



Internalization of Religiosity Values in the Novel “Merasa Pintar, Bodoh Saja Tak Punya” by Rusdi Mathari

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Abstract. The purpose of this research is to describe the religiosity values in the novel “Merasa Pintar, Bodoh Saja Tak Punya” by Rusdi Mathari. The study belongs to the literature review research and employs a sociological approach to literature. This qualitative research utilizes descriptive methods to examine several stories that depict the confusion in understanding Islam. The results suggest that society tends to engage in activities or habits that are merely formalities despite their religious significance. The study highlights the importance of religiosity values that encompass the values of faith (aqidah), morality (akhlak), and Islamic law (syariah). The value of faith includes faith in Allah and fate, while the value of morality is demonstrated through acts of kindness towards orphans. The value of Islamic law is associated with fulfilling obligations such as prayers (shalat) and the payment of alms (zakat).

Keywords: value · religiosity · Merasa Pintar Bodoh Saja Tak Punya

1 Introduction

Literary works encapsulate the societal values of life. Beyond being mere creations or imitations, they also serve as a medium for writers to express their concerns. Such worries may stem from phenomena in society or critiques of governmental institutions. As per the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) [1], literature is defined as a written work embodying specific traits such as authenticity, artistic expression, content, and expression of beauty. Meanwhile, Wicaksono [2] suggests that literary writing is rooted in human problems, life lessons, and suffering. The contextual backdrop of literary works enables them to be communicated through imaginative, aesthetic, and soulful touches.

The creation of a literary work certainly has a purpose, which is to offer the reader an experience related to inner feelings, entertainment, and the ability to gain benefits. These benefits are related to the values of human life experiences [3]. Furthermore, in Indonesia, which has a diverse background of society, literature can serve as a unifying tool for the nation. To discover these benefits, an appreciation of literary works is necessary, which involves delving into the values of life by reading them. Literature uses written language

as a medium to convey its meaning. Reading is not just a matter of reading, but reading with skills such as observing, understanding, and thinking, which then results in positive outcomes for the reader.

Literature is divided into two categories: fiction and non-fiction. Novels belong to the fiction category, which is a story created by the writer's imagination. The word "novella," which comes from Italian and later adopted into Indonesian as "novel," means a tale or story. According to Dr. Nurhadi [4], a novel is a form of literary work that contains cultural, social, educational, and moral values. These values are closely related to human life, where humans interact with one another and their environment. Therefore, novel writers attempt to guide readers to understand the message behind the story they have written. The stories in novels typically revolve around human problems.

One interesting aspect of literary works is the inclusion of religious values, which can influence individual and collective behavior. These values can create awareness in readers to change for the better. Thus, religiosity is not only about an individual's faith in their religion, but also about activities that align with one's thoughts, emotions, and actions. In the novel "Merasa Pintar, Bodoh Saja Tak Punya" by Rusdi Mathari, the story revolves around the lives of people in a village with diverse backgrounds. The characters, such as the philanthropist Mat Piti, the annoying and possibly insane Cak Dlahom, the village beauty Romlah, and the political figure Pak Lurah, depict the different aspects of village life.

The novel "Merasa Pintar, Bodoh Saja Tak Punya" by Rusdi Mathari invites readers to reflect on life within society, religion, and worshiping Allah. The story takes place during the month of Ramadan, divided into two parts: the first and second Ramadan. Although the story starts as a simple serial, it is rich with the meaning of life. One interesting part of the novel is when the character, Cak Dlahom, explains how one can know Allah, while prayer is only a matter of fulfilling obligations, charity is a matter of calculating profits and losses, and knowledge is used to deceive others rather than being used to its full potential. The main character has a different view on the relationship with Allah and all creatures. In this novel, the researcher will focus on the analysis of religious values related to worship, faith, and morals. Based on this exposition, the author seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the internalization of religious values in three aspects: faith, morals, and sharia.

2 Literature Review

Previous studies on religious values in novels reveal several differences. One research article titled "Religious Values in the Novel Merasa Pintar Bodoh Saja tak Punya by Rusdi Mathari" highlights the emphasis on religious values related to the relationship between humans and Allah, humans with each other, and humans with themselves [5]. Another study, "Internalization of Divinity Values in the Novel Orang-Orang Proyek by Ahmad Tohari," indicates that imperialist hegemony can lead to corrupt and nepotistic activities, emphasizing the need for values such as Al-Mawt al-Ikhtiyârý, repentance, asceticism, gratitude, and Rajâ [6].

3 Research Method

This study belongs to the category of literature review that utilizes a sociological approach. The research method used is qualitative and descriptive in nature. The primary data source for this study is the novel *Merasa Pintar, Bodoh Saja Tak Punya* by Rusdi Mathari, which was published in 2016. The secondary data sources include books, journals, and other research materials.

