

Jurnal Pengajian Media Malaysia | Malaysian Journal of Media Studies

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THE REPRESENTATION OF ISLAMIC TEACHING IN THE NOVELS BY HABIBURRAHMAN EL SHIRAZY

(The Study of Literary Sociology, Literary Reception, and Education Values)

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ABSTRACT

The study is mainly focuses on the representative of the Islamic concepts on the novels written by Habiburrahman El Shirazy. It aim to explain the Islamic concepts laid inside the *Ayat-ayat Cinta* (AAC) and *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* (KCB) novels which consist of the representative of Islamic belief, Islamic law (the acts of devotion and the *muamalah*), Islamic morals, the aspects of Islamic social culture consists of the author's ideology and the reader's response on the impacts and the benefits of the AAC and KCB novels toward the society, and the education values delivered by the AAC and KCB novels. The education values consist of the social, the morals, and the cultural values on the novels. The method used on this study is qualitative descriptive method. The result of the study is that the AAC and KCB novels consist of the high of the education values and Islamic concepts which are implemented on the Islamic belief, Islamic law (the acts of devotion and the *muamalah*), and Islamic morals.

Keywords: *Ayat-ayat Cinta and Ketika Cinta Bertasbih novels, Islamic concepts, literature sociology, literature receptions, education values.*

PRELIMINARY

Novel is one of the literary works which is interesting to study. Its presence means to explore the aesthetics values, and is expected to realize universal values prevailing in society, such as religious values, educational, humanitarian, moral, ethical, and others. The presence of a novel certainly cannot be separated from the socio-cultural background of the author's life and ideology, the environment when the creation of the novel, and the reader's society who will appreciate the work. The author proposed the literature as an alternative method to deal

with existing problems since literature is closely related to people's lives. This is consistent with the assumption that literature is not created in a vacuum state culture (Teeuw, 1988: 20).

One of the literary work, novel, is interesting to study because it represents the social culture of the people and contain high values so that appropriate to reception are the novels of *Ayat-ayat Cinta* (AAC) and *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* (KCB) by Habiburrahman El Shirazy. The readers were not familiar with the AAC novel when it newly published serialized in the *Republika* daily newspaper in 2002–2003, but after the work published in the novel form by Jakarta Republika Publisher and Pesantren Karya Basmala Semarang, AAC immediately became the subject of conversation among the societies. Many people have highlighted the novel as a religious-themed novel of love and represent the teachings of Islam. Ahmad Tohari (in *Lampung Post*, March 16, 2008) says that AAC is a novel about the students' salaf-metropolis and travellers who thirst for knowledge. Additionally, AAC successfully describe the socio-cultural background of the Middle East with a very lively without having to use Arabic terms (Ahmadun Yosi Herfanda, *Lampung Post*, 16 March 2008). Helvy Tiana Rosa (in *Lampung Post*, 16 March 2008) praised the novel AAC as an innovation novel in each chapter. Reading the AAC novel makes the readers' dream fly to the land of a thousand towers and feels "the rainbow" of character which beautifies its charms (Ratih Sang, *Lampung Post*, March 16, 2008).

The presence of novel AAC and KCB were then filmed is a phenomenon that a lot of public attention from all segments of life and ages, even the mass media, both print and electronic, noted that the AAC film broke the record as the most watched film by the people at the cinema recorded record-breaking films as many people watch a movie at the cinema, the film outperformed *Ada Apa dengan Cinta* film in 2002, which also brought the world of Indonesian cinema after vacuum so long time. The discussions about AAC and KCB were not only conducted nonformally in everyday life, but also became an interesting discussion theme in the forums or formal seminars especially in universities. Not only in the formal forums that the discussion held, but also in the virtual world, the discussions were intense conducted by the bloggers. When we are online with the Internet, we will find many articles or discussion about AAC and KCB nonformally. On the television, the theme about AAC and KCB often became the main topic of discussion in the talk show events. Also in the various infotainments on the television made the phenomenon of AAC and KCB as the main program.

