

## Spiritual Values of Characters in the Novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo and Their Relevance to Literature Learning in High School

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### Abstract

The novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo is a novel that contains spiritual values that are reflected in the behavior of its characters. This study aims to analyze the spiritual values of the characters in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo, to explain the forms of needs that influence the spiritual values of the characters in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo and to explain the relevance of spiritual values in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo to literature learning in high school. This study uses a content analysis model (content analysis). The steps taken are to review documents, record data, and classify or group data that contains spiritual values. Based on the results of data analysis, spiritual values were found in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* including the values of patience, caring, obeying parents, calm, grateful, simple, diligent, honest, sincere, sincerity, steadfastness, religious, having a sense of trust, patience, daring to admit mistakes, being obedient in worship, enthusiasm, simplicity, and loyalty. The results of the study indicate that there are spiritual values that are useful in learning literature to instill attitudes that can be emulated by students in everyday life.

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## INTRODUCTION

Literary works are a means for authors to express all the feelings that are embedded in their souls. Literary works are created because of the author's inner experience in the form of interesting events so that ideas emerge that are poured into writing. Wicaksono (2017) argues that a literary work is created because of the author's inner experience in the form of interesting events or problems so that ideas and imaginations emerge that are poured into writing. Alfian (2014) argues that through literary works, an author conveys his views on life around him. Therefore, all problems in life also influence the results of literary works.

Safitri (2014) argues that literary works are expressions of human problems with life, in addition to being an interpretation of human problems with life, in addition to being an interpretation of the nature of life and the meaning of life in all aspects. Literary works also discuss humans with all the complexity of their life problems, so between literary works and humans there is an inseparable relationship between one and the other. Literature is a reflection of the aspects of human life in which attitudes, behavior, thoughts, knowledge, responses, feelings, imaginations about humans themselves are written.

Literary works are an important means to get to know humans with all aspects of human life because generally literary works discuss humans with all their aspects. Through literary works, especially novels, someone can find out about the psychological problems experienced by humans. According to Jabrohim (2001) a novel tells an extraordinary event from the lives of extraordinary people because from this event a conflict can be seen, a dispute that diverts the direction of their fate. So, someone can find out about the psychological problems of the characters described by the author by understanding the contents of the novel.

The problem of human psyche in a literary work, cannot be separated from spiritual problems. According to Alwi (2005) spiritual is a science related to behavior or is of a spiritual

nature (spiritual, inner). Many people lose faith or are hesitant about their beliefs. This is due to the dryness of the modern human soul. In addition, the reality of life in today's society which is still filled with conflicts between countries, social, religious, and environmental demands the creation of literary works that contain elements of spirituality. This directs humans in the process of searching for identity, closer to God Almighty and in order to achieve peace in the hearts of each individual.

The problems experienced by a person in life are very complex. Each individual faces different problems, the problems faced are universal. Literature helps a person to find the meaning of life. The meaning of life is related to a person's mental condition which is reflected in spiritual life. Thus, spirituality and literature have a close relationship. It can be said that literature is able to be a means to provide guidance to a person in achieving spirituality.

Literature is considered capable of being a guide to the path of truth because good literature is written with honesty, clarity, sincerity, wisdom, and the nobility of human conscience. Good literature is able to remind, awaken, and return humans to the proper path, namely the path of truth in an effort to fulfill their life's tasks (Saryono, 2009). Literature as a result of the processing of the author's soul, is produced through a long process of contemplation regarding the nature of life and living. The contents of literature are closely related to life which can be used as a means to teach life values to its connoisseurs (Zuliyanti, 2022).

One form of literary work is a novel. According to Kosasih (2008), a novel is an imaginative work that tells the whole story of the problematic side of a person's or several people's lives. The story of the novel begins with the emergence of problems experienced by the characters until the resolution stage. In other words, the novel tells the conflict of the character's life which is told from the beginning to the end at the resolution stage. The inner conflict experienced by the main character greatly influences the personality he has because of the change in character (Nuryatin, 2017). Thus, the

novel has a story and conflict of its characters that are very complex so that they have deep meaning. Amalia (2020) argues that a novel is a work of fiction produced by an author by containing stories about the lives of his characters who are diverse and have deep characterizations.