The data is obtained by reading and understanding the religious values (aqidah, syariah, and akhlak) present in the novel. Additionally, supplementary data is collected by reading books and journals that support the research. After obtaining the data, the following steps are taken: 1) carefully and frequently reading the novel, 2) assigning codes related to religious values (aqidah, akhlak, and syariah), 3) presenting the data in explanatory form, and 4) drawing conclusions.

4 Results and Discussions

This section aims to elucidate the message conveyed by the author in the novel “*Merasa Pintar, Bodoh Saja Tak Punya Karya*” by Rusdi Mathari and examine the degree of religious values portrayed. The term “religious values” derives from the word “ligure” which means to bind, implying that religions are associated with rules and obligations that must be followed and practiced by their followers [7]. Religiosity, on the other hand, refers to the process of internalizing and comprehending religious values which can be applied in daily life [8]. In evaluating religious values, the study will concentrate on the values of Aqidah (faith), Shariah (law), and Akhlaq (morals). Aqidah pertains to beliefs regarding Allah and His creations, Shariah encompasses duties of worship and avoidance of prohibited actions, while Akhlaq concerns the conduct and relationship of humans with Allah, with other individuals, and with the environment.

The Message Conveyed by the Author

The message conveyed by the author in the novel can be divided into two parts. The message is related to the theme that the author aimed to create in the novel. The story is set during Ramadan in a village in Madura, with the main character being Cak Dlahom, a widower who lives alone near a goat pen. Firstly, the author’s criticisms and comments on religious activities in the village were able to make the residents reconsider their understanding of Islam. Furthermore, the author was able to encourage readers to think about this matter. This statement can be found in the following quote.

“Why do you think there is a law for fasting? Why was the obligation to fast revealed by Allah?”

“Well, I’m the one who’s asking, Cak.?”

“Mat, something that is obligatory is something that humans don’t like to do. If humans like to do it, why make it obligatory, Mat?”

“The problem is, do you really like to fast?”

(MPBSTP/2016/hal:5)

Cak Dlahom's inquiry and statement were prompted by the appearance of a banner that welcomed the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan, which bore the message "Welcome Ramadan, we miss you." In our society, it is customary to display Ramadan-themed banners as a way of celebrating this sacred month. Although many people long for its arrival, they often feel compelled when it comes time to observe the fasting requirement, which involves refraining from food, drink, and carnal desires. Only individuals who possess a deep sense of righteousness are capable of fulfilling this obligation. It is important to replace negative attitudes towards fasting with readiness and sincerity to obey God's commands.

Furthermore, the concept of sincerity, or *ikhlas*, is worth discussing. Cak Dlahom's perspective on this matter is unique, as he links sincerity to the bodily functions of defecation and urination, as in the following quote.

"A month ago? A year ago? Since you were born, how many times have you defecated and urinated?"

"You also don't remember, do you, Cak?"

"That's what sincerity is like."

"What do you mean?"

"Deeds that are never remembered."

The statement made by Cak Dlahom indicates that the reality is such that defecation and urination are considered unimportant, despite being bodily waste that must be expelled from our bodies to prevent illness. The practice mentioned for the human body when defecating and urinating without holding it in and not dwelling on it afterwards can be concluded as the meaning of sincerity, which is giving something without ever bringing it up again and giving it completely.

The second point to consider is that our society tends to engage in activities or habits that are merely for show, without any genuine meaning or purpose. This is evident in the novel "Pak Haji, Bu Puasa, Mbah Syahadat," where the title of "haji" is only given to those who have performed the fifth pillar of Islam, as a sign of respect and tradition. However, there is no such title given for the other pillars of Islam. Furthermore, there is a section of the story that depicts a formalistic activity, when Cak Dlahom was stung by dangerous wasps and people wanted to help, but he refused any assistance. The following is an excerpt from the story:

"Mat, many people when they see someone in hardship, see someone in poverty, see someone suffering, then want to help. Want to assist."

"That is the duty of humans, Cak."

"Correct, Mat. I appreciate them. The problem is how they help when they cannot help themselves."

"What do you mean, Cak?"

"Many of them want to help not because they want to be helped. They help only out of pity. Out of discomfort. Out of a desire to be seen and praised by others that they can help. They are busy looking at others, but forget to look inside themselves.

Busy judging others and forget to judge their own shortcomings. People like that are the ones who need to be helped..”

Based on the given passage, the most fitting description of human behavior is to provide assistance primarily to garner recognition and approval from others. Such actions are not commendable since aiding others should solely be for the sake of Allah. Moreover, individuals need to conduct introspection and scrutinize their own inadequacies. It is not advisable to be excessively engrossed in scrutinizing others to the extent that we overlook our own shortcomings. Self-reflection yields a positive outcome towards leading a more fulfilling life. Hasn't religion emphasized the importance of having pure intentions for Allah while performing our deeds? If not, then we should ask for forgiveness and guidance from Him.

