

REVIEW ON AHMAD FUADI

NEGERI LIMA MENARA

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ABSTRAK

Novel Negeri Lima Menara merupakan salah satu novel trilogi karya Ahmad Fuadi yang mengisahkan perjalanan hidupnya semasa mengenyam pendidikan di sebuah Pondok Modern di Gontor. Karakter ini diperankan oleh Alif sebagai tokoh utama. Negeri Lima Menara adalah sebuah novel bertemakan pendidikan dan keagamaan. Tema inilah yang kemudian menjadi kekuatan dalam memberikan pesan dan nilai-nilai positif kepada pembacanya. Selain tema, sudut pandang pengarang dalam novel ini juga menjadi salah satu kekuatan dalam terbentuknya penokohan yang menjadi acuan dalam terjadinya jalan cerita. Terlepas dari kekuatan-kekuatan tersebut, novel Negeri Lima Menara karya Fuadi ini juga memiliki beberapa kelemahan antara lain pada alur cerita dan gaya bahasa. Alur cerita dalam novel ini adalah alur maju mundur atau campuran. Alur melompat-lompat semacam ini dapat membuat pembaca merasa kebingungan dan kehilangan pendalaman karakter pada saat membaca. Kelemahan lain adalah gaya bahasa yang digunakan penulis kurang banyak dalam penggunaan majas sehingga terkesan datar dan membosankan.

Disamping kekuatan dan kelemahan yang terdapat didalamnya, novel Negeri Lima Menara ini termasuk novel yang menginspirasi dan memotivasi pembacanya terutama untuk generasi muda dalam mencapai kesuksesan. Sehingga dapat memunculkan pandangan dan pemikiran baru bagi siapa saja yang membacanya.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Writing

In real life, people have to be more respectful for their success in the future. They have their own dreams to make some changes as the history of their life. There are many ways and many things that lead them to achieve their best dreams. They have many choices in some ways, such as successful education, successful passion of life, and many more.

The writer has analyzed how people have a strong faith to God to make all their dreams come true in a novel, entitled *Negeri Lima Menara*, written by Ahmad Fuadi. There are some cases which appear to describe how hard a life to be the best and why people never give up to achieve their dreams to be success.

Negeri Lima Menara novel leads people to realize how great a life that was given from God. People should respect the grace of God with power to try

hard to be personally successful because God always listens to their praises and wishes. In this novel, the desire to keep trying and always believe in God is shown by the characterization of each character. The characterization of this novel is described clearly. The characters have their own way to reach their dream. It shows that people in the world have their own intentions to prove that they have to be the best and useful not only for themselves and their family, but also for the nation.

Today is a modern era where most of young people are often neglectful to the importance of religious lesson. They tend to do anything fun and enjoy without thinking deeply of the impact toward moral value in their society.

Negeri Lima Menara novel may become a motivation novel similar to *Laskar Pelangi* written by Andrea Hirata. Many people exclude these novels from the literary novel because of the use of the phrase and the author's style of storytelling that use less allegorical elements . However, this novel which includes the ranks of Best Seller has successfully changed the paradigm of one of the Islamic worlds.

Negeri Lima Menara is also recommended for anyone who is in the process of realizing the ideals. This novel can be said as the contemporary religious, themed and best-selling novel for educated readers. *Negeri Lima Menara* is the first trilogy series of works written by Ahmad Fuadi.

1.2. Purpose of Writing

The purpose of the project is to give a review of a novel entitled *Negeri Lima Menara*, written by Ahmad Fuadi, especially to describe its strengths and weaknesses through the analysis of the intrinsic elements, that are theme, plot, characterization, point of view and style, and the extrinsic elements, such as the biography of the author and the common values in society.

1.3. The Brief Biography of Ahmad Fuadi

Ahmad Fuadi was born in West Sumatra in 1972. In this novel, he was inspired by his formative years at an Islamic boarding school to create his first novel, *Negeri Lima Menara*. This novel has been sold more than 100,000 copies in the first year of its release.

After graduating from Padjajaran University, Fuadi became a journalist for *Tempo* magazine. He received a scholarship to get his master degree at George Washington and won the Chevening award to study documentary film in royal Holloway, University of London. *Negeri Lima Menara* novel has won several awards, including *Khatulistiwa* Literary Award 2010, Favorite Fiction Writer and Book from Indonesian Readers Awards 2010, the Best Fiction Novel and the Best Fiction Writer 2011, awarded by the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, and National Intellectual Property Right Award in 2013.

