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Cultural Assimilation of Indonesia-Malaysia in Arena Wati's Novel
Cakra Waruga

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Abstract: Through the novel with Malaysian background, Arena Wati includes socio-cultural aspects of Bugis-Makassar and Javanese in social interaction of Malaysian community. The aim of the study is to compare cultural assimilation between Indonesia and Malaysia in Arena Wati's novel, *Cakra Waruga*. The writing applied multidisciplinary approach which emphasizes the disciplines, such as literature, culture, history and sociology. The analysis of this writing used multidisciplinary approach, which includes intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The study indicates that the occurrence of cultural assimilation between Indonesia and Malaysia was possible due to many Bugis and Makassar people who came and settled in Malaysia. This is due to the existence between the two countries despite their differences, but they belong to the same family that is Malay.

Key words: assimilation, culture, novel, intrinsic, *cakra waruga*

Abstrak: Melalui novel berlatar belakang Malaysia, Arena Wati memasukkan aspek sosial budaya Bugis-Makassar dan Jawa dalam interaksi sosial masyarakat Malaysia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan asimilasi budaya antara Indonesia dan Malaysia dalam Novel *Cakra Waruga* karya Arena Wati. Penulisan ini menerapkan pendekatan multidisiplin yang menekankan pada disiplin ilmu, seperti sastra, budaya, sejarah dan sosiologi. Analisis penulisan ini menggunakan pendekatan multidisiplin yang meliputi intrinsik dan ekstrinsik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terjadinya asimilasi budaya antara Indonesia dan Malaysia dimungkinkan karena banyaknya orang Bugis dan Makassar yang datang dan menetap di

Malaysia. Hal ini dikarenakan adanya perbedaan antara kedua negara tersebut meskipun berbeda tetapi masih satu keluarga yaitu Melayu.

Kata kunci: asimilasi, budaya, novel, intrinsik, cakra waruga

INTRODUCTION

Literary work, especially novel, is one of the media to express a particular culture and human social activity in narrative form. The source of inspiration is of course from various events and social activity in the culture of the community which is recorded, experienced, or witnessed by the author, let alone if the author is a part of that culture such as Arena Wati in her work *Cakra Waruga*. Therefore, the characters shown in a novel will represent the culture which acts according to the custom and habit of the community.

An interaction between Indonesian and Malaysian has lasted for a long time since there was a contact between the two countries. The interaction for life is the most important principle because it does not only occur between the two races and customs but also between individuals.

The Indonesian and Malaysian communicate to fulfill social desires and their needs for living. The communication between genders may result in marriage and this will cause assimilation. When the marriages produce offspring, then the offspring will assimilate themselves in the two cultures: Malaysian culture and Indonesian culture. In *Cakra Waruga* novel, the assimilation between Indonesian and Malaysian cultures was found through marriage between leaders and the social interaction in a community.

This paper gives a social and cultural interpretation toward the assimilation between Indonesian and Malaysian cultures in Arena Wati's novel *Cakra Waruga*. The most interesting thing in the novel is the use of characters which have Indonesian culture especially Bugis-Makassar and Javanese in the context of life of Malaysian community. This is of course due to the existence of both countries which is different, but they belong to the same family that is Malay. Arena Wati himself is a Malaysian and poet of Malaysia, he is also the descendant of Bugis-Makassar who was born in Indonesia.

The use of the main character of Bugis-Makassar and Javanese background in the context of Malaysian community with the setting Pontian, Malaysia was the realization of the role of literary work represented by Arena

Wati's works in eliminating the gap between Indonesia and Malaysia viewed from social, economic, and political aspects by using literary work as a medium particularly in cultural assimilation between the two countries. Among the characters of the story were Kang Juri and Raden Mas Sutarto bin

RM.Sastromulyo of Mataram Kingdom, Salam the son of Kang Juri, Mustafa the son of Datuk Dan, the great grandson of Wak Coneng of Wajo, South Sulawesi, Rubiah and Kintan the descendant of Andi Masek. The role of the main characters in the story brings their own tradition and culture in social interaction.

Cakra Waruga was Arena Wati's work, a Malaysian literary man who was a descendant of Bugis - Makassar. Through the novel with Malaysian background, Arena Wati includes socio-cultural aspects of Bugis-Makassar and Javanese in social interaction of Malaysian community. Even in the family tree of the characters of the story, there was a mixture of Indonesian and Malaysian blood, Indonesian and Indonesian which becomes the third generation. This reflects the cultural assimilation in the novel, namely between Indonesian and Malaysian cultures.