5 Religious Value Analysis

Aqeedah Value

Aqeedah is commonly defined as a profound and genuine belief, faith, and conviction, which is translated into action. In Islamic context, aqeedah refers to the belief in the Oneness of Allah and the entirety of the cosmic order [7]. Experts suggest that aqeedah is a doctrine that is practiced by every Muslim in relation to their belief and faith, and is therefore fundamental and serves as the primary bond in Islam [9]. As such, to establish a strong and fundamental bond, aqeedah must not only be internalized in the heart, but also exhibited through speech, action, conviction or intention, and following the Sunnah of the Prophet.

The value of aqeedah reflects the extent of a Muslim's faith in the truth of Islam, and is closely associated with the pillars of faith, including belief in Allah SWT, the Angels of Allah SWT, His Books, Prophets and Messengers, the Day of Judgment, and the Divine Decree (*Qadha and Qadar*). The cited passage above illustrates the significance of aqeedah:

“Any calamity or trial should lead someone to become closer to their Creator. Through calamity, they should realize that they are poor and have nothing, and have no power or strength in the presence of Allah” (MPBSTP, 2016: 124)

The aforementioned quotation by Cak Dlahom discusses the appropriate behavior that Muslims should exhibit when experiencing trials in the form of calamities. Such trials should bring them closer to Allah, rather than causing them to distance themselves and commit shirk by seeking aid from others. Proximity to Allah is a manifestation of an individual's faith, whereby they believe that every adversity can be endured with forbearance and augmented worship of Him. Additionally, this serves as a reminder that humans are insignificant in comparison to Allah; thus, they should avoid arrogance or a sense of superiority over others. It can be inferred that the quotation reflects the religious value of aqeedah, which denotes the belief in Allah.

Another quote that describes the value of aqeedah is:

“We’re just trying our best, Mas.”

“Yeah Dik, but what does it mean to surrender everything to Allah? I’m worried about you, about our child. I’ve given everything to Allah, but I’m still anxious.” (MPBSTP, 2016: 196)

The above quote illustrates that feeling anxious is a natural human response. Nody is concerned about the safety of his wife and unborn child as they approach the time of delivery. No one can deny their destiny that is determined by Allah; life and death are His will. Humans can only strive, pray, and make their utmost effort to the Almighty, to Him and Him alone, not to anyone else. Death is one of Allah’s decrees that cannot be changed by humans themselves. Life and death have been predetermined by Allah since ancient times. Therefore, as humans, we never know when we will die. Hence, the quote reflects the religious value of *aqeedah* in terms of belief in *qadha* and *qadar* (predestination).

The Akhlak Value

In Islam, Akhlak (morality or ethics) is interrelated with Aqidah (faith or belief). Akhlak, also known as *budi pekerti*, holds a high position within the religion. It is not surprising that there is a *sahih* hadith stating that “The most perfect of believers in faith are those with the best character” (Hadith Narrated by Abu Dawud and Tirmidzi). The word Akhlak is derived from the Arabic language and is the plural form of *khuluq*. In the Arabic language, *khuluq* means *ath-tab’u* (character) and *as-sajiyah* (behavior) [10]. Meanwhile, in terms of terminology, Akhlak refers to behavior that is inherent in an individual and serves as the source of certain actions without coercion [11]. These actions can be good or bad, right or wrong, and are derived from the Quran and Hadith [12]. Thus, Akhlak encompasses all actions performed by an individual without consideration or coercion, and in Islam, it is derived from the teachings of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad.

Akhlak can be broadly divided into three categories: first, Akhlak towards oneself, which includes honesty, self-confidence, friendliness, politeness, hard work, discipline, and sincerity. Second, Akhlak towards family. Third, Akhlak towards the environment [13]. Another perspective divides Akhlak into six categories: Akhlak towards Allah, towards the Prophet Muhammad, towards oneself, towards family, towards society, and towards neighbors [14]. The following quotation illustrates the value of Akhlak:

“Sarkum, maafkan aku...”

“Sarkum, forgive me...”

“Pak Dlahom never did anything wrong...”

“I’m sorry, Sarkum. It’s my fault. If you allow and want me to, can I be your father? Can Romlah be your mother? Nody be your sister? Mat Piti be your uncle? Gus Mut be your sibling?”

“Pak Dlahom, how could I not want that? Only Pak Dlahom has always shown concern for me and my mother. I am grateful if Pak Dlahom really wants to make me his son. I want to go to school.”