Ahmad Fuadi is a busy writer and speaker, both at home and abroad. Fuadi also has a job at international book events, such as Frankfurt Book Fair, Byron Bay Writers Festival, Singapore Writers Festival, Ubud Writers Festival, Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair, Salihara Literary Biennale, and Makassar Writers Festival. He is also the founder of *Komunitas Menara*, a non-profit organization for poor children to get free access on education.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY OF NOVEL *NEGERI LIMA MENARA*

After graduated from secondary school, Alif wants to continue his study at a High School but his mother wants him to study deeply on religious teaching. Finally, Alif decides to advance his religious knowledge at a pesantren, called Pondok Madani. Pondok Madani is located in East Java far from his hometown Minangkabau, West Sumatra. At first, Alif has never agreed with the rules and the idea in Pondok Madani. He thinks that it is the wrong way ever to live apart from his family and makes his life harder than before, but he has a strong faith that his parents only wishes the best for him. It is hard for him to adapt the new system until one day, Alif gets to step a grade down because of it.

As the time passes, Alif gets a chance to be closer with his five roommates Atang from Bandung, Baso from Gowa, Raja from Medan, Said from Surabaya

and Dulmajid from Madura. Almost every day, they spend their free time in a tower called “Sahibul Menara”. They are often seen together when hanging out near the tower.

One day, Alif begins to think far ahead that everything is not like what he expects before. He starts to think how a school gives him a modern idea and motivates all the students, especially, Alif and his five best friends to have a big visions on their life. It is “Man Jadda Wa Jadda”, a phrase given by Ustad Salman which means “who gives his all will surely succeed”. For the next meeting in Sahibul Menara, Alif, Baso, Raja, Said, Atang, and Dulmajid make a promise under the Tower. The promise is that one day they will go to the places that they have been dreaming of. Alif wishes to go to America, Atang wishes to go to Egypt, Baso wishes to go to Mecca, Raja wishes to go to England, and Dulmajid wishes to travel all over Indonesia.

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW ON AHMAD FUADI'S NOVEL *NEGERI LIMA*

MENARA

In this review, I try to give the strengths and weaknesses of *Negeri Lima Menara*. The strengths of *Negeri Lima Menara* include the theme, character, point of view, biography of the author and the values inside. There are also some weaknesses in *Negeri Lima Menara* which include plot and language style. The following discussion will explain these strengths and weaknesses.

3.1 The strengths of Novel *Negeri Lima Menara*

1. Theme.

The theme of this novel is about education and religion. Fuadi succeeded to create a modern atmosphere in the Islamic boarding schools (PM) that have

been considered old-fashioned and stiff and uninteresting. That is about Islamic boarding schools teach only religious issues as well as the author wanted scrapped. In this novel he implicitly shows the modern side Islamic boarding school by telling them to learn about art, language and also speak English liabilities that should not be tolerated. Alif initially never agreed with the rules in PM. Moreover in fact, he only half-heartedly continued his education in the field of religion.

As the time went by, Alif felt fortunate he was able to gain knowledge in PM.

Besides studying the science of religion, Alif also learned English and Arabic that are used daily and obligatorily in PM. Moreover, the disciplines PM also cover self-development such as calligraphy, martial arts, sports, scouts, journalism, art, and so forth. Various activities in the PM could not be separated from the strict rules of discipline to gain success. If there are students who break the rules, no matter how small it is, they have to directly deal with the law enforcement to pay the penalty.

Successful study at PM finally was achieved by Alif and his five friends, Said, Raja, Atang, Baso and Dulmajid. They thanks to a word "*man Jadda wa Jadda*" of PM so then they achieve success without a doubt. With intelligence, respectively and with each characteristic, the fifth "Sahibul Menara" was

successful worldwide as they dream. Thanks to PM, they become what is really shown themselves who had never previously unexpected.

2. Point of view

The main character of the story is Alif. The character of Alif is the narrator of the story. *Negeri Lima Menara*, overall, was telling the story of life in reaching successes. The novel tells the story of his life through the “*Negeri Lima Menara*”. It is not surprising that the viewpoint of the author here as the first-person perspective as well as a narrator whose story is not far from his life experience. In this novel, the character of Alif uses pronouns like "*aku, amak, kawanku, ayahku, diari - diariku, bulu kudukku*, and so forth" it is to strengthen its role as the first person.

