8) Zenitsu Agatsuma. These characters can be identified and classified based on 5 types of naming according to Burhan Nurgiantoro's characterization theory, namely, 1) based on role: main character and supporting character, 2) based on the function of the character's appearance: protagonist and antagonist, 3) based on characterization: simple character and round/complex character, 4) based on the criteria whether or not the character's character develops in the story: static characters and developing characters, and 5) based on the reflection of the story characters on real-life humans: typical characters and neutral characters.

After examining the storyline and dialogue between characters and the author's narrative, the author identified and classified the eight characters who play important roles in the Demon Slayer manga, especially volumes 1, 2, and 3, into several character types, namely, main character/central character, supporting character, protagonist, antagonist, simple character, round/complex character, static character, developing character, typical character, and neutral character. In this case, these characters are categorized into several character types at once, for example, as main character-protagonist-developing-typical.

1. Main Characters

Tanjiro Kamado and his sister Nezuko Kamado are classified by the author as main characters, although to varying degrees, as they are both featured continuously in all three manga volumes (1, 2, and 3).

2. Protagonists

Seven characters in the Demon Slayer (Kimetsu no Yaiba) manga are classified as protagonists because they consistently display good traits and behavior and strive for the good

of everyone. These characters are Tanjiro Kamado, Nezuko Kamado, Giyu Tomioka, Sakonji Urokodaki, Tamayo, Yushiro, and Zenitsu Agatsuma.

3. Antagonists

Muzan Kibutsuji is the antagonist in this manga due to his evil and cunning nature and behavior.

4. Simple Characters

Giyu Tomioka, Sakonji Urokodaki, Muzan Kibutsuji, Tamayo, and Yushiro are considered simple characters because they are flat and reflect only one specific personality.

5. Round/Complex Characters

Tanjiro Kamado, Nezuko Kamado, and Zenitsu Agatsuma are round/complex characters because they have a specific personality but at other times, they can also display a variety of personalities and behaviors.

6. Static Characters

The static characters in the Demon Slayer (Kimetsu no Yaiba) manga are Nezuko Kamado, Giyu Tomioka, Sakonji Urokodaki, Muzan Kibutsuji, Tamayo, and Yushiro. These characters have relatively fixed personalities and attitudes, remaining undeveloped from the beginning to the end of the story.

7. Developing Characters

A developing character is a character whose character changes and develops as the events and plot unfold. Tanjiro Kamado and Zenitsu Agatsuma are developing characters in the Demon Slayer manga.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and analysis conducted on the character characteristics in the Demon Slayer (Kimetsu no Yaiba) manga by Koyoharu Gotouge, the author concludes that in the Demon Slayer (Kimetsu no Yaiba) manga by Koyoharu Gotouge, there are eight characters who play important roles in developing the manga's content:

1. Tanjiro Kamado as the main character, protagonist, well-rounded/complex, developing, neutral
2. Nezuko Kamado as the main character, protagonist, static, neutral
3. Sakonji Urokodaki as a minor character, protagonist, simple, static, typical

4. Giyu Tomioka as a minor character, protagonist, simple, static, typical
5. Muzan Kibutsuji as a major character, antagonist, simple, static, typical
6. Tamayo as a minor character, protagonist, simple, static, typical
7. Yushiro as a minor character, protagonist, simple, static, typical
8. Zenitsu Agatsuma as a minor character, protagonist, complex, typical

Furthermore, the eight characters have different characteristics. The characteristics of Tanjiro Kamado are: kind and has a high sense of empathy, brave and assertive, hardworking and high-spirited, cares about family, has special abilities. The characteristics of Sakonji Urokodaki are: wise and has extensive experience, stubborn and highly caring. The characteristics of Giyu Tomioka are: serious and firm, controlled emotions, cares about Tanjiro, responsible. The characteristics of Nezuko Kamado are: strong, loyal and loves family, able to control emotions, regeneration ability, relies on instinct. The characteristics of Tamayo are: intelligent and experienced, gentle and loving, independent and brave, has personal goals, cooperates with Tanjiro, has special abilities. Yushiro's character characteristics are: loyal and dedicated, talented and skilled, polite and respectful. Muzan Kibutsuji's characteristics are: strong and powerful, intelligent and cunning, controls other demons. Zenitsu Agatsuma's character characteristics are: fearful, often nervous and panicky: lack of self-confidence, loyal and caring, has special skills.

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