

## EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN ISHMAEL BEAH'S NOVEL *A LONG WAY GONE: THE TRUE STORY OF A CHILD SOLDIER*

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<i>Analysis Educational Values Novel</i>	This study aims to find out the educational values in the novel <i>A Long Way Gone: The true story of a child soldier</i> written by Ishmael Beah. The method used in this research was the qualitative method, which focused on textual data analysis. The results showed the educational values found in this novel were divided into values of being and giving, which include values of being: honesty, brave, peace, confidence & potential, discipline, and purity. Meanwhile, values of giving had loyalty, trustworthiness, respect, love & affection, unselfish, kindness & friendliness, and fairness & humanist
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### INTRODUCTION

People use language as a medium to communicate and interact with each other to convey their idea, opinion, or feeling. As stated in Oxford dictionary, there are three definitions of language; (1) system of communication in speech and writing used by people of a particular country, (2) the use by humans' system of sounds and words to communicate, (3) the particular style of speaking or writing. So, language is used to communicate either spoken or written forms by people in a community or a country. Both spoken and written forms of expressing ideas are commonly called literature.

In relationship to the language used, the presence of literature aspects cannot be separated. The word "literature" is derived from Latin, "*letter*," which means that literature constitutes human ideas and feelings in language, mostly in written form. Jacobs (2005: 2) says literature has an important role in human life. It has given much entertainment, inspiration, motivation, and also information. Many literary forms include poetry, novels, opera, electronic literature, graphic novel, film, or movie. But, the main generic of literature today is poetry,

drama, and novel. A novel is prose narrative fiction. According to Taylor (2006: 46), prose works of quite some length and complexity attempt to reflect and express something of the quality or value of human experience or conduct.

The novel has certain messages that the author delivers, so the reader gets the abstract experience from the story (Ariyani, 2010: 2). It has two inseparable elements, namely intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements build stories in a novel directly, while extrinsic elements are outside of literary work. The writer wants to deliver its values to the reader through the novel. By reading a novel, we get pleasure and take the messages because it contains values. One of the values is educational values. Mubarok (2008: 12) states that educational value is so important because it positively influences education. The way the novel clearly explains the process and message can generate interest and motivation in learning. These values are very essential because it forms the human person as an individual, social, religious, and cultured creature.

There are some novels that tell about children who fought in the war and give us many values, such as *Children at War* written by P. W Singer in 2006, then *Dear World: A Syrian Girl's story of war and plea for peace*, a novel by Bana Al-Abed published at 2017 and also *I Am David* novel written by Anne Holm at 1963. But one novel that raises education values is *A Long Way Gone: the true story of a child soldier* novel written by Ishmael Beah in 2007. This novel can be said as an autobiographical sketch because the main character is the author, Ishmael himself.

Inspired by the author's true story, the writers choose this novel as the research object. Through this research, the writers expect people to be able to recognize and notice the educational values in an art work especially in a novel. The value of education in a novel means noble teaching that supports the educational goals described in the elements of a fictional narrative story. Besides that, the novel is useful in teaching the human dimension required to develop characters and also build identity in young learners. For teachers, the novel will bring new perspectives in teaching. The educators have the right to use novels for the importance of the education field. At first, the educators must understand using novels for education because today their students also learn from the outside school. Besides, it not only gives us entertainment, but the novel also provides messages that will contribute to building character and creating educational people.

In this study, the writer wants to find how the educational values show their role to give the reader the meaning of the novel and how the story goes. It is the story of Ishmael Beah himself. He was a child soldier for the Sierra Leone Armed Services during the civil war with the RUF, the Revolutionary United Front, known as the rebels. The army blames the rebels for the death of Ishmael's family, and his soldiering is motivated by his desire for revenge. Ishmael's story is one of personal transformation and survival. Before the war, he enjoyed his childhood in his village. During the war, he becomes a killing machine capable of horrible acts of violence. When UNICEF rescues the boy soldiers from the front lines of war, Ishmael is rehabilitated. Through the love and compassion of his nurse and extended family, Ishmael learns to manage his anger and to forgive himself for the war that was not his fault. He learns to accept others' help and uses his story to educate the world about how war affects children. Based on the explanation above, the writer decides to conduct research about AN ANALYSIS OF INTRINSIC ELEMENTS AND EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN ISHMAEL BEAH'S NOVEL *A LONG WAY GONE: THE TRUE STORY OF A CHILD SOLDIER*. The research problem of this research is what are the educational values found in *A Long Way Gone: The story of a child soldier Novel*? Through the problem above, the writers would like to find out the educational values from the novel *A Long Way Gone: The true story of a child soldier* by Ishmael Beah.