3. Characterization.

There are five major characters played in this novel. Characterization becomes one of the strengths from this novel because without a strong character of each character, the story would not have the impression for the reader. Some important characters make the story more interesting. First is Alif. Alif is an obedient child “*selama ini saya anak penurut*” (Fuadi, 2010:11). Alif as the main character has a very important role on the course of the story. At the beginning of the story he was a shy village boy, quiet and less confident. But Alif is a good figure and obedient to his parents. Alif always remembers the words spoken by his mother that “*Mempunyai anak sholeh dan berbakti merupakan sebuah warisan yang*

tak ternilai, karena dapat mendoakan orang tuanya mana kala sudah tiada". After staying in PM, Alif's character has changed. Now, Alif is a figure who is really taking serious in achieving his goals.

The changes of the main character here make the story of *Negeri Lima Menara* has a worthy value that can be taken by the reader. Alif's character here is very strong as the one who sets up the story and as the center of the main core. Alif is a figure with persistent and never give up. As a Moslem, Alif strongly believes in the power of God to guide his steps. This suggests that the novel *Negeri Lima Menara* has a very strong religious value in building good characters. The next character is the other member of Sahibul Menara. First is Dulmajid. Dulmajid is an independent boy, he says "*Tentu saja saya datang sendiri*" (Fuadi, 2010: 27). He also a honest, a stubborn boy, and a loyal friend as Alif said "*Aku menyadari dia orang paling jujur, paling keras, tapi juga paling setia kawan yang aku kenal.*" (Fuadi, 2010: 6).

The other character is Raja. Raja comes from Medan. His characters are confident, expressive and never give up. Those can be shown on page 44 of the novel "*Raja Lubis yang duduk di meja paling depan maju*" then on page 108, he was so expressive "*Tampak mengayun-ayunkan tinjunya di udara sambil berteriak "Allahu Akbar!"*". Like this statement, "*Jangan. Kita coba dulu. Aku saja yang maju duluan*" (Fuadi, 2010: 124). It shows that Dulmajid never gives up.

Next character is Atang. He comes from Bandung. Atang is a Good boy and proper appointment shows on this statement “*Sesuai Janji, Atang yang membayari ongkos*” (Fuadi, 2010: 221) and also “*Aku bersyukur sekali mempunyai teman-teman yang baik dan tersebar di beberapa kota seperti Atang dan Said.*” (Fuadi, 2010: 226).

The next Sahibul Menara is Said. He is kind and a motivator, “*...senyum dan cerita yang mengobarkan semangat*” (Fuadi, 2010: 45). He is also a character who thinks adults. We can see on page 156 “*Perawakan yang seperti orang tua dan cara berpikirnya yang dewasa membuat kami menerimanya sebagai yang terdepan*”. Moreover, Said is a man who took the goodness and the lessons of an incident, shown on his statement on page 156 “*Aku sendiri mengagumi caranya melihat segala sesuatu dengan positif*”.

The last Sahibul Menara is Baso. He comes from Gowa. He is very disciplined, diligent, and earnest. We can see on page 92 “*Dia begitu disiplin menyediakan waktu untuk membaca buku favoritnya*”, and “*Baso anak paling rajin di antara kami*” and also on page 357 “*Hampir setiap waktu kami melihat Baso membaca buku pelajaran dan Al-Quran dengan sungguh-sungguh*” Baso is also a quiet, shy and closed shown on this statement, “*Selama ini memang Baso lah kawan kami yang paling pendiam, pemalu dan tertutup*” (Fuadi, 2010: 359).

The next important character is Amak, Alif’s mother. She is a friendly middle aged woman. It is shown on page 6, “*Mukanya selalu*

mengibarkan senyum ke siapa saja". She is also willing to sacrifice and care about the fate of Muslims. It had been proven on page 6 and 7; "*Amak terpaksa menjadi guru sukarela yang hanya dibayar dengan beras selama 7 tahun*" and "*Bagaimana nasib umat Islam nanti?*". Furthermore, Amak is a mother who is consistent with her decision. It can be seen on page 9; "*Pokoknya Amak tidak rela waang masuk SMA!*".

Next is the character of Alif's father, a middle-aged man who defends the truth and can be trusted. We can see on page 20, "*Mungkin naluri kebapakannya tersengat untuk membela anak dan sekaligus membela dirinya sendiri*" and on page 95, "*Amanat dari jamaah surau kami untuk membeli seekor sapi untuk kurban Idul Adha minggu depan telah ditunaikan Ayah*".

The additional character such as Randai, Tyson, kak Iskandar, Ustad Salman, Ustad Torik and Kiai Rais also have an important role to complete the storyline. Their characters are mostly as a religious teacher of Alif and his friends to help them realize the ideals based on the value of Islam religion.