The research question posed in this study is on how the interrelation of cultural assimilation between Indonesian and Malaysian in *Cakra Waruga* novel by Arena Wati is. This research was done to find out cultural assimilation between Indonesian and Malaysia through the novel entitled *Cakra Waruga* by Arena Wati.

METHOD

This study is based on library research that is conducted in different places. The primary data used in the analysis was taken from Arena Wati's novel *Cakra Waruga*. The secondary data were collected from journals, articles, books and historical documents such as letters, autobiographies and notes. The writing applied multidisciplinary approach which emphasizes the disciplines, such as literature, culture, history and sociology.

GENERAL REVIEW OF CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

The position of the two countries is very important in the field of trade to develop the culture. At the same time the similarity of religion (Islam) also contributes to the relationships between the two countries. At this paper the review of megalithic, Aceh gravestone and artifact of Islamic shilling to view the sustainability of relationships of both countries. In evaluating socio-cultural relationship, Sumijati (1984) points out that this relationship involves a broad scope since it has simple or complex value of culture interacts one another to form a system. This system will motivate the community to preserve it.

First, Geldern points out the effect of megalithic into two stages; (1) initial stage disseminated through ethnic and cultural wave; (2) what is disseminated through immigration (Nik Hassan Suhaimi, 1999). I.H.N. Evans (1921: 160) was the first who studied megalithic in Malaysian Peninsula indicates that there are two main elements in the relationship between Malay Land and Sumatera. First, based on trade and second, dissemination and exchange of culture. Fifteen granites were reported by Evans and three megalithic stones and other late rites are still scattered, slanted and on the ground. Along the process of excavation, man skeleton was never found at the foot of this megalithic stone (Mohd Supian, 2003). The art form developed simultaneously before and after Islam can be seen based on the archeological remain of megalithic stones in Pengkalan Kempas, Negeri Sembilan (Miksic, 1984: 40). It can be seen from two aspects: form produced through physical observation having a wheel, umbrella, and creese.

Second, the form of shilling produced by the Malacca Malay Sultanate viewed from the aspect of physical indicates the effect of initial government developed previously. This can be seen in the archeological remain of shilling once found in Samudra Pasai Kingdom. Through the archeological remain of shilling, it indicates that there was a title used to increase the destiny of Islam in daily life. The symbol was printed on the back of the shilling and the name of government was printed at the front part of the shilling.

Third, data on Aceh features of tomb can be related to the use of nature elements as a symbol viewed from the point of view of Islamic archeology. The ornament pattern in Aceh gravestone has art elements based on two main aspects: elements before and at the time of Islam and adjustment between arts before and at the time of Islam. The ornaments can also be divided into four:

(1) related to nature such as in the form of mountain (head), related to nature such as lily flower (part of the shoulder and part of the foot); (2) geometrical elements are in the forms of line, curve, round (part of the foot); (3) animal symbol in the form of spiders web (part of the foot) and (4) symbolism element that is tears form (part of the head), ladder ornament (part of the body) and shoulder (part of the body) Othman, 1988;

Perret and Kamaruddin 1999, 41-44). The interesting aspect of this Aceh gravestone is its types of art which is physically can be differentiated according to development and periods. The name and year of the dead is also found in Aceh gravestone.

CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

Assimilation is the mixture of elements causing the loss of the originality of an element and formation of a new element which then called mixture of elements. Therefore, the assimilation of two cultures is the mixture of one culture with the other and this creates an assimilation of culture. The assimilation is due to interaction, but this does not always result in assimilation, therefore interaction between Malaysian and Indonesian people does not always result in cultural assimilation. But the assimilation was initially begun with interaction. Interaction resulted in assimilation is interaction between Malaysian people and visitors especially from Indonesia who are Muslims. Social interaction and trade between the two countries was then continued to the level of marriage. The marriage resulted in the birth of mixed descendants and united into one Malay Malaysian community.

The assimilation also occurs due to interaction of Malay and non-Malay ethnic groups and intermarriage between ethnic groups of the same religion. Such marriage is regarded to be very beneficial, because it can broaden the family relationship, for instance, the marriage between Malay-Malaysia and Bugis-Makassar; Malay-Malaysia and Javanese, etc. The main factor hampering the discontinuity of the interaction to the level of marriage was the difference in religion. When one left his religion and embraced other religion or the belief of his opposite sex, then marriage could take place.