## **METHOD**

In this study, the writer used a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the educational values taken from "A Long Way Gone: the true story of a child soldier," The data in this research was taken from the novel "A Long Way Gone: the true story of a child soldier" by Ishmael Beah, published by Harper Perennial in London. It contains 229 pages of 20 chapters. Therefore, this novel can be called the primary source. To support the primary source above, the writer also needs other secondary sources, which help to analyze the primary data. Therefore, he got much information from textbooks, such as literary theory, dictionaries, theory values, and other sources taken from the internet, discussing intrinsic elements and educational values.

In collecting the data, the writer used the documentation method and taking notes techniques. In collecting data, the writer used the following steps: Reading "A Long Way Gone: the true story of a child soldier" novel repeatedly. Understanding the content of the

novel. Finding out the data related to research problems. Writing down the significant notes in the novel “A Long Way Gone” and finally organizing data into several parts based on their classifications.

The final activity in qualitative research is analyzing and interpreting the data collected and presenting the result. Therefore, there are many steps to be conducted by the writer to analyze the data. The following is the process of data analysis chronologically: Exploring and investigating the data, concluding data analysis to answer the statement of the research problems. , Delineate the data based on the intrinsic elements and educational values and Extracting the values.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The educational value in education is concerned with developing the individual intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual personality. It can be found in academic processed or formal institutions and can be found in other experiences, friends, environment, family, novels, etc. The value of education in a novel means noble teaching that supports the educational goals described in the elements of a fictional narrative story.

The educational values found in this novel are divided into two; values of being and values of giving. The values of being which are shown by the main character in this novel are the value of honesty, brave, peace, confidence & potential, discipline, and purity. On the other hand, values of giving have loyalty, trustworthiness, respect, love & affection, unselfish, kindness & friendliness, and the last one is fairness & humanist.

### **4.1 Values of Being**

The value of being is a value within human beings that evolved into the behavior and how we treat others. The value of being in the novel *A Long Way Gone: the true story of a child soldier* can be seen below:

#### **1) Honesty**

Honesty is about telling the truth, the reality, without changing the information. In this novel, Ishmael told everything based on his experience during the civil war in Sierra Leone. He began with the story of the rebel who attacked his village and how he wandered from one place to another, was forced to join the army, used drugs, and how he rehabilitated and finally fled to America and started a new life in New York City. He revealed all the reality back at **the beginning of the war** when he was twelve (Chapter 1 page 6), then **he run from the rebels**

(Chapter 4, page 26-27) with no food, no shelter, no gun, and walked for days in the ambush while thinking about his family. The next truth is when he was **forced to join the army and used drugs (Chapter 12, page 109)** during the battle to boost his energy when they encountered with the rebels. Ismael and his friends were forced to join the army at a very young age so they were given drugs by the soldiers everytime they had to go for a battle. The last reality Ismael revealed in this story is when he finally **went to the rehabilitation center and fled to America (Chapter 15, page 137)** after two years becoming a child soldier. When he was 15 years old, he was taken to Benin Home, another rehabilitation center in Kissy Town at the eastern outskirts of Freetown, an Approve School and a government-run juvenile center, where a year later, in 1997, Ishmael was fled to America to New York City (**Chapter 21, page 209**).

## 2) **Brave**

Brave means an attitude from a human who dares to try things that others think are difficult and dangerous. Dare to be gracious, friendly, and maintain something that is believed to be good and right even though facing danger or difficulty. In this novel, one of the heroic moments happened during the attack by rebels in Kamator village. When the rebel attacked Kamator village, Kaloko and Ishmael almost got killed by dozens of bullets. They hid in a swamp to save their life. However, hiding in a swamp forever was not a good idea, their life were threaten since the rebel could find them anytime soon. Ishmael decided to run, but Kaloko chose to stay and hid in the swamp because he thought the swamp were the safest place to survive. Ishmael had different opinion, he was afraid that the rebel would find them. He decided to run, to go far away from that place, even though he know the effect of his action was dangerous, and it was going to be difficult for him since his own friend disagree with his decision. He believed that leaving the swamp was the best option, and he managed to leave that 'hell' place although he had to suffer physically. Unfortunately, his friend Kaloko could not survive and died in that swamp. At this point, Ishmael's experience shows what brave is. He believev in his decision, fought for it and at the end he survived (**Chapter 7, page 46-47**).