As a means of learning literature in high school, the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo is one of the interesting literary works to study because it contains spiritual values. This provides readers with an experience related to the struggles of the characters in this novel in order to achieve their life goals with all the conflicts that can be found in the real world.

## METHODOLOGY

This study uses a literary psychology approach, which is an approach to analyzing literary works by considering the characterization aspect to find out the total meaning of a literary work. The purpose of this study is to reveal the spiritual values of the characters and describe the forms of needs that influence the spiritual values in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo which are relevant to literature learning in high school. The data collection technique in this study is to use a content analysis model (content analysis). Endraswara (2008:160) stated that content analysis is a relatively new literary study model. The novelty can be seen from the target to be revealed. Content analysis is used to reveal, understand, and capture the message of literary works. The steps taken with content analysis in this study are as follows: 1) conducting a document review by carefully reading the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo. 2) recording data in the form of text fragments contained in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo in the form of data cards containing spiritual values. 3) classify or group data that contains spiritual values.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literary works contain values that the author wants to convey to the reader. These values include spiritual values that are reflected in the behavior of the characters described by the

author in the story. Pierre in Nelson (2009:8-9) states that spirituality can help someone find the meaning of their life, encourage them to always think and do good, encourage them to establish harmony with God, nature, society including finding peace of mind and heart (kalbu), spirituality can provide enthusiasm (spirit), freedom from the shackles of depression and spirituality also provides a path towards a more meaningful self-transformation. The spiritual values in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* are reflected in the behavior of the characters as individuals with various problems so as to form the personalities of the characters in the story which are described as follows.

### **Spiritual Values of Characters in the Novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo**

#### 1. Gani's Character

Gani is a figure who has mature spirituality when he is already old. He lives his life calmly and is able to face all problems within himself and his family with an open heart. This is evident in the following quote.

Kini, setelah Gani menua, bangkit keinginannya mendakibukit, menempuh perjalanan ziarah. Ia sesekali memandang bulan purnama di atas bukit, seperti begitu dekat, di atas bunga-bunga kambo jatu a, tak jauh dari kepak sayap kelelawar. Ini kali dia datang kepuncak bukit, ziarah kemakam leluhur, pada senja yang sunyi, sendirian, untuk menemukan ketenangan. (Utomo, 2019:2)

#### 2. Arum Character

Arum is an obedient person. Her obedience, especially to her husband, Gani, is shown by her sacrifice in leaving the entertainment world to become a wife. This is evident in the following quote.

Di ruang tamu itu Dewi Laksmi mendengarkan keluhkesah ibunya: seorang penari yang meninggalkan dunia hiburan untuk menjadi seorang istri, kemudian menjadi seorang ibu yang membesarkan anak-anak. "Aku menahan diri untuk tak kembali ke panggung. (Utomo, 2019:70)

#### 3. Suman Character

Suman is a character who has a sense of love. The sense of love he has is manifested in the form of attention to Arum. He takes the time to serve Arum's interests. Here is the proof of the quote.

Ia menyediakan rumah untuk Arum. Ia memberi pekerjaan. Ia sering mengajak jalan-jalan. Mengajak bepergian keluar kota. Mengantar Arum mementaskan tari – kehairanan menari perempuan itu berkembang semenjak kecil, dan tak mungkin di sembunyikan. (Utomo, 2019:84).

#### 4. Goddess Laksmi Figure

Goddess Laksmi is a figure who has perseverance. Goddess Laksmi's perseverance makes her a dancer who can display dance movements with full soul in every dance she performs. She takes the time to practice the dance movements that will be displayed in the performance. Here is the proof of the quote.

Kelembutan tari bedaya, kedalaman rasa, keselarasan, dan keheningan mengendap dalam jiwa Dewi Laksmi. Berbulan-bulan ia melatih diri menari bedaya, kadang berpuasa, mempertajam kepekaan rasa. Tarian ini memintanya meretas ruang dan waktu kealam gaib tanpa batas, tanpa sekat. Ia merasa berada di pendapakeraton, berhadapan dengan raja, ratu, pangeran, dan para putri. Gamelan yang lamban, tenang, mengiringi gerak yang memendam perenungan. Tari bedaya ini akan diperagakan di ruang pertunjukkan hotel, menyambut seorang ratu, istri sultan, yang bakal menghadiri sebuah seminar budaya. Ia belum pernah bersua, berhadapan dengan seorang ratu. (Utomo, 2019:65).

