

Hermeneutic Study of Aceh Cultural Values in Novel of *The Most Silent Place* by Arafat Nur

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the hermeneutics of Acehese cultural values in Arafat Nur's novel *The Most Sunyi*. The method used is descriptive analytical method with a hermeneutic approach. The data source is Arafat Nur's novel *The Most Silent Place*. The data collection of this research was carried out by the library method. The technique of presenting the results of data analysis is done by using informal presentation techniques. The results of this study indicate that it is full of Acehese cultural values. Most of the Acehese cultural values in this novel are related to religious elements including the responsibility of a family leader, the law of adultery, obedience in worship. Aceh's cultural values are indeed based on Islam, because Aceh is synonymous with Islam. In addition, there are also Acehese cultural values in the novel related to customs, the way of life of the nobility, and the tradition of shopping on weekends.

Keywords: hermeneutics, cultural values, novel

1 Introduction

Literature is a cultural wealth that reflects the identity (identity) of a nation. One of the important and useful things from that identity is the cultural values of the nation concerned [1]. Explains that through Nusantara literature, Indonesian people know the cultural values of their ancestors. In the literary works of the Archipelago, it is reflected in the singular diversity of the nation's cultural values. Many of these literary works contain great ideas, noble thoughts about good and bad qualities, remorse for sins, feelings of compassion, high views of humanity and so on.

Moeliono says values are things that are important or useful for humanity, while cultural values are abstract concepts about basic problems that are very important and valuable in human life [2]. Koentjaraningrat states that cultural values are concepts that live in the minds of citizens about the things that are considered the most valuable in life. Therefore, a system of cultural values usually serves as a guideline for rules in society [3].

Cultural values that can encourage development include cultural values that praise the nature of being able to endure suffering, the obligation to strive hard in life, tolerance for the opinions or beliefs of others and mutual cooperation. Many cultural values are reflected in literary works. Understanding a literary work is not possible without knowledge, to a lesser extent, about the culture behind the literary work and is not directly revealed in the sign system of the language. The separation of cultural conventions from language and literature conventions is often impossible or not easy to implement, because many cultural conventions have been contained in the language and literature system [4].

Cultural values are the first layer of ideal and customary culture. Cultural values in the form of ideas that conceptualize the most valuable things in the challenges of community life. A cultural value system consists of conceptions that live and grow in the minds of most citizens and are closely related to things that they consider very valuable and alive [5]. Therefore, a cultural value system usually functions as the highest guideline for human behavior at a more concrete level, such as special rules, laws, and norms, all of which are also guided by the cultural value system.

The erosion of cultural values is caused by the rapid development of technology. The shift in social cultural values of an area of course raises concerns for us as a society, cultural stakeholders, including academics. Of course, this problem is our collective responsibility. We certainly don't want Acehese culture as a regional identity to be extinct. Therefore, the preservation of cultural values must be instilled in the younger generation, including the cultivation of literary cultural values. Literature as part of local wisdom has an important role in balancing the social morality of the community. Therefore, it is clear that the novel is a part of literature whose description of the story has Acehese cultural values. In the novel *The Most Silent Place* by Arafat Nur, it emphasizes aspects of etiquette or norms based on Islamic sharia. Often the social conflicts depicted in the story deal with the problem of applying Islamic norms. Of course, this is indeed a reflection of the reality of Acehese life. Islam is not just a behavior of worship, but Islam is also part of the practice of cultural essence.

Literature is not only a mere entertainment, but also as a funnel in the formation of the cultural character of society because literature is a reflection of the reality of people's lives which contains so many examples in it. One of the literary works is the novel. Trisman states that the novel can be considered as a recording tool of people's lives at a certain time and place [6]. The social life of the community described in the novel is part of local wisdom and is often used in the novel as a socio-cultural setting which is a reflection of people's lives.

This is because Islamic fanaticism has been deeply rooted in the souls of the Acehese. Based on the above background, the formulation of the problem in this study is how are the cultural values of Aceh in Arafat Nur's novel *The Most Sunyi Place*?

2 Research Method

This research was conducted with a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is research that uses a natural setting, with the intention of interpreting the phenomena that occur and is carried out by involving various existing methods. Moleong states that qualitative research is research that produces analytical procedures that do not use statistical analysis procedures or other quantification methods [7]. It is clear that this research contrasts qualitative research with quantitative research by highlighting that any quantification effort is not necessary in qualitative research. Moleong states that qualitative research is research that uses a natural setting, with the intention of interpreting phenomena that occur and is carried out by involving various existing methods [8].

Qualitative research methods are often called naturalistic research methods because the research is carried out in natural conditions (natural setting); also referred to as the ethnographic method, because initially this method was more widely used for research in the field of cultural anthropology; referred to as a qualitative method, because the data collected and the analysis is more qualitative in nature [9].