(MPBSTP, 2016: 212)

The quote elucidates that during the Eid al-Fitr celebration, Cak Dlahom did not forget to share his joy by adopting Sarkum as his own child. Furthermore, he apologized for neglecting the orphan and admitted his faults. Cak Dlahom's actions demonstrate his good moral values towards his neighbor, the orphan. In Islam, it is highly recommended for Muslims to care for, love, and provide for orphans. There are special rewards and blessings for those who do so, including guaranteed entry into heaven and divine assistance from Allah.

The Sharia Value

The term "Syariah" has its linguistic origin from the Arabic word "ibadat" (singular: 'ibadah; plural: ibadat), which denotes the act of devotion or worship (related to the Arabic word 'abd, meaning servant or slave), specifically the submission or devotion to Allah SWT, the sole and supreme deity [15]. Another viewpoint posits that Syariah refers to the pathway to the source of water or the pathway that must be followed, namely the route leading to the primary source of life. Technically, Syariah refers to all religious laws and regulations stipulated by Allah for Muslims, as per the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

In accordance with the definition above, Syariah encompasses all aspects of human life as an individual, a member of society, and a subject of the universe. Syariah regulates the life of humans as individuals, who are servants of Allah who must be obedient, submissive, and obedient to Allah. Obedience, submission, and compliance with Allah are demonstrated in the form of worship whose procedures are arranged in such a way by Islamic law. The purpose of worship is total submission to Allah as an acknowledgement of human weakness and limitations in the face of the sovereignty of Allah. In addition, worship is not only limited to the pillars of Islam but also includes all forms of human behavior in dedicating oneself to one's Lord, such as engaging in good deeds, seeking sustenance for personal and family needs. The following excerpt from a novel portrays the value of Syariah:

"The people in the mosque are cursed, Mat..."

"They are worshiping, Cak. They are not seeking curse..."

"They are cursed, Mat."

"How could worship and prayer be a curse, Cak?"

"There is no good deed that is not threatened by Hellfire except for prayer, Mat."

"Yes, Cak, the prayer of those who are negligent."

"Now, you are smart." (MPBSTP, 2016: 114)

The given literary excerpt presents a dialogue between two characters, namely Mat Piti and Cak Dlahom. Mat Piti endeavours to assuage Cak Dlahom who persistently pronounces "They are doomed, Mat". This assertion is founded on the observation that the denizens of their village are absorbed in performing religious obligations in the mosque but fail to take into account the plight of their indigent neighbors and orphaned children. The cited dialogue contains a warning from Allah, which is cited in the Al Qur'an Surah Al Maun, "woe to those who pray". Prayer represents a mandatory form of worship that must be carried out by humans. However, it should not be construed

solely as a tool to avoid negligence. Negligence in this context implies non-compliance with the preconditions of prayer, performing it beyond the stipulated period, engaging in lethargy, and disregarding its ultimate goal. Moreover, it encompasses neglecting to offer aid to others. Based on this elucidation, it can be deduced that Cak Dlahom is cautioning the villagers against the prospect of being doomed due to their disregard for the needs of their neighbors and orphaned children.

Other quotes that describe the value of Sharia are:

“According to you, what is zakat, sir?” A young man sitting near the mosque door tried to start a conversation.

“Zakat is an obligation of the Sharia.”

“I know, sir. What I meant is, what is zakat?”

“Zakat is filth. Just like charity, donation, and the like. We all have to get rid of it. Don’t hesitate.”

“What do you mean, sir?”

“Zakat must be paid. To purify our possessions. To purify our hearts.” (MPBSTP, 2016: 73)

From the given story, it is evident that zakat is an obligation for eligible Muslims to pay. A portion of an individual’s wealth is designated as a right for fellow Muslims in need. Zakat is classified as a form of worship that has been precisely regulated based on the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Moreover, zakat represents a social deed that can bring benefits and rewards. The purpose of zakat is to purify oneself, akin to removing impurities. When the impurities are given to those who are entitled, they become a form of worship and provide benefits.

6 Conclusion

Based on the conducted research on the religiosity values in the novel entitled “Merasa Pintar, Bodoh Saja Tak Punya” authored by Rusdi Mathari, it can be concluded that the religiosity values are focused on the values of aqidah, akhlak, and syariah. Firstly, the value of aqidah pertains to the belief in Allah and the belief in destiny. Secondly, the value of akhlak refers to doing good deeds to orphans. Thirdly, the value of syariah is related to the acts of worship, such as prayer and zakat. In light of the aforementioned conclusion, the researcher hopes that after reading this journal, the readers can gain a better understanding of the conveyed message in the novel “Merasa Pintar, Bodoh Saja Tak Punya” by Rusdi Mathari. Additionally, this research is also expected to provide a positive and constructive contribution to the education sector, specifically in the development of religious character values through literary works.

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