

MORAL AND CULTURAL VALUES REFLECTED IN THE NOVEL *PERGI* BY TERE LIYE

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Abstract

Tere Liye is one of Indonesia's most prolific literary figures, whose works are rich in life values that remain relevant to readers. The novel "Pergi" (2018) is a sequel to "Pulang" (2015), narrating the adventures of the main character Bujang in the world of cross-border shadow economies. Beneath its action and adventure narrative, the novel holds a wealth of moral and cultural values worthy of scholarly examination. This study aims to describe and analyze the moral and cultural values contained in the novel *Pergi* by Tere Liye. The method employed is descriptive qualitative with a content analysis approach. Data were collected through a read-and-note technique from the novel's text as the primary source, supported by scientific journals and reference books as secondary sources. The findings reveal that *Pergi* contains moral values encompassing the relationship between humans and themselves (honesty, courage, responsibility), the relationship between humans and others (loyalty, compassion, cooperation), and the relationship between human and God (tawakkul, gratitude) the cultural values identified include Malay-Minangkabau cultural values reflected through Bujang's family background, the values of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) and togetherness, as well as a representation of multicultural values mirrored in settings spread across various countries. This study concludes that *Pergi* is not merely a work of entertainment, but rather a medium for the transmission of rich moral and cultural values to its readers.

Keywords: moral values, cultural values, novel *Pergi*, Tere Liye, literary analysis.

Abstrak

Tere Liye adalah salah satu tokoh sastra Indonesia yang paling produktif, yang karyanya kaya akan nilai-nilai kehidupan yang tetap relevan bagi para pembaca. Novel "Pergi" (2018) merupakan sekuel dari "Pulang" (2015), yang mengisahkan petualangan tokoh utama Bujang di dunia ekonomi gelap lintas batas. Di balik narasi aksi dan petualangannya, novel ini menyimpan kekayaan nilai-nilai moral dan budaya yang layak untuk ditelaah secara akademis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis nilai-nilai moral dan budaya yang terkandung dalam novel *Pergi* karya Tere Liye. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan analisis isi. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik membaca dan mencatat dari teks novel sebagai sumber primer, yang didukung oleh jurnal ilmiah dan buku referensi sebagai sumber sekunder. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa novel *Pergi* mengandung nilai-nilai moral yang mencakup hubungan antara manusia dengan dirinya sendiri (kejujuran, keberanian, tanggung jawab), hubungan antara manusia dengan sesama (kesetiaan, belas kasih, kerja sama), dan hubungan antara manusia dengan Tuhan (tawakkal, rasa syukur). Nilai-nilai budaya yang teridentifikasi meliputi nilai-nilai budaya

Melayu-Minangkabau yang tercermin melalui latar belakang keluarga Bujang, nilai-nilai gotong royong dan kebersamaan, serta representasi nilai-nilai multikultural yang tercermin dalam latar cerita yang tersebar di berbagai negara. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa *Pergi* bukan sekadar karya hiburan, melainkan sarana penyampaian nilai-nilai moral dan budaya yang kaya kepada para pembacanya.

Kata kunci: nilai-nilai moral, nilai-nilai budaya, novel Pergi, Tere Liye, analisis sastra.

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INTRODUCTION

Literary works are among the most effective media for reflecting the values of human life. Through fiction, authors not only entertain readers but also construct moral, social, and cultural discourses that can shape readers' perspectives on the world. This is in line with Nurgiyantoro (2018, p. 3), who argues that literature is an expression of life's problems, philosophy, and psychology that embodies aesthetic, moral, and humanitarian values.

In Indonesia, the development of modern literature has been marked by the emergence of numerous popular authors whose works are not only commercially successful but also rich in moral and cultural messages. One of the most influential figures is Tere Liye, the pen name of Darwis, a novelist from Lahat, South Sumatra, born on May 21, 1979. His literary works are widely recognized for presenting compelling narratives while conveying profound moral and cultural values. From the *Si Anak Hebat* series to *Hujan*, *Rindu*, *Pulang*, and *Pergi*, Tere Liye consistently portrays characters who embody the values and identity of the Indonesian people.

The novel *Pergi* was first published by Republika in 2018 as the direct sequel to the novel *Pulang* (2015). Together with *Pulang-Pergi* (2021), these novels form a trilogy that chronicles the life journey of Bujang, a young man from Sumatra who rises to become the leader of the largest shadow economy family in Southeast Asia. Specifically, *Pergi* depicts the period in which Bujang, now serving as the new Tauke Besar, succeeds the former leader and faces threats from international criminal clans

operating across several countries, including Mexico, Singapore, Japan, Russia, Spain, Macau, and Hong Kong (Tere Liye, 2018, p. 4).

