

SALAHUDDIN AYYUBI'S SYMBOL REPRESENTATION OF ISLAMIC TOLERANCE IN THE "KINGDOM OF HEAVEN" MOVIE

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Abstract

This study highlights the background of a character in the Ridley Scott's movie of "Kingdom of Heaven". The character highlighted in this study is Salahuddin Ayyubi, the General in the second Crusade War. Through the narration in the movie, Salahuddin is proven to be symbol representation of Islamic tolerance. To analyze, qualitative methods is used through dramatism theory literature by Kenneth Burke to assert the forms of representation and symbolism in the dialogues and symbolic acts of Salahuddin Ayyubi in the "Kingdom of Heaven" movie. This study asserts that Salahuddin Ayyubi is a character designed to be the representation of the Islamic tolerance symbol in the "Kingdom of Heaven" movie.

Keywords: Kingdom of Heaven movie, Salahuddin Ayyubi, Kenneth Burke, dramatism, symbolism, representation, tolerance

A. INTRODUCTION

The issue of inter-faith tolerance often becomes the main problem in every country. Religious feuds or conflicts still become the main issue in the sociology studies on religions and the studies for other disciplines, such as literature. In Indonesia, many conflicts based on religious sentiment are repeated for many times and those become threats for the harmony of the nation.

The effort to build the tolerance awareness often faces instrumental constraints that oblige every effort to bring more effective influence. Currently, many instruments or media have been employed; some of those are using literature and movie media by building certain symbols within as the representations.

Burke views literature as “the tool of life” which means that the texts speak about someone’s living experience and problem and provide reaction for people on how to deal with the problem. Therefore, dramatism study learns how language and its usages related to public.

Some of tolerance lovers among writers and artists can be seen in the movie directed by Ridley Scott and written by William Monahan, “Kingdom of Heaven”. The movie, according to Scott, is an enlightenment effort for the people around the world after the 11 September 2001 attack and it is a critic for Bush, the President of America then, who called on Crusade War. Ridley Scott admits that he is a fan of Salahuddin Ayyubi. Explicitly, Scott made his movie as instrument in building the tolerance comprehension.

“Kingdom of Heaven”

The “Kingdom of Heaven” is a film of epic history with the background of the Second Crusade War, involving two Christian and Muslim knights. The movie described not only the war upheaval; it also portrayed the political-economical motives of nations using religious sentiment as the spirit of power struggle. The movie was released in 6 May 2005 and became Box Office hit in United States.

Through the characters of Balian and Salahuddin, this movie symbolically tried to expose two main issues: political and economical issues shown by Salahuddin character as the symbol representation of the tolerance in Islamic teaching.

There was a scene showing internal conflict between Balian, Tiberias, and Godfrey on the real reason for the sacred war. “Then, I realized we were fighting for wealth and land. I was ashamed,” Tiberias told Balian. The movie ended with Balian leaving and met King Richard “the Lion’s Heart”. Richard said to Balian that he would take back Jerusalem.

Some of the dialogues referring to attitudes showing tolerance are in the scene when Salahuddin with his army reached a commanding plan of attacking Jerusalem.

Salahuddin Ayyubi

Salahuddin Ayyubi or Saladin or Salah ad-Din (1139 - 4 March 1193) is a Muslim Kurdish general and fighter of Tikrit (currently, northern Iraq). He established the Ayyubiyah Dynasty in Egypt, Syria, parts of Yemen, Iraq, Mecca Hejaz and Diyar Bakr (Sharif, 1994).

Salahuddin is famous to Muslim and Christian worlds because of the leadership, military forces, knightly and merciful natures during the fight against the second Crusade forces (1145-1149). The Sultan Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi is also a cleric who masters hadith among the Sunnis (Sharif, 1994).

This study stresses on the form of tolerance symbolic representation of Salahuddin Ayyubi character in the "Kingdom of Heaven" movie. Basically, this study refers to dramatism to obtain conclusion result as the objective of the study.