The marriage between Malay and non-Malay Muslim or between Malay and non-Malay of non-Muslim Malay who is not from Malay race can develop toward assimilation provided they have the same religion or same belief. Muslim Malay who married to non-Malay who is Muslim can easily assimilate than between non-Muslim Malay and non-Muslim non-Malay because the

Malay people are not easy to accept the second assimilation. On the contrary, non-Muslim non-Malay can accept the assimilation with Malay people who have the same religion. In this case, factors regarded to Malaysianism and Islamism or similarity of religion fully determine the assimilation between the Malay and non-Malay people. It is no wonder if the non-Muslim non-Malay people left their religion and embraced Islam. They are then called Malay people because some of the community members notice that Malay and Islam are identical.

SOCIO-CULTURE IN *CAKRA WARUGA*

The realization of custom gives the live to the community. Ideas, concepts, norms and belief in it arranges and gives direction to human social activity who interacts and to the human work itself including literary work. Direction and guide of the cultural system cause patterned action in human activity which interacts (Koentjaraningrat, 1990: 187). Wiranata (2002: 103) points out further that the realization of culture in the form of interaction human activities, socialize, and communicate one another follow certain pattern based on behavioral system. This reflects the inseparable link between literary work and human in it which is related to social, cultural, customary aspects of human community. This novel basically talks about the behavior of the rich family, Datu Dan and Kang Juri. The relationship among the three families was strengthened by friendship due to marriage.

In *Cakra Waruga* novel, the death of Salam, the son of Kang Juri and Mbak Ngisa, was followed by a set of activities reflected the civilization of Bugis-Makassar including Javanese, namely on the third day of *taksiah* (religious gathering to commemorate someone's death), *tembosa* (ritual meal) and *juadah* (cake made of rice) were served and on the seventh day *tembosa* was not served. *Tembosa* is a symbolic matter related to the condition of the corpse in the cemetery. Therefore, *juadah* or offering on the third day was different from *juadah* on the seventh day of the death due to the different of corpse condition in the cemetery. Besides that, Wak Coneng's house between two trees, namely tamarind and *binjai* (a fruit tree) is the reflection of Bugis traditional house in which there are several symbols depicting the habit of Bugis people.

CULTURAL ASSIMILATION THROUGH MARRIAGE

Indonesia and Malaysia are two countries of the same race with different cultures but reflects similarity with one another. And even Indonesian national language has many things in common with Malaysian national language because the two countries are of the same origin of language, namely Malay language. Living together in one continent that is Asia makes easy interaction between the two countries and this makes it very possible for cultural assimilation through marriage.

Arena Wati himself is a man from Makassar, Indonesia and became a citizen of Malaysia. His arrival in Malaysia, of course would also bring his own custom and habit and at the end assimilate with custom and habit of Malay people. Cultural assimilation between the two countries through marriage gave color to Arena Wati's work whose real name is Muhammad Dahlan bin Abdul Biang.

Datuk Haji Hamdan and Ustazah Maimunah are parents of Prof. Dr. Mustafa as one of the main characters in *Cakra Waruga* novel. Datuk Hamdan, the father of Mustafa was the son of Bilal Mion of Lebai Haji Sarwan descendant from Banjar who was an imam in Karimun during his life. Whereas Ustazah Maimunah, the mother of Mustafa was the daughter of Sabiah who a real descendant from Wak Coneng was whose nick name was Patta Lasinrang from Wajo.

Mustafa knew from his grandmother's story, Sabiyah binti Wak Coneng, that formerly there was no road connected Kukup and Pontian. Tigers proliferated in the forest at the upstream of Rimba Terjun. The tigers roamed and came to the coast keeping an eye on the monkeys' eating conches during the ebb tide. Conch is the food for monkeys and monkey is the food for tigers. That was the situation of Pontian at that time, namely when Tuan Haji Usman bin Yahya from Trengganu came to Rimba Terjun. He cut down trees of Sultan Abu Bakar. Then he planted bananas and beetle nuts and then changed it to rubber plantation. He brought unskilled laborers from Java to work at the rubber plantation. Tuan Haji Usman was asked to be an imam, but he refused. Then, Nik Senik and his family came from Kelantan, Engku Mumba, Bugis Selangor and family came from Kelang. There had been Bugis Selat there named Madamin then married to Banang Malay. Madamin worked on the swamp at the coast and then planted it with coconuts and beetle nuts. During the era of Sultan Ibrahim, he opened rubber plantation as well.