## 3) **Peace**

Peace is harmony in natural human life where there is no enemy or conflict. It can also be interpreted as a calm and patient attitude, the tendency to accept other people's opinions, and a willingness to understand their feelings rather than deny and oppose them quickly. In this novel, three things made Ishmael feel peace and made him calm. The first one was the **Memories of his family**. Ishmael's memories about his family always made him strong and

gave him peace of mind. (**Chapter 7, page 45**). the second is the moon, **looking at the moon bring him peace** since his grandmother always told him that good things happened under the light of the moon. The moon reminded people to be good to one another. Ishmael later came to see the moon as a source of solace during the war that encouraged him (**Chapter 1, page 17**). The last one was when he told his stories with Esther, the nurse at the rehabilitation center. Ester was a nurse at the rehabilitation center. She was the first person whom Ishmael trusted to tell his stories during his therapy. When he told her his stories, he always felt better day by day, she was a non-judgmental person who made him feel comfortable and peace at the same time (**Chapter 17, page 165-166**).

#### 4) Confidence and Potential

Confidence is about believing in the ability of self; meanwhile, potential can be defined as being prepared and able to do something. In this novel, Ishmael knew himself well. It can be seen when Leslie, one of the staff at Benin Home in the rehabilitation center, told him news about an interview for two children to represent the country to the United Nations to talk about the war. When he went to the building where the interview took place, many boys attended that too. They were dressed better than Ishmael and went with their parents, and when they saw Ishmael, they laughed at him. But Ishmael did not care, and he sat away on his own. (**Chapter 19, page 185-186**). But apart from those stories above, the main important thing was when Ishmael answered the question well on why they should choose him over other boys. Ishmael, full of confidence, said he knew himself better and was a part of the war. His confidence impressed the interviewer(**Chapter 19, page 186-187**).

#### 5) Discipline

Discipline is defined as human consistencies, consequences, commitment, or agreement to do something related to the rules that have been agreed upon. Thus, it is physical, mental, and financial. In this novel, when Ishmael joined the military, they lived in Barack in Yele, which means he lived under military rule every day. The army is known for its rules and discipline. Ishmael and other kids woke up early in the morning, got dressed in the army uniform, and trained. (**Chapter 12, page 109-110**). Although the war made him lose his innocence, and he became a killing machine. Still, Ishmael learned a lot about the military, especially its discipline, unquestioned obedience, and sense of collectivity, which they saw their fellow soldiers as a family member. It made them have a strong bond and connection.

#### 6) Purity

Purity is the awareness to keep the value of life. It is also the condition or quality of being pure, free from bad things. In his novel, Ishmael believed that nature would always help him. It is because he was a boy with a strong value. He saw the moon and sky as his role model because his grandmother taught him. The moon and the sky symbolize good behavior, and good things happen when the moon shines. (**Chapter 17, page 166**).

#### ***4.2 Values of Giving***

The value of giving is values that need to be practiced or provided, which would then be accepted as a given. The value of giving in the novel *A Long Way Gone: the true story of a child soldier* can be seen below:

##### **1) Loyalty & Trustworthiness**

Loyalty is the quality of being loyal, faithful to commitments or obligations to family, work, school, and organizations. It means being ready to support, serve, help, and be trusted to carry out consistent promises. And on the other hand, trustworthiness is about honesty, reliability, courage to do the right things, building a good reputation, and being loyal. In this novel, Ishmael's loyalty as a soldier was seen when their chief, Lieutenant Jabati, sent them to the rehabilitation center. He was angry and confused to be kicked out of the squad. The dismissal from service was so painful for him. Although he knew that the war and the Lieutenant made him lose his innocence, he became a killer, but he admired the Lieutenant as a father figure, and he felt that his friends, the other child soldiers as his new family. (**Chapter 15, pages 129-130**). When he was at the service with the army, the Lieutenant brainwashed Ishmael and other kids to do the right things and be loyal. Based on their perspectives, those rebels killed their family and burned their village, so they must be killed whenever and wherever they saw those rebels. The instruction still had control over him, although he already was at the rehabilitation center. And it also happened with another boy who joined the rebels; they got the same instruction to kill other boys who fought for the army. So, when they finally met at the rehabilitation center, they fought and killed each other. (**Chapter 15, page 136**).