II. Literature Study

1. Dramatism

Dramatism theory (Burke, 1994) tries to understand the actions in human's life as a drama. Dramatism, as the name, conceptualizes lives as dramas, placing a critical focus on scenes acted by some players. Just as in a drama, a scene in life is important to reveal human's motivations. Dramatism provides us an appropriate method to discuss communication acts between the texts and public, and the actions within the texts.

Drama is a useful metaphor for Burke's ideas in three reasons: (1) drama results in broad coverage and Burke did not make limited claim; the aim was to theorize on overall human's experiences. Dramatic metaphor is especially useful in describing human relations because it is based on interactions or dialogues. (2) Drama tends to follow types or genres easily to recognize: comedy, musical, melodrama, etc. Burke thought that the way we form and use language can be related to the way the human drama is played. (3) Drama is always designated for public. In this context, drama is rhetorical. Burke viewed literature as a "tool of life" which means that literature or texts speak to one's living experiences and problems and provide reactions to deal with the experiences. Therefore, dramatism study learns ways where language and its usages relate to public.

Dramatism Assumption

1. Human being is an animal using symbol. Some matters done by humans are motivated by animal instinct within and some others are motivated by symbols. Of all symbols used by humans, language is the most important one.
2. Language and symbol formed a very important system for humans. Sapir and Whorf (1921; 1956) stated that it became very difficult to think about a concept or an object without any words for them. Thus, people are limited (in a certain limit) in what they can comprehend because of their language limitation. When humans use a language, they are also used by certain languages. When a language of a culture does not have symbols for certain motives, the speaker using the language also tends to not having the motives. Words, thoughts, and actions have very close relations one to another.
3. Human is a choice maker. The main base of dramatism is human's choice. This relates to the conceptualization on agency or ability of social actor to act according to the choices he makes.

Kenneth Burke created a method to apply his theory on an understanding of symbolical activity called as pentad which involves:

- Action, which is considered by Burke as something done by someone.
- Scene, which provides context involving action.
- Agent, i.e. some who does acts.
- Agency, which refers to ways used by an agent to complete an action.
- Aim, which refers to the final result within the agent's mind for an act.
- Attitude, which refers to ways where an actor positions himself to others.
- Key concept of dramatism
- Substance, i.e. general character of someone as described by oneself or others.
- Identification, i.e. a situation when there is an overlap between two people on each substance.

- Consubstantiation, i.e. an effort to improve an overlap one to another by making rhetorical appeal.

2. Symbol

Victor Tuner in Winangun (1990:18) stated that symbol is something that is called as general agreement to be something representing or a special characteristic of something filled with analogical quality or placed within reality or mind.

Tri Guna Wijaya (2000 : 35) stated that there are at least four symbols, i.e.: 1). Construction symbol, i.e. a symbol in form of belief that is usually the core of a religion. 2) Evaluation symbol, i.e. a moral assessment full of values, norms, and rules. 3) Cognition symbol, i.e. a knowledge used by humans to obtain an insight on reality and regularity in order to understand more on environment. 4). Expression symbol, i.e. a feeling disclosures. Those symbols are useful to maintain social control and nurture togetherness in society.

3. Representation

The concept of representation in a mass media study, including movies, can be seen from some aspects, depending on the nature of the study. Media study seeing on how a discourse develops in it – usually, it can be found in critical discourse study of media coverage – understands representation as a concept “referring on how someone, a group, certain idea or opinion can be presented in a news coverage” (Eriyanto, 2001:113).

According to Eriyanto (2001:113), at least, there are two important matters related to representation; first, how someone, a group, or an idea is presented when related to existing reality; that means if it is presented according to facts or it tends to be made worsen that results in an impression of marginalizing or only showing the bad side of someone or a certain group in the news. Second, how the object presentation is executed in the. The execution of the object representation can be formed in the choice of words, sentences, accentuation and the types of photos or images strengthening used to present someone, a group or an idea in the coverage.

Meanwhile, according to John Fiske (1997:5) a representation is number of actions related to the techniques of

camera, lighting, editing process, music and certain voice processing symbols and conventional codes into the representation of reality and ideas to be stated.