The family initially had forest land at Rimba Terjun. At that time the Malay people from Karimun and Siak, Bugis people and Banjar Alai arrived at Rambah, Teluk Kerang, Penerok, Permas and Serkat. Among the Banjar people, including Mion's father, Mustafa's grandfather named Lebai Haji Sarwan who came from Martapura. He was an imam at Karimun. Therefore, Mion who was born at Pamerok, Mustafa's grandfather was older several months than Sabiyah, Mustafa's grandmother. Mustafa was a descendant of Bugis, and Banjar became a citizen of Malaysia. Therefore, Bugis, Banjar and Malay cultures have assimilated in Mustafa's own body. The assimilation occurred through marriage among their ancestors.

Mustafa then married to Kintan, Datuk Haji Bob's son and Juriah. Datuk Bob, Kintan's father was born in Benut. His father's name was Andi Ambak bin Andi Masse, a Bugis of Wajo descendant and his mother was Habibah Alias Bibi binti Adam Khan. Adam was from Patan, a descendant of Peshawar was married to Malay woman, Batu Pahat a descendant of the mixture of Hakka Chinese and Malay. Further, Kintan's mother, Juriah, was Malay from Parit Botak, Rengit. His father was Buginese of Javanese descent and Chinese mother. This means that Kintan was of Bugis, Javanese, Malay and Chinese blood.

The second son of Datuk Bob and Juriah was Rubiah married with Salam who has pure blood of Central Java. Salam was one of the sons of Haji Bajuri bin Raden Mas Sutarto known as Kang Juri and Hajjah Aisyah binti Raden Mas Sumiarto known as Mbak Ngisa. This couple has three children: Suratmo, Sumarni, and Supardi.

The marriages mentioned above was an event causing cultural assimilation between Indonesia and Malaysia. Although most of them came from Bugis and Makassar and Java, Indonesia to Pontian, they have already become Malay citizen from their ancestor. Therefore, in themselves there have been mixture of two cultures, namely Indonesian and Malaysia cultures and of course gave color to their daily life. All this gave color to the assimilation of two cultures: Indonesia and Malaysia in the story.

CULTURE AT THE TOMBSTONE

When a person dies, a tombstone is put on his/her cemetery as a sign that in that place a human being has been buried. For the Indonesian people, especially Muslims the tombstone of adult is different from the tombstone of a child. The shape of the tombstone is different between male and female. The

tombstone of a male is round, and the tombstone of female is flat. For the tombstone having a heart shape, it faces up for the male and it faces down for the female. For the latter, not all tombstones use it, but it is also one of the cultural elements in Indonesia.

The phenomena toward the tombstone are one of the cultural aspects in Indonesia especially the form and heart shape on the tombstone is also found in *Cakra Waruga* novel as one of the indications that cultural assimilation has occurred in the architecture of the tombstone: "The male tombstone angle faces up and the tombstone is hexagon in shape which is almost round. The female tombstone angle faces down and quadrangle in shape, and is almost flat" (Arena Wati, 2006: 16). However, the beauty of architecture of both types of tombs told in the story expressed the identity of the tombstone owner that he/she has prepared himself/herself to face the death. Awareness and perception to life after death is the guide of the attitude and social behavior which is always directed to the ways which are not contradictory to the norms of their religion.

CULTURE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TAKSIAH OF THE DEAD

Taksiah (religious gathering to commemorate someone's death) is a ceremonial activity which has been adopted in Indonesia especially for Muslims is usually done at the first, second and third nights. But it is also done until the seventh day of the dead. The people who come at this time listen to religious lecture related to death as a kind of expression of condolence.

In *Cakra Waruga*, on the third and seventh days of the death of Salam, Kang Juri's son it was done with special food according to custom as said by Kintan: "*Tembosa* (ritual meal) for the feast on the third day, whereas food served on the seventh day is mungbeans porridge as a symbol of the corpse condition on the seventh day of the death".

CULTURE OF BRINGING SOUVENIRS

In the context of feast or ceremony according to Bugis-Makassar culture and Javanese culture, people who come is served with food and when they go home, they are also given souvenirs to take home. During *taksiah* on the third

day of the death of Salam, women filled plastic with rice, meat and cake. This is a souvenir for the guests to take home for the family.

The custom to give souvenir to the guests is carried out at Pontian with additional variation accustomed to Malay people. In Java, the implementation of *selamatan* (commemoration of someone's death) or *taksiah* is done by preparing *nasi tumpeng* (a cone of rice with dishes) kept in a parcel of pyramidal shape surrounded by meat and vegetable. This is not eaten by the guests, but it is meant to take. They only eat food that has been prepared and they drink coffee.