Before the presence of novel AAC and KCB, people are tired with novels which assessed less educated, even some novels talked about sex vulgarly. Therefore, the presence of these novels provide many new insights primarily taught Islamic Teachings because after reading the novels, many people change their way of life into the goodness ones because touched by the Islamic Teaching inside. During this time many novels are attempting to load the teachings of Islam but did not bring significant changes to the public favour because Islamic teachings contain in it is told with a vague and shadowy in accordance with the ideology of the author (Maman S. Mahayana 2008: 1). However, the presence of novel KCB AAC and delivered to the language mannered, beautiful, and wore (easy to understand readers) was able to teach the teachings of Islam to the people without intending to patronize. The society understand about the aqidah, sharia, and moral values, for example, in one part of the novel in one part of the novel is told that AAC was originally represented Islam with violence and terrorism, but actually in the end of the story it is untrue. Habiburrahman El Shirazy could provide insight as it certainly cannot be separated from his socio-cultural background and ideology that in fact, he was graduated from Islamic boarding school so that it made him aware of the religion issues.

Maman S. Mahayana (2008: 1) stated that the novel *AAC* and *KCB* treated as an ideal portrait of Muslim youth behaviour. They were successfully to present a story that is in line with the expectations of readers horizon who idolized Islamic values.

In addition, the success of the *AAC* novel followed by *KCB* novel can not be simply separated from the psychological factors of the Indonesian literary readers because when *AAC* novel published in 2004, Indonesian literary echo was hit by the spirit to exploit the sexual appeal. Or, at least, the novels which were published in the early 2000's were dominated by the women novelist which created story told about sexual vulgarly, such as the the novels by Ana Maryam, Stefani Hid, Dinar Rahayu, Maya Wulan, Riyanti Yusuf, and Djenar Maesa Ayu. The *AAC* and *KCB* novels came at the right time, when most of the readers (Indonesian literary) started to feel a bellyful of the novels which present the body exploitation which does not comply with the morals and the Islamic teachings espoused by the majority of the Indonesian people. This phenomenon also occurs in the Harry Potter novel that also manages to present the horizon of readers' hope because when Japanese comic books and adventure stories rains hit our teen readers, Harry Potter, in many ways, it comes like offering all expectations which cannot be met entirely by the number of Japanese comics and adventure stories.

Then the question is why the novels which were also trying to present the Islamic teachings were not successful as the *AAC* and *KCB* novels? The answer is because it does not match the expectations of readers horizon, the reader hopes to literature.

The *AAC* and *KCB* novels were very phenomenal and represent the Islamic teachings which presented by the main characters such as Fahri and Azzam who strongly in maintaining the principles of Islam, Islamic boarding and Egyptian background which were convincing, the pattern of youth romance framed in *mahram and non-mahram* corridor is an important part that makes it different from other novels that came before. The specificity was also supported by the narrative that flows smoothly and well mannered, a wealth of Arabic expressions and style that is somewhat hyperbolic. The specificity of the language such as poetry because poetry can also contains the actual teachings of Islam through language, grammatical, and stylistic (Stewart 2009: 1). The appropriate language contained in the poem could provide a positive experience (Kazemek, 2006: 38). Even the features inside the poem were influenced by the phenomenology and ideology of the author (Olivier 2009: 59). Literary works can also help the reader (students) to understand the language and cultural symbols (Cudak 2004: 101). In addition, it contains the knowledge power and the social life (Sekeres & Gregg 2007: 473).

Therefore, the author simply took the data source from the *AAC*, *KCB 1*, and *KCB 2* novels because the novels represent the teachings of Islam so significant implications on people's lives. In addition, the *AAC* and *KCB* novels were considered as the best seller novels in domestic and abroad. One of the reasons was because in the *AAC* and *KCB* novels contain particularly high values of education which can contribute to young people (students) in the case of *muamalah* (romance). Therefore, teachers must be able to teach literature with appropriate media and methods in order to make the literature subject learning can be accepted by the students well (Ingvarson 2008: 5). Based on the facts, the research on the representation of Islam in the novel *AAC* and *KCB* in terms of the sociology of literature, literary reception, and education values were appropriate to be conducted.

THE THEORY FRAMEWORK

The theories used in this study were the literary sociological, literary reception, and educational values theories. The theory of literary sociological used the trilogy theory of the author—the literary work—the reader (the literary work as well as in relation to the subject of creator and audiences) by Rene Wellek/Austin Warren. While the reception theory used in this research is the review method to know the readers' responses about the impacts and the benefits of the *Ayat-ayat Cinta* and the *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* novels to the societies.

The Nature of Islamic Teachings Representation

Representation is production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language (Hall 1997: 17). Nyoman Kutha Ratna (2008: 122-123) explains that representations can also be interpreted as similarity and imitation which would be a representation of actual and mental imagery. Mental images are formed by different individuals that resulting different interpretations. Shape representation is based on a certain ideology messages that cannot be separated from the social and political power. Something that is represented in a work of literature by the author is not a thing as such, but it is understood according to the diverse perspectives of the authors.