Still according to Fiske, in a practice of valid representation assumption, media content is not the pure reality, therefore, a representation is more precise to be seen as how they form the reality version with certain ways according to the social position and interests. Fiske's opinion on the representation applies in a process of general media work and it starts to mention on the relation between representation and formed reality created by media.

Fiske's statement has similarity to Fairclough's opinion (1995:104). According to Fairclough in a representation analysis on the contest of media, people can actually try to determine what is covered and what is not, the explicit one and the implicit one, what becomes the foreground and the background, and what becomes thematic and what does not, and to determine which category that is a representation of an event, character, situation or certain condition.

Fairclough's conception on representation analysis on media content also implicitly mentions the relation between the representation practice and reality represented by the media. The difference is Fairclough's opinion hints that media can be consciously try to put a certain formed reality forward and, therefore, reaffirm that a representation does not simply present reality reflection.

Further, according to Branston and Stafford (1996:78, a representation can be translated as all signs in which media represent an event or reality. However, the visible reality in an image or a voice does not merely present the reality as it. Within, there is always a construction found, or there is no real transparent "window" of reality.

Branston and Stafford argued that even though, there is always construction in a practice of supposed representation, the conception of "representation" cannot always be translated equally as a "construction"; even, "representation" goes further because it approaches the question on how a group or some possibilities of matters outside of media have been represented by a product of the media.

III. Method

This study uses search method with the frame of Kenneth Burke's dramatism theory. Dramatism explains the elements in the narrations of "Kingdom of Heaven" movie from the representation of Salahuddin in tolerance context.

The aspect studied refers to the dialogue in the movie's narration and gestures or acts in the narration plot of the movie.

1. Synopsis

In 1184, Balian the blacksmith of French was haunted by the his wife's suicide. A group of Crusade Army arrived in his village; one of the soldiers introduced himself as the father of Balian, Baron Godfrey of Ibelin. Godfrey asked Balian to return with him to the Holy Land; however, Balian declined and the Crusaders left. The town priest, Balian's half brother revealed that he asked Balian's wife to be beheaded before burial. Full with anger, Balian killed his half brother and escaped the village.

Balian joined his father, expecting to receive forgiveness and redemption for his wife and himself in Jerusalem. After Balian reached Godfrey, the soldiers sent by the bishop arrived to catch and kill Balian. Godfrey refused to hand Balian over and in the next attack, Godfrey was beaten by the arrow cut within his body and that weakened him.

In Messina, Godfrey asked Balian to serve the King of Jerusalem and protect the helpless. Godfrey died because of his wounds. During Balian's travel to Jerusalem, his ship was wrecked during storm, leaving Balian as the only survivor. Balian was faced to the arrogance of a Muslim cavalier who attacked him on horse. Balian defeated him and forgave him. He did not kill him in order to take him to Jerusalem. When they arrived, Balian released him. Then the man told Balian that his actions would make his name redolent of respect for Saracen (Saracen was a generic term for [Muslims](#) widely used in Europe during the [later medieval](#) era).

Balian was introduced to Jerusalem's political arena: King Baldwin IV, the lepers; Tiberias, the Jerusalem Marshal; the King's Sister, Princess Sibylla; and the princess's husband, Guy de Lusignan who supported anti-Muslim activities of the brutal faction, such as Templar Knights. After the death of Baldwin, Guy

intended to rupture vulnerable truce with the Sultan Saladin and fought against the Muslims.

Guy and his ally [Raynald of Châtillon](#) attacked a Saracen caravan, and Saladin advances on Raynald's castle [Kerak](#) in retaliation. At the request of the king, Balian defended the villagers by charging Saladin's cavalry, despite being overwhelmingly outnumbered. Balian's knights were captured, and he encountered the servant he freed, who he learned was actually Saladin's chancellor [Imad ad-Din](#). Imad ad-Din released Balian in repayment of the earlier debt. Saladin arrived with his army to besiege Kerak, and Baldwin met it with his. They negotiated a Muslim retreat, and Baldwin swore to punish Raynald, though the exertion of these events weakened Baldwin. In his camp, Saladin assured his impatient generals that he would claim Jerusalem, but only when he was confident of victory.