Although categorized as an action-adventure novel, *Pergi* contains deeper layers of meaning. Behind every thrilling battle and pursuit, the novel conveys moral values that are transmitted organically through the dialogues among the characters, the protagonist's actions, and the internal conflicts experienced by Bujang. Furthermore, the Malay-Minangkabau cultural background strongly embedded in the protagonist's character, together with his encounters with diverse cultures throughout his journey, enriches the novel with cultural dimensions worthy of academic investigation.

The study of moral and cultural values in literary works is of considerable significance. First, from the perspective of character education, analyzing the values embedded in literary works can enrich teaching materials and serve as an effective medium for instilling noble values in younger generations. Second, from the perspective of library and information science, a comprehensive understanding of the content of literary works is essential for the processes of selection, organization, and dissemination of literary information. Librarians and information professionals need to understand the substance of literary works to recommend appropriate reading materials that meet the needs of library users.

Several previous studies have examined the works of Tere Liye from various perspectives. However, research specifically focusing on the moral and cultural values in the novel *Pergi* remains very limited. Most existing studies have concentrated on the novels *Pulang*, *Selamat Tinggal*, or other novels in the *Si Anak Hebat* series. This research gap provides the foundation for the present study to contribute new and relevant academic insights.

Morality in literary works is one of the most frequently examined aspects of literary criticism. According to Nurgiyantoro (2018, p. 429), morality refers to the

message that an author intends to convey to readers. It represents the meaning embedded in a story and is invariably associated with noble human values.

Furthermore, Nurgiyantoro classifies moral values in literary works into three major categories: (1) the relationship between human beings and themselves, which includes values such as courage, honesty, responsibility, and personal integrity; (2) the relationship between human beings and others within a social context, encompassing affection, loyalty, compassion, and solidarity; and (3) the relationship between human beings and God, which includes religious values such as trust in God (*tawakkal*), gratitude, and submission to the Almighty.

Meanwhile, Kenny, as cited in Nurgiyantoro (2018), distinguishes morality as a didactic suggestion—that is, the explicit or implicit lessons conveyed by the author to readers—from the theme of a story. While the theme concerns the central issue addressed in a novel, morality refers to the values derived from that issue as lessons applicable to real life.

Within the context of Indonesian popular literature, Damono (2018, p. 5) argues that literary works emerging from a particular social context inevitably embody values rooted in the social system of the community from which they originate. Therefore, the novel *Pergi*, written by an author with a Malay–Minangkabau cultural background, can be expected to contain moral values that reflect this cultural system.

Koentjaraningrat (2015) defines cultural values as abstract conceptions shared by the majority of members of a society regarding what they consider to be highly valuable in life. Cultural values constitute the deepest layer of culture and serve as guidelines and motivating forces for human behavior in everyday life (Ratna, 2011, p. 32).

In literary studies, cultural values can be identified through both the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of literary works. The intrinsic elements include:

1. Setting, which reflects the culture of a particular society;

2. Characterization, which illustrates how characters are shaped by their cultural backgrounds; and
3. Dialogue, which reflects specific cultural norms.

From an extrinsic perspective, the author's cultural background often influences the cultural nuances presented in the literary work.

From the perspective of literary anthropology, literature serves as a medium for identifying cultural values in the novel *Pergi*. As explained by Ratna (2011, p. 32), this approach views literary works as cultural documents that record aspects of human life within their socio-cultural contexts. Literary works do not emerge in isolation; rather, they develop within society and reflect the cultural values practiced by the communities in which they are created.

Character analysis is one of the most fundamental methods in the study of prose fiction. Abrams, as cited in Nurgiyantoro (2018), classifies characters according to their roles in the story (protagonists and antagonists), their characterization (flat/simple and round/complex characters), and their development (static and dynamic characters). Character analysis is essential because the moral and cultural values in a novel are primarily conveyed through the characters' actions, speech, and decisions.

In the novel *Pergi*, Bujang, the protagonist, is portrayed as a complex and dynamic character. He undergoes a significant transformation from a mere "enforcer" to a responsible leader. This character development becomes the vehicle through which Tere Liye conveys various moral and cultural messages to readers.

In addition to moral and cultural values, the novel also employs various figures of speech to strengthen its literary expression.

1. Metaphor

According to Tarigan (2015), metaphor is a figure of speech that directly compares two different things without using comparative words. It is employed to reinforce meaning and create a deeper impression on readers.

2. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figure of speech characterized by deliberate exaggeration to produce a particular effect. It is frequently used to enhance the dramatic impact of a literary work (Tarigan, 2015).

3. Personification

Personification is a figure of speech that attributes human characteristics to inanimate objects or abstract entities. Its function is to create more vivid and imaginative descriptions (Tarigan, 2015).

4. Communicative Style (First-Person Point of View)

Nurgiyantoro (2018) states that the first-person point of view positions the character "I" as the narrator who directly recounts the events of the story.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using the descriptive method. Qualitative research was chosen because the objective of this study is to understand meanings, values, and interpretative phenomena rather than to measure or statistically test hypotheses.

The study adopted a content analysis approach, as it is appropriate for systematically describing and analyzing the content of the novel in order to identify patterns of moral and cultural values embedded within the text. Content analysis enables researchers to generate replicable and valid inferences while considering the context in which the data occur (see Moleong, 2017, p. 6; Fiantika, 2022, p. 64).

The data sources consisted of two categories:

1. Primary data: the text of the novel *Pergi* by Tere Liye, published by Republika Penerbit in 2018. The novel comprises 31 chapters and one epilogue, totaling approximately 444 pages. The primary data consist of dialogues, narrative passages, and descriptions containing moral and cultural values.
2. Secondary data: supporting sources, including relevant scholarly journal articles, literary theory books, and academic publications related to moral and cultural value analysis.

Data Collection Technique

The data were collected using the reading-and-note-taking technique through the following procedures:

1. Reading the novel thoroughly;
2. Identifying and marking text segments containing indicators of moral and cultural values;
3. Recording relevant quotations along with their page numbers and contextual information; and
4. Classifying the data according to the categories of moral and cultural values proposed by Nurgiyantoro (2018) and Koentjaraningrat (2015).

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages:

1. Data Reduction: Quotations extracted from the novel were selected, organized, and focused according to the categories of moral and cultural values relevant to the objectives of the study.

2. Data Display: The reduced data were presented in the form of systematic descriptive narratives organized according to each value category and supported by classification tables to facilitate interpretation.
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Based on the presented data, conclusions were drawn regarding the dominant moral and cultural values found in the novel and the ways in which these values are conveyed to readers.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed theoretical triangulation, utilizing multiple theoretical perspectives, particularly those proposed by Nurgiyantoro, Koentjaraningrat, and Ratna. The use of multiple theoretical frameworks ensures that the interpretation of the data is comprehensive, balanced, and academically rigorous.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The storyline of the novel *Pergi* begins with Bujang, now known as Agam, who has assumed the position of Tauke Besar following the death of his predecessor. In his new role, he faces threats from various factions, including international shadow economy clans that refuse to acknowledge his leadership, as well as former enemies seeking opportunities to destroy the Tong family (Ai Said, 2026).

The cover design of *Pergi* is simple yet highly symbolic. It depicts a vast green grassland, creating an impression of tranquility, freedom, and harmony with nature. In the center of the field stretches a long road extending into the distance, symbolizing life's journey, the search for purpose, and the protagonist's adventure. The title *Pergi* appears prominently in large, bold letters at the center of the cover, while the author's name, Tere Liye, is placed at the bottom. This visual composition reflects the themes of departure, isolation, and personal journey that characterize the novel.

A semiotic analysis of the novel cover reveals rich symbolic meanings. The silhouette of a solitary figure standing within a circle of light represents Bujang's condition as a leader who, despite reaching the highest position of power, remains vulnerable and isolated. The dominant use of dark colors, particularly black, contrasted with a single source of light, symbolizes the struggle between darkness—the world of the shadow economy—and hope, represented by the moral values that Bujang continues to uphold. The bold, uppercase typography of the title *Pergi* conveys determination and certainty, suggesting that the "departure" referred to in the title is not an escape but a carefully considered journey.

From the perspective of cultural values, the cover reflects a universal modern aesthetic while simultaneously suggesting Malay–Minangkabau cultural values. The protagonist's upright and dignified posture symbolizes the concept of *marwah* (honor and dignity), which occupies a central position in Malay–Minangkabau culture.