##### **2) Respect**

Respect is a way of treating and thinking about something or someone because of their personal qualities, knowledge, and skills. It can be applied to others' rights, respect to the father and mother, respect to elders, nature, and others' beliefs and rights. In this novel, it can be seen that there was an honor to respect elders before the war started because they were considered

wise. Elders always told lessons to children through stories and tales. But this changed since war began. Those rebels indoctrinated children that older people were seen as sick and weak. They were useless. On their way to Yale, Ishmael is shocked when he sees the rebels capture and torture an older man who hardly stands and walks. The rebels fired a bullet near his ear to scare the older man and laughed when he thought he had been shot. Ishmael and his friends cry and vomit because they grew up in a culture that demanded respect for the older from the young. **(Chapter 5, page 33).**

### **3) Love & Affection**

Love and affection are defined as positive feelings someone may have or express for other people or things. Love is more than just loyal and respectful, and affection is a feeling of liking and caring for something. It can be indicated to dear friends, neighbors, and anybody. In this novel, Esther's unconditional love and affection for Ishmael and other boys during their rehabilitation made them back to their old life before the war. Especially for Ishmael, Esther became a good listener, and Ishmael trusted her a lot. She also provided Ishmael with cassettes and walkman, those things that Ishmael loved. **(Chapter 17, page 161-163).**

### **4) Unselfish**

Not selfish is a feeling where cares and considers others. It is shown by empathy, tolerance, brotherhood, learn to feel togetherness and compassion toward others. After Ishmael spent more than a month surviving alone in the forest, he finally met some of his friends. He knew that he would not be alone anymore. It was better to survive with friends rather than survive alone. In group, they continued their journey. They walked at night and hunted for food during the day. They shared and ate some unfamiliar fruits, ate ears of corn, and drank water from the river. If they wanted to sleep, they slept in the shift, so there was always someone on guard against the rebels. One day, they arrived at Kamator during planting season, and they helped the villagers by cleaning their land. They worked there for three months, and the villagers gave them food and shelter. **(Chapter 10, page 71-72).**

### **5) Kindness & Friendliness**

Kindness is a good attitude that people have to others or things. It is aware a friendly and caring attitude is more commendable than a rough and tough attitude. Friendliness can be shown by being capable of making new friends and maintaining friendships. In his novel,



Ishmael learned that kindness and friendship came in different forms. For the kindness, he got it from Esther, the nurse who worked at the rehabilitation center for children affected by war. She was kind, patient, and cared about children's mental, emotional, and physical health. She was the person who believed in the process, although it took time. But the foremost important thing was the words **“It is not your fault,”** which she always said and made Ishmael learn to accept his past and begin to rehabilitate. **(Chapter 17, page 159-160).**

On the other hand, Ishmael learned a lot about friendship during his survival with the other children. It made them become a family and have a strong bond. Being with friends, they would play together, share stories, would never alone, and could forget those horrible things, although it was just for a moment. Ishmael would never forget those moments with his friends; they became memories that made him strong and become a better person after rehabilitation. **(Chapter 6, page 37).**

#### **6) Fairness & Humanist**

Fair means treating a group of people equally and not allowing personal opinion to influence a judgment. At the same time, humanist is characterized by tenderness, compassion, and sympathy for people or things. Those values can be seen in how all the staff at Benin Home, the rehabilitation center, treated Ishmael and his friends equally and humanistically. They knew that dealing with those kids affected by war was not easy and needed time to rehabilitate. Although those kids committed some violence against them, they always told them that it was not their fault. Although those kids destroyed their things, such as plates, cups, and other things, those staff smiled and replaced them without incident. Their patience, kindness, and forgiveness overwhelmed Ishmael and other kids, and they began to accept their past and started to rehabilitate. (Chapter 16, page 138) and (Chapter 16, page 140).

## **CONCLUSION**

After conducting the research to find out the educational values in the novel *A Long Way Gone: the true story of a child soldier* written by Ishmael Beah, the writer draws some conclusions as in the following: 1) The novel *A Long Way Gone: the true story of a child soldier* written by Ishmael Beah, is an autobiographical sketch or a memoir because the main character is the author, Ishmael himself. 2) This novel also had educational values, which are divided into values of being and giving. Which include values of being are: honesty, brave, peace, confidence & potential, discipline, and purity. On the other hand, values of giving have loyalty,

trustworthiness, respect, love & affection, unselfish, kindness & friendliness, and the last one is fairness & humanist.

Furthermore, based on the result of this study, the writer would also like to give some suggestions for students, educators and also further researchers. Students can learn from the main character's attitude-behavior that friendship and togetherness can solve and ease problems. Life values can be obtained from any sources, such as novels, books and movies. When watching a movie or reading a novel take the lesson from it, learn the culture, people's perspective and life value. This research is also beneficial for lecturers or teachers as a piece of additional information and instrument for teaching literature and taking values and lessons from the essence of the value of education in the novel. Lecturers and teachers can use novels as an alternative media for teaching about values, especially educational values. In addition, it can make students more active and enjoy in the classroom. And the last is for the next researcher who wants to research on educational values and use this research as a supplementary source in their writing. In addition, the other researchers can find out about how the novel used and affected the education world that was not discussed in this study.

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