Representation is the production of meaning derived from notions conveyed through language, as well as influenced by an ideology. In a literary work (novel), a novel represents the contents of the social and cultural of the readers and authors. In the AAC and KCB novels there were representations of Islam consists of theology, sharia (religious and *muamalah*), and morals educations.

The Nature of Sociology

Literature is closely associated with the community and social environment that is the origin born of literature. Literary works arise because of the views, thoughts, and imagination of the author related to the reality of life. Therefore, literature is a reflection of the cultural environment and dialectic tests between the authors and the social situation which shape or an explanation of a historical dialectic developed in the literature.

The sociology study which conducted by the Marxisme that suggested literature is a reflection of the people who are affected by historical conditions. Wellek dan Warren (in Melani Budianta 1993: 111) makes the social classification of literature as follows: (a) The sociology of the author, the approach is to talk about the social, economic basis of literary production, status and ideology of the author regarding to the author as producer of the work, (b) sociology literature, this approach is talking about literary content, purpose, and matters relating to social issues contained in the literature, and (c) the sociology of literature relating to the readers' problems and social's impact of the literature to the society.

Sociology of literature is the relationship between the literatures with aspects of sociology. Based on this approach, it can be obtained the real image of the relationship between the social culture condition with the author's life, the literature, and the readers. The theory of the literature sociology can be applied in the AAC and KCB novels by interviewing the author and read his biography to know the sociological condition of the author, examine the novels to determine the condition of the sociological literature, and interviews to the readers to determine the social impact of the novel on people's lives. The theory that will be used in this research is the theory of the author-works-reader trilogy (works of literature as well as in relation to the subject of creator and audience) by Rene Wellek / Austin.

Literary Reception

Literary Reception are responses or readers receptions either individually or jointly or in mass to literature, and these responses are influenced by the historical process, the reader in a certain period. Therefore, responses that lead to the interpretation of literary texts are different depending on the readers' mindset or schemata. Literary reception theory can be applied to the interview technique to the reader to determine the readers' responses to the content of the *AAC* and *KCB* novels.

Educational Values

Educational values that will be used in this research are the educational values of social, moral, and cultural. The values of religious education are not used because the writer will be already researching the representation of Islamic teachings in the novel. So, the value of religious education is included in the representation of Islamic teachings. The educational values are everything good and bad that is useful to humans and can be acquired through learning.

THE RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to describe the representation of Islamic teachings contained in the *AAC* and *KCB* novels (aqidah, sharia, and morals); socio-cultural aspects of Islam that are in *AAC* and *KCB* novels consisting of the author's ideology contained in the *AAC* and *KCB* novels, and readers' response regarding the impact and benefits of *AAC* and *KCB* novels on the society, as well as educational values that can be found in the *AAC* and *KCB* novels consisting of social, moral, and cultural.

The Brief Biography of Habiburrahman El Shirazy

The novels of *AAC* and *KCB* are phenomenal novels and have hypnotized its readers which then the novels filmed. *AAC* and *KCB* novels are the Indonesian novels written by Habiburrahman El Shirazy. He was born in Semarang, on Thursday, September 30, 1976. He started his secondary education at MTs Futuhiyyah 1 Mranggen while studying the yellow books at the Al Anwar boarding school, Mranggen, Demak under the guidance K. H. Abdul Bashir Hamzah. In 1992, he moved to Surakarta to study at Madrasah Aliyah Program Khusus (MAPK) Surakarta and graduated in 1999. He graduated Postgraduate Diploma (Pg.D) S-2 in The Institute for Islamic Studies in Cairo founded by Imam Al- Baiquri in 2001. The profile of Habiburrahman El Shirazy and his literature works had ever graced in several newspaper and magazines, both locally and nationally, such as SoloPos, Republika, Annida, Saksi, Sabili, Muslimah and others.

Habiburrahman El Shirazy or commonly called Kang Abik by his brothers, when in the high school he had ever written the theatrical poem entitled "*Dzikir Dajjal*" as well as directing the play with *Teater Mbambung* in the Sriwedari Arts Puppet Theatre Surakarta in 1994. When he was studying in Cairo, Egypt, Kang Abik had ever led the study group of MISYKATI (Majelis Intensif Studi Yurisprudens dan Kajian Pengetahuan Islam) in Cairo in 1996–1997.

In the mid 2000s, Kang Abik arrived in the country, at that time he was also directly asked by the Education Quality Development Center (P2MP) Jakarta to participate editing the Popular Arab-Indonesian Dictionary compiled by Diva Pustaka Jakarta in June 2003.