There is also *nasi ambang* (red rice) with meat put on tray. The content can be eaten by twelve people divided into four then wrapped for the guests to take home. Then the Javanese at Pontian varied it so that the guests can eat rice and other dishes. *Nasi tumpeng* is symbolization of gratefulness to God for his blessings.

CREESE FOR BUGIS-MAKASSAR AND JAVENESE COMMUNITY

For Bugis-Makassar and Javanese community, creese is a symbol of masculinity associated for a man. Many Bugis-Makassar people view the creese as their souls so that for them no day without creese. The masculinity of a man with a creese on hand was shown by Prince Diponegoro in Java and Sultan Hasanuddin in Gowa, South Sulawesi in defending their country against colonialism. Viewing a creese as a friend in struggle for life especially during the colonial time make this weapon special for the community so that by having and keeping this weapon is assumed to be a cultural aspect of Indonesia. Its cultural aspect is clearly viewed in the way of handling it. The creese has a historic value or even certain mystic value in the eyes of those who own it.

In *Cakra Waruga* novel expressed in narrative form of cultural assimilation of Indonesia and Malaysia, Datuk Dan, the father of Mustafa, was a man who loves creese. He kept many creeses as mentioned by Rubiah who was touched by the hobby of Datuk Dan in keeping the creese. For Datuk Dan including noblemen of Java and Bugis-Makassar, keeping a creese is something comfortable. Viewing and touching the creese can give personal comfort. For them the creese can give entertainment to make the depressed mind calm.

HORSE RIDING

There are several characters in the novel mentioned about the dissemination of culture such as Kang Juri from Java, Mustafa from Banjar, Wak Conneng from Bugis, Datuk Bob and Rubiah from Malaysia. Prof. Dr. Rubiah knew from Sawitri that man in the past loved a horse very much so that by having a horse was a pride. In Indonesia the horse is a means of transportation to help community in their activity such as carrying paddy from the rice field and carrying people from one place to another or carrying heavy things using a cart. Horses were used as a means of transportation in the past when roads had not been built.

Horses in the past were viewed not only as a true helper in doing activities but also, they were assumed to improve social status of someone. This is due to not all people own a horse. Therefore, a horse is a symbol of authority for a man, for Javanese and Bugis-Makassar as well. The authority reflected the use of horses in the struggle of Indonesian gains the colonialism. Prince Diponegoro in Java with his white horse and Sultan Hasanuddin in Gowa with his black horse struggle with people against the colonialism. Many heroes in Java and Bugis-Makassar used horses in war and they were the leaders of the squad. Having a horse, especially a stallion, was a pride for a man.

In Jeneponto, the birthplace of Arena Wati is a region which is popular for its horses. Today horses in Jeneponto still give contribution to the life of some people there. Horses are not only used for daily activities but also, they give energy for those who consume the meat. In Makassar we can eat *coto kuda* (spicy horse meat) to improve vitality for man and is good to prevent infection on wound. All the horses consumed in Makassar are generally from Jeneponto regency. Riding horse culture in Bugis-Makassar area has been promoted to tourists. In Malino, one of the tourism areas in Gowa regency, the tourists can enjoy riding horse around the location guided by the horse owner. This is a realization form of riding horse culture in Bugis-Makassar area.

CONCLUSION

Culture of a community is the reflection of situation and social behavior in the community of which the use has been agreed in interaction. The culture is in the form of habits of the community in the past of which the existence is still preserved until today.

The habit is in oneself so that wherever he/she goes the habit is with him/her. Therefore, the Indonesian people who travel to Malaysia bring their own habits causing the assimilation of culture between the two countries. This mainly occurs when there is a marriage between Indonesian and Malaysian. And, between Indonesian and other Indonesian who has assimilated for a long time with Malaysian culture. The implementation of *taksiah* on the third day and the seventh day of Salam's death, Kang Juri's and Mbak Ngisa's son at Pontian was an example of cultural assimilation of the two nations. Likewise, the culture of bringing souvenirs which is from Java is carried out in Pontian, Malaysia.

The appreciation to creese, horse, and placement of tomb on the cemetery is a part of the culture of both nations. The narration of cultural assimilation between Indonesia and Malaysia in *Cakra Waruga* novel is inseparable from Arena Wati's biography as the writer of the novel. He is an Indonesian with Malaysian citizenship has assimilated two cultures in himself that is Indonesian culture and Malaysian culture.

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