The researcher who does the interpretation must recognize the message or the inclination of a text, then he must absorb the content of the text. The intelligence and thoroughness of the interpreter in interpreting the meaning of a literary work will determine the success or failure of the literary study. Literary research in particular and works of human expression in general are related to interpretation or hermeneutics as something fundamental [10].

The qualitative research method was carried out by describing the existing data and then followed by an analysis of Aceh's cultural values in Arafat Nur's novel *The Most Sunny Place*. The data collection technique used in this research is literature study. The steps for data collection are as follows: 1) Reading the *Lonely Place* by Arafat Nur which has been determined to understand the content of the story 2) Performing coding, namely the use of codes for each data in the novel to facilitate data grouping. 3) The data that has been collected is identified according to the formulation of the research problem. 4) The next stage is grouping or sorting out each data, namely Acehese cultural values in Arafat Nur's novel *The Most Silent Place*.

The steps to be taken in analyzing the research data are as follows. (1) The author reads the entire contents of the novel. This is done so that researchers can understand the novel in depth, (2) describe the data, (3) analyze the value of humanity and women in the novel using predetermined theoretical concepts, (4) draw conclusions.

3 Result and Analysis

In this section, we will describe the cultural values of Aceh in the novel *The Most Silent Place*. Here's the excerpt.

“Mustafa’s other two sisters are all married, and live far apart from each other. They rarely visit each other because of their busy lives and difficult living conditions. Mahmud himself was not very close to his brother. In fact, they never sent word after their mother died. As a child, they had all been orphaned, and his brother deliberately chose to travel in hopes of completing his education without burdening his mother and siblings [11].

The quote above describes Mustafa's two younger siblings who are married and live far apart. It is a tradition in the life of the Acehese. Brothers and sisters no longer live together. Usually they will accompany their husbands to work in other areas. Always work far away from each other. They will meet when Eid arrives. The form of reverence and obedience to the husband is indeed taught in Islam. The husband is the leader in the family. Obedience to our husband is the same as our obedience to the mother who gave birth to us. This is part of the values of Aceh's local wisdom.

Another part of the novel *The Most Silent Place* which contains the value of local wisdom is as follows.

“Long ago he imagined that by raising a family, his life would be calm and he could feel a little bit of happiness in the midst of the chaotic situation of this country that was hit by the turmoil of war.” [11].

The quote from the novel reflects the character Mustafa who has the view that family is a gift and a mandate from Allah that must always be nurtured. It is indeed not separated from the responsibility of a man. Even the husband as the leader of the family will be held accountable in the hereafter for what his wife's children have done. In this fragment of the novel, Mustafa is also described who feels a little happy by raising a family even in conditions of war. This is in accordance with the realities of Acehese life. Another part in the novel *The Most Sunyi* which relates to the value of local wisdom follows.

“However, the ijab khobul which took place in a suburban mosque confirmed Mustafa’s prison, along with the mental torments of an old-fashioned family who still maintains the noble way of life. His father-in-law is a person who only cares about money and self-esteem without the slightest understanding of the political situation which can instantly turn into a tragedy of serial killings and massacres of residents in this blood-soaked land.” [11].

In this fragment of the novel, it is mentioned about the customs and way of life of the nobility. Indeed, in the life of the Acehnese today there are still people or parties who maintain the cultural customs of the nobility. Nobles in the tradition of Acehnese life are people who have a higher social strata in society. They always have an honorable place. Not infrequently flattery and great respect made these nobles become arrogant individuals. There are some of them who act arbitrarily to the community and carry out customary rules that they seem to be forced. Like the character depicted in the novel who married the son of a noble. When Ijab Kabul he begins to realize that this is the first door for him to enter a new life full of torments. This is a reflection of the reality of Acehnese life. Many men or women who marry the nobility will be depressed.

In the following fragment of the novel there are also Acehnese cultural values.

“Syarifat still thinks that Mustafa is making it up, trying to hide the truth and also his salary for other purposes which his wife then associates with a mistress.” [11].

In the novel, it is described about Syarifat's character who has bad prejudice against her husband. She suspects that her husband, Mustafa, has many mistresses. Mistresses are a very taboo subject in Acehnese life. Violating the customs and social norms of society.

Although mistresses are a negative culture throughout the world, especially in Indonesia, in the life of the Acehnese people, mashers and having lots of mistresses are a crime and very taboo. They are the trash of society and have no place in Acehnese society. Cheating men is an act of adultery. Under sharia law which is now applied in the Veranda of Mecca, men who commit adultery are punished with lashes. It has already been done. They were arrested and after being proven guilty, the process of punishment was carried out in front of the mosque and watched by hundreds of people.