#### 5. Widi's Character

Widi is a diligent person. A person's perseverance in doing a job can have an impact on inner peace. Work that is done continuously indicates a form of perseverance to produce something satisfying. That way, a person will experience inner satisfaction so that it can calm his mind. This is proven by the following quote.

Widi menenteramkan perasaannya dengan memahat topeng. Kampung ini kembali memiliki seorang pemahat topeng yang pulang dari pengembaraannya. Terdengar hentakan-

hentakan palu pada gagang pemahat hingga larut malam. (Utomo, 2019:177).

#### 6. The figure of Kiai Sodik

Kiai Sodik is a devout worshipper. Performing worship on time is proof of one's obedience to God. He will not waste his time when it is time to perform worship. All worldly things will be immediately left behind to focus on performing worship to the Creator. Here is the proof of the quote.

Usai salat magrib, Kiai Sodik memimpin doa di masjid yang sepi, hampir-hampir tanpa pengunjung, kecuali para santri. Hanya empat orang kampung yang mengikuti salat magrib di masjid itu. Kiai Sodik menyalami empat orang yang mengikuti doanya. Gani memahami kecemasan dalam Cahaya mata kiai. (Utomo, 2019:44).

#### 7. Male Character with Crossed Eyes

The cross-eyed man is a devout worshipper. He always draws closer to the Creator despite his limitations. He is not only a cross-eyed man but also a lame man. His closeness to God is proven by his obedience in carrying out worship. Here is the proof of the quote.

Lelaki tua bermata juling itu seorang penggembala kambing di hutan larangan. Kini hanya tinggal lahannya yang masih utuh pepohonan. Ia mendirikan surau dari papan-papan kayu jati. Kokoh. Bersih. Di sendang bening itu ia biasa mandi dan bersuci. Di tatalempengan-lempengan batu dari tepi sendang menuju surau kayu. Ia berloncatan kecil memijak lempengan-lempengan batu bila meninggalkan sendang mendekati surau kayu. (Utomo, 2019:34).

#### 8. Raras Figures

Raras is Suman's wife. As a wife, she has patience. She always waits for Suman to return with patience. While waiting, Raras provides everything Suman needs after arriving home. As a wife, Raras knows her duties and responsibilities to serve her husband. This is proven by the following quote.

Dipendapa itulah Raras dengan sabar menanti suaminya pulang, menyediakan air hangat untuk mandi, menyeduh kopi dan

menggoreng pisang kesukaansuami. (Utomo, 2019:120).

#### 9. Yu Jinah Character

Yu Jinah is a loyal servant of the Raras family. She serves the Raras family loyally. She serves the Raras family with full love. Yu Jinah's devotion to the Raras family is done wholeheartedly. This is evident when she takes care of her employer when he is sick. Here is the proof of the quotation.

Yu Jinah merawat Raras dengan penuh kecintaan. Yu Jinah memang pembantu yang mengasuh Raras semenjak kecil. Pada saat Raras menikah, Yu Jinah mohon diperkenankan mengikutinya. Yu Jinah mengasuh anak-anak Raras. Yu Jinah dengan penuh kecintaan senantiasa meluangkan waktu merawat Raras. Suman tak pernah cemas meninggalkan istrinya. (Utomo, 2019:122).

### **Forms of Needs that Influence Spiritual Values of Characters in the Novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo**

#### 1. Physiological Needs

Physiological drives and physiological needs are the strongest needs that are considered the starting point of motivation theory (Maslow in Fawaid and Maufur, 2017:72). Physiological needs are the most basic needs that humans need to survive. In fulfilling physiological needs, humans need food, water, air, shelter, clothing, and biological needs. The physiological needs of the figure are in the following quote.

The islands used to be green hills, which were then submerged as lakes. There were no more houses, rice fields, fields, ancestral graves, and teak forests, with children playing ball in the meadows. Suman used to always meet bitter and self-restraint faces, which disappeared one by one, who knows where: to the other island as transmigrants, to migrate to the city, or to hide in the teak forests. (Utomo, 2019:89).