The last strength comes from the extrinsic element, that is, the common values inside "*Negeri Lima Menara*". From the extrinsic elements, this novel has the strength in conveying the message properly and appropriately especially among students and all young people. The message is that in the pursuit of ideals and their dreams, not everything goes according to what we have planned but it all goes hand in hand how

we resolve the obstacles that come off and also to get reach, we have to sacrifice something.

On the other hand, the values of *Negeri Lima Menara* are Divinity value, Moral value, social value, economic value, culture value, and religious value.

1. Divinity Value

There are so many values of divinity inside the novel, including the equality of human being.

2. Moral Value

The moral values in this novel are shown by the togetherness of Sahibul Menara in facing all things to work together and never give up.

3. Social value

At the boarding school life, they do not have to be selfish, but help each other, give priority to solidarity.

4. Economic value

The economic value in *Negeri Lima Menara* is that the teachers at Pondok Madani are not asked to be paid, they are sincere educating students because of The God, as well as students in Pondok Madani are many shortcomings financially but they still could go on study there.

5. Cultural value

There is a Minangkabau culture that Boy and his father have never hugged in Minangkabau society. It is shown on page 38, “*Di kampungku memang tidak ada budaya berangkulan anak laki-laki dan seorang ayah*”.

6. Religious value

This novel tells a story of a boarding school life, that is, always teaching a religious value, ranging from sincerity, honesty, discipline, etc. For example, on page 113 there are a statement “*Bacalah Al-Quran dan hadits dengan mata hati kalian...*”

3.2 The weaknesses of Ahmad Fuadi’s Novel *Negeri Lima Menara*

Although *Negeri Lima Menara* has a number of strengths, there are also some weaknesses. There are some point that shown the weakness of the novel, such as plot and Language style.

1. Plot.

The plot of *Negeri Lima Menara* is foward and backward. At the beginning of the story is told in the present there is a time when Alif and his friends succeed and working abroad. After that, the plot retreats back to the past that is where Alif and his friends live a life in PM. After that, the middle of the story, the

plot moves forward again when Alif is on an airplane heading to London to meet his friends there. Then after that, the storyline goes back to continue the story backwards in PM. Then it moves forward again until the end of their meeting in London. I think the storyline that is mixed like that can make the reader confused. The concentration of the readers can split abruptly when the storyline back forward or backward. In this novel, the plots moving forward reappear suddenly in the middle of the story. It is certainly surprising because after reading half over the storyline, the author raises the storyline is a bit far from the groove associated advanced earlier.

2. Language style.

The language style used by the author, among others, is figure of speech. In this case, the use of figure of speech is very little that makes the story seem boring. At the beginning of the story, the author writes too many things that are not important and too long, so the *Negeri Lima Menara* novel seems boring because it is too long and not a lot of important things that need to be delivered.

The Language styles that are used by Fuadi are personification, metaphor, and hiperbole. The personification on page 1 that is “*Hawa dingin segera menjalari wajah dan lengan kananku*”. Metaphor, for example, “*Matahari sore menggantung condong ke barat berbentuk piring putih susu*” (*Negeri Lima Menara*, page 1). For the Hiperbole, on page 23 that is “*Laut boleh tenang, tapi perutku masih terus begulung-gulung seperti ombak badai*”.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Negeri Lima Menara novel is one of the greatest trilogy novels by Ahmad Fuadi. *Negeri Lima Menara* is a religious and education novel that has a motivation to the readers. This novel comes from the real life of the author. So, the things that happen in this story are not far from the daily life. The story tells us how a simple slogan “*Man Jadda Wa Jadda*” can make the six boys successful in the future.

This novel has some strengths that make it a good to read. The strengths inside the novel are theme, point of view, characters, characterization, and values. The various themes such as religious teaching and education inside the story bring the readers to experience many situations and expressions. The first person point of view makes the readers feel as Alif does. It is also the figure of the Author itself.

So, the readers do not only feel as Alif but also the author does too. The characterization inside the story is so strong to build up the plot and good story.

Novel *Negeri Lima Menara* also has some weaknesses. Some weaknesses that disturb the readers are when the following story such as using of language style that can make them feels bored and may be not to read anymore. Another weakness is the plot. The jumping plot of this novel also makes the concentration of the reader become fragmented. Even though there are the weaknesses, this novel is worth reading. *Negeri Lima Menara* novel was recommended to be read by people, especially, for young people. This novel is very inspiring and motivating to read. *Negeri Lima Menara* builds a good dream and success, but it is still related to the religious line. After all, by reading this novel the readers will experience many spirits and believe that could happen in life.

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