Baldwin asked Balian to marry Sibylla and took control of the army, after knowing them needed love one another. However, Balian turned the offer down because that cost Guy's execution. After Baldwin passed away, Sibylla succeeded her brother, and Guy became a king. Guy released Raynald, asking him to give him a war, which Raynald did by murdering Saladin's sister. Sending the heads of Saladin's emissaries back to him, Guy declared war on the Saracens. Guy sent three Templars to assassinate Balian, the most strident voice against war, though Balian survived the attempt.

Guy and the Templars marched Jerusalem's army to war, despite Balian's advice to remain near water. Saladin's army annihilated the Crusaders in [the ensuing desert battle](#) and marched on Jerusalem. Tiberias and his men leave for [Cyprus](#), believing Jerusalem lost, but Balian remained to protect the people in the city. Balian knighted the men of the city and hoped to hold out long enough for the Saracens to offer terms. After a [siege that lasts three days](#) (a siege on the city of [Jerusalem](#) that lasted from September 20 to October 2, 1187, when [Balian of Ibelin](#) surrendered the city to [Saladin](#).), a frustrated Saladin parleyed with Balian. When Balian reaffirmed that he would let the city burn before surrendering, Saladin agreed to allow the Christians

to leave safely in exchange for Jerusalem – though he pondered if it would be better if there were nothing left to fight over.

In the marching column of citizens, Balian found Sibylla, who had renounced her claim as Queen of Jerusalem and other cities. After returning to France, English knights en routed [to retake Jerusalem](#) ride through the town to enlist Balian. Balian told [the crusader](#) that he was merely a blacksmith again, and they departed. Balian was joined by Sibylla, and they passed by the grave of Balian's wife as they rode toward a new life together. An epilogue notes that "nearly a thousand years later, peace in the Holy Land still remains elusive."

2. Dialog Study

Dialog 1: *"Do you offer terms? I ask none," said Balian*

Dialog 2: *"I will give every soul safe-conduct to Christian lands. Every soul. The women, the children, the old, and all your knights and soldiers. And your queen..."*Salahuddin offered.

The dialog between Salahuddin and Balian above shows how Salahuddin, with consideration, offers the 'best way' to keep everyone safe; the Christians and the Muslims. As he guaranteed Balian, he would let the Christians leave on their own to other Christian lands safely.

He continued:

Dialog 3: *"...your king, such as his, I leave to you and what God will make of him. No one will be harmed. I swear to God." Salahuddin continued.*

Salahuddin, by saying this, wisely returned Guy, as the King of Jerusalem, to Christians' side. Salahuddin and the Muslims could easily kill Guy if they really intended to. However, they did the opposite. Salahuddin preferred offering a term to having further attack. Then, from his saying 'what God will make of him', referring to Guy, Salahuddin emphasized that he would

not kill him. Thus, he left that man and the rest was on God's will. Further, Salahuddin, as a leader of the Muslims army, promised that he and his army would not harm the Christians who would leave Jerusalem.

Next, Balian replied:

Dialog 4: *"The Christians butchered every Muslim within the walls when they took the city."*

By this line, Balian seemed to remind Salahuddin what the Christians had done when the Muslims took Jerusalem in the past. Also, he probably doubted or distrusted Salahuddin. Salahuddin, in Balian's mind, probably would do revenge towards the Christians.

But Salahuddin, respectfully but assertively, answered:

Dialog 5: *"I am NOT those men. I am Salahuddin. Salah-din."*

Saying this, Salahuddin explicitly said that he was not part of the men who did such merciless murder. He implied that he would not do the same thing as the Christians did towards the Muslims in the past nor planned a revenge on them.

Thus, Balian finally decided:

Dialog 6: *"Then on these terms I surrender Jerusalem," said Balian.*

The war finally ended after Balian surrendered Jerusalem to the Muslims.