The quote above explains that the residents around the lake have lost their place.

their residence. They lost their home that had been a place of shelter and socializing with their family. The character Suman is one of the residents who also lost their home because the

entire village was submerged into a lake. Based on the events he experienced in the past, it can be seen that Suman's physiological needs related to the fulfillment of a place to live were not met. As a result of the unfulfilled physiological needs, it affects Suman's behavior to achieve his physiological needs by achieving spirituality in his life.

#### 2. Security Needs

Security needs arise naturally when physiological needs have been met. These needs can include security, stability, dependency, protection; freedom from fear, anxiety, and chaos; the need for structure, order, law, and boundaries; protective power and so on (Maslow in Fawaid & Maufur, 2017:74).

The character Suman in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo has a need for security. Suman needs security because of his past trauma. Suman needs security to get his inner peace. Here is the proof of the quotation.

"I can no longer recognize where our house, land, and fertile rice fields are," said Suman. "You know, how my father was chased by the village officials, forced to let go of his house, rice fields, and fields, at a very cheap price. My father was accused of being a rebel, and later accused of being a communist. Our rice fields were flooded by the river, and our residence was submerged. My father, mother, and older sister were forced to transmigrate to the island across the way. I survived here, following a neighbor, living in a village not far from the lake, going to school, helping to make fish cages, raising fish, and catching them to sell to the market." (Utomo, 2019:89).

#### 3. Need to Belong and Love

The need to belong and the feeling of love in humans is described by the behavior of understanding and loving each other. The need for love is needed to arouse the passion of human life and the feeling of love makes someone want to belong or have.

Arum has a desire to be loved. She has decided to leave her husband and children. However, she wants to get love from someone close to her life. Here is the proof of the quote.

Sitting with Suman on the boat, Arum remembered her daughter, Dewi Laksmi, who had a beautiful body, asking for his blessing to marry her. He did give his blessing. How could she return to her family? She had left her husband, left her children. She lived in her own house, and accepted Suman into her life. Every now and then she felt restless, tortured, and had a sense of shame. (Utomo, 2019:88).

#### 4. Pride

Self-esteem is considered important because when someone has self-esteem, others will respect him as a person who deserves respect. Fulfillment of the need for self-esteem can give birth to feelings of self-confidence, value, strength, ability, and skill, feelings and being needed in this world. However, failure to fulfill this need can give birth to feelings of inferiority, weakness, and helplessness, awkwardness, passivity, inability to cope with the demands of life and inferiority in socializing (Maslow in Fawaid & Maufur, 2017:79)

The character Samad escorts the Dewi Laksmi dance troupe to the airport. Dewi Laksmi will soon return to her homeland with her troupe. Although there is sadness in Samad's heart, he still shows his dignity as a man. Here is the proof of the quote.

At Suvarnabhumi airport, Samad tried to be patient. He smiled warmly at the Dewi Laksmi dance troupe when he saw them off. He straightened his back and straightened his gaze. A manager of a big hotel in Bangkok, he never showed his brittle soul. He did not give up hope of meeting Dewi Laksmi. Will she accept me if I visit my ancestral land, stop by Dewi Laksmi's house? (Utomo, 2019:107).

#### 5. Self-Actualization

Self-actualization is the human desire to obtain satisfaction with oneself, to realize all one's potential, to become whatever one can do, and to be creative and free in achieving the peak of one's potential (Alwisol, 2014:2006)

Self-actualization is needed by someone to show their existence to others. This is done by someone to gain recognition for their existence in their life. Arum's self-actualization is shown in the following quote.

Once again, Dewi Laksmi and her future husband, Wisnu, came to Arum who was bored practicing dancing. In a few days, Arum had to perform "Arkasuta", Dewi Kunti's dance in one of the art buildings in the capital – with tickets that had already been sold out. She, who had left her husband and children for a long time, asked herself: is it true that I have played Dewi Kunti in my daily life by wasting my biological child? She felt that she was not as noble as Dewi Kunti who faithfully protected her other five children. (Utomo, 2019:163).