“Moreover, Salma's stubborn attitude doesn't want to listen and doesn't care about all the problems around her. What he thought about was self-interest, as was the attitude of the families of officials, the rich, the merchants, and the nobility“. [11]

The description of the contents of the novel is about the nobility of a character who cares for the community. He is willing to share knowledge with others about the dangers of HIV/AIDS even without being paid. He sincerely did it because of Allah swt. This is one example of a reflection of human values. A form of humanism that must be an example and be nurtured to generations for the safety of many people.

“This situation made Mustafa unable to move in front of that woman which caused his pride to fall into a smelly outhouse. Apart from not knowing himself, he is also considered ungrateful to the family who saved him from a vagabond whose origins were not clear to a respectable family but he was never respected.” [11].

In the passage in the novel, it is explained about the character of Mustafa who from a homeless person becomes an honorable person after marrying the son of a noble. In the Acehnese tradition, nobles are people who have a high class in society. He is always respected. There are people who marry the aristocratic class who are lucky and those who are mentally tormented. It is not easy to live in a noble family that has rules and customs that must always be obeyed. People who are unable to fulfill this will be ostracized in the aristocratic group, it is not even uncommon for people who marry the aristocrats to fall back into a low social class. Some aristocrats married other groups to match. But there are also those who marry non-aristocrats.

“Mustafa's other two sisters are all married, and live far apart from each other. They rarely visit each other because of busyness and difficult life circumstances. Mahmud himself was not very close to his brother. They never even sent word after their mother died. As a child, they were all orphans and his brother deliberately chose to travel in the hope that he could complete his education without burdening his mother and siblings.” [11].

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"By leaning his back against the wall and flicking ashes at the end of the cigarette, Jamal looked at Mustafa with a friendly smile. "You asked if I prayed, didn't you? Of course not. I haven't prayed in a long time," said Jamal lightly, but with a serious face." [11].

The snippet of the novel describes the character Jamal who gives answers to Mustafa's questions about prayer. He stated that he did not pray. Another part in the novel *The Most Sunyi* which relates to the value of local wisdom is described below.

"When Syarifah and Salma came home from shopping one weekend, they opened a number of things in the living room." [19].

The novel describes the characters Syarifah and Salma who come home from shopping and they put a number of things in the living room. Shopping on weekends is a tradition in Acehnese society. In fact, if people's habits in general are shopping can be anytime and anywhere if it is needed. But this is what is called tradition. A habit that is inherent in the joints of life. There is no obligation to shop on weekends. Weekdays in a region in Aceh are different. There are weekends that fall on Sunday, some are Saturday or Wednesday.

"Oh God, what is my sin?" He groaned to himself in a semi-prostrate manner on the bedroom floor." [11].

In the novel fragment above, it is described about a character who is half prostrating on the floor. This is done as a form of a servant's belief that God is the place to complain and ask for help. Humans are completely helpless. This is in accordance with the reality of the life of the Acehnese people who are very fanatical in their belief in religion, especially Islam. The fanaticism of the Acehnese is shown by their attitudes and behavior. Even the law applied in Aceh uses Islamic law which is different from the law in other areas. The form of local wisdom related to Islamic values is also found in the following fragment of the novel.

"He believed that heaven and hell existed, so he got up somewhat forced to uphold Isha. In the still dimly lit room, after washing his limbs he stood up straight, bowed, prostrated, and then sat in meditation facing the Qibla feeling sad and empty. He felt the presence of God very far from the earth." [11].

"After doing Duhur in a bit of a hurry and almost out of time, he ate rice just to be accompanied by Salma, finally they left in an engine rickshaw to the beach." [11].

In the novel fragment above, it is described about a character who goes to a place after performing the zuhur prayer. This is in accordance with the reality of the life of the Acehnese people who always carry out all activities after the Zuhur prayer is carried out. This is also related to local wisdom related to religious values.

4 Conclusion

Arafat Nur's novel *The Most Silent Place* is full of Acehese cultural values. This is indeed inseparable from the background of the author's life. The author is not only of Acehese blood but has also lived in Aceh for a long time and always mingles with the socio-cultural life of the Acehese people. So, we can see that in the novel *The Most Silent Place*, he clearly describes the cultural values of Aceh both from the characters and the setting that surrounds them.

Most of the Acehese cultural values in this novel are related to religious elements including the responsibility of a family leader, the law of adultery, obedience in worship. All of these things are sourced in the teachings of the Qur'an and hadith which are part of Aceh's cultural values. Aceh's cultural values are indeed based on Islam, because Aceh is synonymous with Islam. In addition, there is also Acehese culture in the novel related to customs, the way of life of the nobility, and the tradition of shopping on weekends.

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