As the climax of the movie, the scene portrayed Salahuddin waiting for Balian to offer terms. In such condition – the break of the war – Salahuddin, as the agent, spoke to Balian, in a well-mannered way. Instead of attacking the Christians further, Salahuddin asked Balian whether he surrendered Jerusalem or not. This way was the agency that Salahuddin developed. He preferred discussing it with Balian to doing more harmful acts towards the Christians. To end the war, Salahuddin offered a term

to let every Christians leave the city and move to other Christian lands. He even guaranteed the safety of them. These were what Salahuddin aimed: both taking Jerusalem back and making an end of the war between the Muslims and the Christians without having more dreadful carnage. All the aspects above had formed a substance of Salahuddin's image as a General of the Muslim army, namely, well-composed but assertive, and tolerant of other religions, particularly Christian. Salahuddin, as a figure of Muslim leader, had symbolized how Islam teaches tolerance to the other. His utterance, decision, and the way he spoke had symbolized Islamic tolerance. Considering his act and decision to let every Christian leave Jerusalem and promise them a safe-conduct during their journey, Salahuddin had become a representation of the Muslims in applying tolerance.

The dialogs above also show the attitude of Salahuddin. He shows a great tolerance towards the non-Muslim people. It can be seen, for example, from his words to Balian. He uses a good language, in a good delivery. He respects his enemy as seen in his utterance. Meanwhile, his decision to give a safe-conduct towards the Christian who will leave Jerusalem is a symbol of Islamic tolerance. Through Salahuddin, Islam is proven to be a peaceful religion. Salahuddin is a representation of what Islam has actually taught. In Sura Al Mumtahanah verse 8, for example, it is stated:

لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ
وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٨﴾

8. Allāh does not forbid You to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against You on account of Religion and did not drive You out of Your homes. Verily, Allāh loves those who deal with equity.

And, in Sura Muhammad, verse 4:

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخْنَتُمْهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوَتَاقَ فَإِمَّا مَنًّا
بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَآتَتْصَرَّ مِنْهُمْ وَلَٰكِن

لِيَبْتَلُوا بَعْضَكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٨﴾

4. So, when You meet (in fight Jihâd In Allâh's Cause), those who disbelieve smite at their necks till when You have killed and wounded many of them, *Then bind a bond firmly (on them, i.e. take them as captives). thereafter (is the time) either for generosity (i.e. free them without ransom), or ransom (according to what benefits Islâm), until the war lays down its burden.* Thus [you are ordered by Allâh to continue In carrying out Jihâd against the disbelievers till they embrace Islâm (i.e. are saved from the punishment In the Hell-fire) or at least come under Your protection], but if it had been Allâh's will, He himself could certainly have punished them (without you). but (He lets You fight), In order to test you, some with others. but those who are killed In the Way of Allâh, He will never let their deeds be lost

It can be inferred that, from Sura Al Mumtahanah verse 8, Islam does not teach its people to be intolerant. Instead, it teaches how to build tolerance between one and others. Salahuddin, as portrayed in the movie, had left the Christians alive, guaranteed them to have a safe-conduct. He swore in the name of Allah that he would not harm anyone. Even, he spared Guy's life and kindly returned him to his people. This is as what Islam taught in the Qur'an, Sura Muhammad verse 4, that the Muslims could free the captives for either generosity or ransom after the war ended. This is what Salahuddin did. He returned Guy to his people. His actions and his decision have formed an implication that Islam is tolerant, peaceful religions and he is himself a representation of this peaceful teaching.

3. Act Study:

Act 1. *In one of the scene, when Guy and Reynald were captured by the Muslims army, dying of thirst, Salahuddin took the cup of water and snow and gave it to Guy with his own hand.*

This scene portrays the win of the Muslims against the Crusaders at the desert battle which were led by Guy de Lusignan and his partner, Reynald of Chatillon.