### **The Relevance of Spiritual Values in the Novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo to Literature Learning in High School**

Novels are one form of literary works that can provide reflection, appreciation, and action to readers regarding the values contained therein. The values contained in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo are spiritual values that are relevant to literature learning in high school. Literature learning basically aims for students to have a strong sense of appreciation for valuable literary works so that they feel motivated and interested in reading them (Semi, 1990:152). Reading literary works is expected to make students have an understanding of the values contained therein to stimulate their sensitivity to humans and their environment.

Literature learning is one part of language learning. The purpose of literature learning is to foster the ability to express thoughts and feelings using good and correct language through literary appreciation. Literary appreciation learning aims to enable students to understand, enjoy, and utilize literary works to develop their personality, broaden their horizons, improve their knowledge, and language skills (Depdiknas, 2001).

Literature learning needs to be taught in schools because it can help improve language skills, increase knowledge and can improve creativity and taste and support the formation of students' personalities in appreciating literary works and sharpening feelings, reasoning, and imagination, as well as sensitivity to society and the environment. Reading literary works opens up opportunities for students to grow into wise

individuals because by reading literary works they can find out various life problems and efforts to solve them. In addition, reading literary works also opens up opportunities for students to grow into critical individuals because in a story sometimes it teaches someone to find a way out of the problems experienced by the characters in the story.

Novels as a means of learning literature can open new insights so that students are more active and constructive towards current symptoms and situations. That way, learning will be more meaningful in improving students' abilities and concerns and be used as a guideline in shaping students' personalities because the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo contains values that are educational for readers so that they can learn from the characters and emulate them in everyday life.

The novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo is relevant to literature learning in high school. In the Merdeka Curriculum for the Indonesian Language subject in grade XII of high school, there is a learning objective of analyzing the intrinsic elements of the novel and compiling generalizations from the results of inferences to the ideas contained in the novel text. This is expected to increase students' interest in literature learning. Literature learning plays a role in fostering students' intelligence in all aspects. Through appreciation, students' spirituality can be trained and developed. Students are not only trained to read, but are also able to find the meaning and values contained in literary works, one of which is the value of spirituality.

The spiritual values contained in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo include the values of patience, perseverance, honesty, sincerity, obedience, love, care, sincerity, steadfastness, religiousness, trust, courage to admit mistakes, enthusiasm, simplicity, and loyalty. The value of patience found from the analysis of the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo is one of the attitudes that students should emulate in their daily lives because patience will lead to a person's level of spirituality. The value of perseverance leads students to become tough people and have

the ability to continue practicing in order to achieve better life goals.

The value of honesty is very important to be taught to students along with the development of the era that demands all forms of convenience that sometimes neglect humans. The value of sincerity teaches students to be able to accept God's will with an open heart. This can prevent deviant behavior that is sometimes done by young people when experiencing unpleasant events.

Compliance is a behavior that students need to have to foster a polite attitude in everyday life both in the family environment and in society. Love is a value that can encourage students to create a safe and comfortable atmosphere. Caring teaches students to be sensitive to others and their environment. The value of sincerity contained in the novel is useful for increasing the capacity of the human spirit so that they have inner calm in facing life's problems.

Determination teaches students to have a stance and believe in their own abilities. This is important for students to grow a sense of self-confidence. Religious values as the basis of faith are very necessary for students to form a strong character along with the changing times.

The value of trust needs to be possessed by students so as not to trigger conflicts that occur between students. Dare to admit mistakes is needed to instill in students a responsible and independent attitude. Enthusiasm is one of the values that can invite students to think forward in order to prepare for their future.

The value of simplicity teaches students to distance themselves from wasting behavior and act appropriately in social life. The value of loyalty can encourage students to behave in accordance with applicable agreements or norms.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of the spiritual values of the characters in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng* by S. Prasetyo Utomo, it has relevance to literature learning in high school because the spiritual values possessed by the characters in the novel *Percumbuan Topeng*

reflect attitudes that can be emulated by students in everyday life. Spiritual values that reflect exemplary behavior include: the values of patience, perseverance, honesty, sincerity, obedience, love, care, sincerity, steadfastness, religiousness, trust, courage to admit mistakes, enthusiasm, simplicity, and loyalty.

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