In 2003-2004, Kang Abik dedicated his knowledge in MAN 1 Jogjakarta. Then in 2004-2006, Kang Abik recorded as a lecturer at the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Language Abu Bakr Shidiq UMS Surakarta. In addition to being a lecturer at the UMS Surakarta, Kang Abik fully dedicate himself in the world preaching and education through his work in *Pesantren Karya dan Wirausaha Basmala Indonesia* which he established with his younger brother, Anif Sirsaeba and the famous humanist Prie GS in Semarang and through other *wajihah dakwah*.

Some works written by Kang Abik which have been published are *Ayat Ayat Cinta, Ketika Cinta Berbuah Surga* (the second printed, MQS Publishing, 2005), *Pudarnya Pesona Cleopatra* (the second printed, Republika, 2005), *Di Atas Sajadah Cinta* (the third printe, Basmala, 2005), *Langit Makkah Berwarna Merah, Bidadari Bermata Bening, Dalam Mihrab Cinta* and *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*. Among of some novels above, the most phenomenal were *Ayat Ayat Cinta* and *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*.

The Representation of Islamic Teachings in the AAC and KCB Novels

The AAC and KCB novels contained the teaching of aqidah, syariah (worship and *muamalah*), and morals. Among these three things, the morals part are more portion than the aqidah and sharia. This is because in the novel much going dialogue and daily relationship between characters that represent the ideology of the author. For example, Fahri showed the good morals in the neighborhood to the Boutros family although they have different beliefs. Fahri often assist Maria, gave a birthday present to Madame Nahed and Yousef, etc. Those were interpreting the moral which presented by the main character, Fahri.

The Benefits and Impacts of AAC and KCB Novels toward the Society

The AAC and KCB novels have the different impacts and benefits based on the segment of Indonesian societies which could be categorized as the blind societies to the educational systems in Egypt, they were the ordinary societies for the fiqh law, the moslem ordinary societies, the non-moslem ordinary societies, and the people who had already understand the fiqh laws. Considering the AAC and KCB novels loaded with the Islamic laws especially rich in legal jurisprendence, so that the public acceptance also varies based on the segment but basically the AAC dan KCB novels dedicated to all faiths, not only moslem, because Islam is a religion which *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Thus, the author through the novel wants to spread Islam by the term *bilhal*.

Society Group	Impacts/Benefits
People who do not know the education system in Egypt	The society could get a picture of religious life in Egypt through the work of literature. For example, in Indonesia rarely Taraweeh prayers read one juz of the Quran, in Egypt was used. The natural life in Egypt was difficult but the characters still obey running the worship.
People who do not know the <i>fiqih</i> law	People indirectly could obtain the Islamic <i>fiqih</i> inserted.
The general society of the Moslem	People could interpret about a loving relationship in the Islamic corridor including the polygamy.

The general society of non-Moslem	Understanding the rules of Islamic law and can understand the harmony of inter-religious outside Indonesia, especially Christianity. Meanwhile, the Indonesian public only understand about Catholic Christianity and Protestant Christianity. Eastern Christian (Coptic) is almost unknown in Indonesia. Coptic Christians have in common with Islam.
For people who already understand fiqh	Nothing new interpretation of Islam. This novel is simply echoed the laws of Islam.

The Educational Values in the AAC and KCB novels

The AAC and KCB novels contain the educational values that can be applied in educational field such as the values of religious, social, cultural, legal, and health. All the values are reflected in the characters which greatly affect contributed to the readers' paradigm.

Literary, education, and values are inseparable things. The literary is basically a reflection of life. Relation to education, literary and values are two complementary phenomena. The education is functioned as the attempt to establish the values of life, attitudes, and personality. The educational values are everything good and bad which are useful to humans and can be acquired through learning process. Related to the human existence, the educational values in the AAC and KCB novels are:

- **In AAC novel**
 1. **Educational** values can be proven by the flow of introductions that Fahri is an Indonesian student who **studies abroad**.
 2. **Religious Values** can be proven that Fahri was for marriage whiles still a student. So, it is better **immediately to marry** when ready physically and mentally.
 3. **Law Values** can be proven on the story when there was a conflict that Fahri was maligned to rape Naura. The law is very strict in the country of Egypt i.e. when someone conducted rape, he will accept the **death penalty**. However, Fahri's wife immediately survives her husband from the penalty.
 4. **Social values** can be proven by Fahri character in the story when remained in *ukhuwah* or good friendship despite having friends like **Mary Christian**.
 5. **Cultural values** in the story of *Ayat-ayat Cinta*, although Fahri lived abroad still maintaining the **personality traits of the East** when he still have a sense of sympathy and helpful when someone need a help. For example, with Aisha when he was in the bus, and Naura when carrying fruit falling by the wayside.
- **KCB Novel**
 1. **Religious Values** can be proven in the episode one and two of the *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* novel. All of the storyline contained the elements of religion especially Islam.
 2. **First**, the **introductory** stage when the figure Azzam met Anna, they can keep a view on a city bus, and the homestead where Azzam and his all brothers do not mix with the boarding family or women **do not carelessly accept friend** like thugs or unknown status because the story told that one of Azzam's friend had been receiving guests for overnight and Azzam were angry because these people are fugitives.

3. **Second**, the character named Furqon when engaged Anna using the Islamic procedures, started from *ta'aruf* and *khitbah* until married still keep the Islamic sharia.
4. **Third, the flow of conflicts and the resolution** when Azzam's mother died in an *accident*, and Azzam broke his leg. Azzam family stays firm receiving such trials and **did not blame anyone** (the impactor, heavy rain or icy road) they resigned because the destiny God has set in Lauhil Mahfudz or book of records maintained.
5. **Educational value** can be proven that a lot of students received scholarships abroad, for example, Azzam and his friends from Indonesia joined **lecturing S1 degree** in Egypt. It taught the Indonesian people to keep optimistic in the struggle and keep study hard to get the school scholarship or free college abroad.
6. **Cultural Values** can be proven that when Azzam character met with one of the ambassadors' family as well as a film actress named Elliana who were known as a beautiful woman but does not properly veiled. Azzam and his family keep the respect to her or **construct the ukhuwah** without vilifying Elliana's esteem, in fact it became new motivation to dakwah and finally it was success. **Elliana started to veil by wearing sharia clothes** and was more polite as the Indonesian character.
7. **Social Values** in the *KCB* story can be found when Azzam character selling tempe after graduated and returned to Indonesia, he and his sisters started to open a business that is selling meatballs. It is evident that entrepreneurship is a way of following the Prophet to work by trading. So, by this way, invites students to try an action and do not idle. Beside study, the students are expected to do business or trading in order to practice independently.
8. **Health Values** in the story when Azzam character stricken by accident that causes his leg broke and should be conducted the surgery. Azzam attitudes remain patient delaying marriage and seek treatment and practice walking using a walker. Eventually, he recovered and could return to normal by a few months.

CONCLUSION

The AAC and KCB novels represented the Islamic teaching which known as aqidah, Islamic laws (worship and muamalah), and also morals. The morals portion is more than the aqidah and Islamic laws. This is because the novel much going dialogue and daily relationship between the characters that represent the ideology of the author. For example, the Fahri showed the good moral very well in the neighborhood with the Boutros family who different beliefs. Fahri often help Maria, gave a birthday present to Madame Nahed and Yousef, etc. It is the moral representation which presented by the main character, Fahri. The Islamic representation on the novel was influenced by the author's ideology that in fact, he is the Indonesian and follows the Syafi'i mazab and also the Islamic ideology in Egypt which follows Hanafi mazab.

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JURNAL PENGAJIAN MEDIA MALAYSIA (JPMM) menyediakan forum untuk bertukar-tukar idea dan pengalaman dalam kalangan pendidik, pengkaji, pengamal, dan pelajar media. Ia berusaha untuk mempersembahkan hasil kajian, esei bibliografi, analisis isu, dan artikel-artikel dalam bidang komunikasi, penerbitan, kewartawanan, periklanan, perhubungan awam, penyiaran, perfileman, dan pengkhususan lain dalam bidang pengajian media yang luas.

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SURAT-MENYURAT

Artikel dan sebarang pertanyaan boleh dihantar kepada editor melalui e-mel, iaitu mdsidin@um.edu.my atau atau sas_media@um.edu.my.

MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF MEDIA STUDIES

JURNAL PENGAJIAN MEDIA MALAYSIA

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF MEDIA STUDIES (MJMS) provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences among the media educators, researchers, practitioners, and students. It seeks to present research findings, bibliographic essays, analysis of issues, and articles in communication, publishing, journalism, advertising, public relations, broadcasting, film, and other specializations within the broad areas of media studies.

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Articles and enquires can be sent to the editor by e-mail to mdsidin@um.edu.my or sas_media@um.edu.my.