They both were captured and brought to meet Salahuddin at his tent. Salahuddin, took a cup of snow then gave it to Guy. Salahuddin, in this scene, showed his tolerance to Guy who had become his prisoner. Instead of letting Guy die of thirst or torturing him, Salahuddin gave him a cup of water to drink. If he really intended to, Salahuddin could easily torture the two of the Crusaders' leaders since the two of them were powerless. Yet he, as a leader of the Muslims army, still showed his modesty. He even gave the cup to Guy with his own hand, just like a host of the house who honored his guest. This action however symbolized his tolerance, though his enemy was Christian.

Islam, represented by Salahuddin, teaches to treat the other people well. In the Qur'an, it is stated:

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الْطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾

8. and they give food, inspite of their love for it (or for the love of him), to Miskin (poor), the orphan, and the captive,
(Sura Al Insaan, verse 8)

This verse implies that a Muslim is allowed to give food to the captive. This also implies that Islam should treat their captives well. Salahuddin, through his act giving Guy a drink, represents how Islam teaches its people to be kind towards the others. In this scene, without using any language but gestures, Salahuddin has symbolized his modesty as a Muslim as well as represented Islamic tolerance towards the other people, especially the non-Muslims.

Act 2. *Prior to the end of the movie, when Salahuddin entered an empty and a little messy palace, he saw a great Crucifix on the floor. Salahuddin took it and returned it to the position on the table.*

Again, without any words employed, Salahuddin had shown a tolerance to the non-Muslims—the Christians. When he saw the crucifix on the floor, he did not ignore it. Instead, he took it and placed it properly on the table. His action showed that he respected other religion's holy symbol. That was why he placed

and stood the Crucifix on the table. Though he was a leader, a king of the Muslims at that time, did not make him intolerant and irritated at the Christians. This also showed his attitude of being tolerant and respectful.

Act 3: *Salahuddin forgave Balian as the gratitude for what Balian did to Salahuddin's helper in the past.*

In the early scene, Balian had met Imad—Salahuddin's helper. He spared Imad and treated him well. Thus, as for his gratitude, Salahuddin forgave Balian. This act is a reciprocation of what Balian did in the past. As a leader of the Muslims army, Salahuddin could easily sentence Balian to death for what he had done towards his people. But Salahuddin preferred forgiving him, considering Balian's kindness to Imad. Salahuddin's action and decision to forgive his enemy as a gratitude for what Balian did in the past has also symbolized a tolerance, that a person should be kind to other persons. Although Balian was basically his enemy, a non-Muslim who had once fought the Muslims, Salahuddin still respected him and was thankful for what Balian did to his helper. Salahuddin, by this act, had also become a representation of tolerance, being kind to the non-Muslim people.

Act 4. *Salahuddin slightly smiled at Balian and calmly and majestically returned to his army. Christians and Crusaders welcomed with joy the outcomes of the negotiation between the two great leaders. They praised and yelled the names of Balian and Salahuddin. Jerusalem then controlled by Muslim and it was called Saracen. Not long after, the group of refugees, including King Baldwin's sister, Sybilla, lined up to leave.*

At the end of the negotiation, Salahuddin smiled at Balian. He did not put an expression of anger nor hate towards Balian. After Balian surrendered Jerusalem, Salahuddin, calmly and majestically, walked back to his army. His action showed that he respected Balian—as his enemy. Both of them however symbolized tolerance to each other.

The acts mentioned above, represented by Salahuddin, have formed a symbol of tolerance; in particular, Islamic tolerance

to other religions. The acts show how Salahuddin, as a Muslim figure, treats his enemy, and also treats the other religion's symbol, in a good manner. Salahuddin is such a real representation of what Islam has actually taught.

IV. Conclusion

This study can draw conclusion that the dialogues and acts of Salahuddin are an attitude of representation on the form of symbolic messages, namely:

1. Salahuddin's modesty and assertiveness as a knight.
2. Attitude of tolerance of a Salahuddin in facing his non moslem enemy.
3. Reciprocation of Salahudin towards Balian's forgiveness to his slave
4. Salahuddin is a Muslim figure that becomes symbolic representation of Muslims (Islam) for the tolerance reasoning.

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