Character Analysis

The novel features nine principal characters: Bujang (Agam), Salonga, Kiko, Yuki, White, Master Dragon, Tauke Imam, Maria, and Otets. Their characteristics and narrative roles are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Character Analysis

Character	Personality Traits	Role
Bujang	Brave, intelligent, responsible	Main protagonist and leader of the Tong family
Salonga	Loyal, courageous, self-sacrificing	Bujang's close companion
Kiko	Critical, intelligent, professional	Team member

Yuki	Calm, patient, wise	Team member
White	Disciplined, meticulous, strategic	Strategic advisor
Master Dragon	Wise, experienced	Mentor
Tauke Imam	Religious, wise	Moral guide
Maria	Resilient, confident	Important female character
Otets	Firm, authoritative	Influential character

Moral Values in the Novel *Pergi*

The classification of moral values identified in the novel is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Classification of Moral Values in the Novel *Pergi*

Category	Moral Value	Frequency	Example Chapters
Human–Self	Courage	High	Chapters 3, 8, 15, 22
Human–Self	Honesty	Moderate	Chapters 5, 12, 25
Human–Self	Responsibility	High	Chapters 1, 7, 18, 29
Human–Self	Self-control	Moderate	Chapters 9, 16, 24
Human–Others	Loyalty	High	Chapters 2, 6, 14, 20
Human–Others	Solidarity	Moderate	Chapters 10, 17, 26

Human–Others	Cooperation	High	Chapters 4, 11, 19, 28
Human–God	Trust in God (<i>Tawakkal</i>)	Moderate	Chapters 13, 21, 30
Human–God	Gratitude	Low	Chapter 7 and Epilogue

Table 2 indicates that four moral values occur with high frequency, namely courage, responsibility, loyalty, and cooperation. Four additional values appear with moderate frequency, namely honesty, self-control, solidarity, and trust in God (*tawakkal*). Gratitude represents the least frequently occurring moral value in the novel.

Cultural Values in the Novel *Pergi*

The cultural values identified in the novel are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Cultural Values in the Novel *Pergi*

Cultural Category	Identified Value	Representation in the Novel
Malay–Minangkabau	<i>Marwah</i> (Honor and Dignity)	Protection of the Tong family
Malay–Minangkabau	Respect for Elders	Relationship between Bujang and Master Dragon
Multicultural	Professionalism	Collaboration among team members from different ethnicities and countries

Multicultural	Tolerance	Harmonious interaction without culturally based conflict
Indonesian	Mutual Cooperation (<i>Gotong Royong</i>)	Teamwork in confronting various threats

The findings demonstrate that the author integrates local, national, and multicultural values throughout the novel. Traditional Malay–Minangkabau values, particularly respect for elders and the preservation of family honor, remain central to the narrative. At the national level, the uniquely Indonesian value of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) is prominently portrayed through the collective efforts of the characters in overcoming various challenges.

Analysis of Language Style in the Novel *Pergi*

The most prominent stylistic feature in the novel is the use of metaphor, particularly through the expression *shadow economy*, which represents the hidden world of illegal business operations and underground networks of power. This metaphor functions not merely as the setting of the story but also as a symbol of concealed aspects of human life characterized by conflict, power struggles, and moral dilemmas. Through this metaphorical expression, readers gain a deeper understanding of the complex world navigated by the protagonist.

Hyperbole is frequently employed to intensify the dramatic effect of action sequences and conflicts. Dangerous situations, battles, and life-threatening encounters are often described using deliberate exaggeration, thereby heightening suspense and capturing readers' attention. The use of hyperbole contributes to the dynamic atmosphere of the story and reinforces the adventurous nature that characterizes the novel.

The novel also exhibits a communicative writing style, reflected in Tere Liye's straightforward and accessible diction. The author's simple vocabulary enables

readers from diverse backgrounds to easily understand the story. During action scenes, Tere Liye predominantly employs short sentences that create a rapid and suspenseful rhythm. In contrast, reflective passages are presented through longer and more descriptive sentences, allowing readers to understand the protagonist's thoughts and emotions more profoundly. This variation in sentence structure creates a dynamic narrative flow that keeps readers engaged throughout the novel.

First-Person Narrative Technique

The novel *Pergi* employs a first-person narrative point of view, with Bujang serving as the principal narrator through the use of the pronoun "I." This narrative technique establishes a close emotional connection between readers and the protagonist because his experiences, conflicts, reflections, and emotions are conveyed directly from his personal perspective.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions can be drawn.

1. The dominant moral values in the novel *Pergi* are those concerning the relationship between human beings and themselves, particularly courage and responsibility, as well as the relationship between human beings and others, especially loyalty and cooperation. In contrast, moral values related to the relationship between human beings and God appear with the lowest frequency, with gratitude being the least represented.
2. The cultural values portrayed in *Pergi* include Malay–Minangkabau values such as *marwah* (honor and dignity), family solidarity, and respect for elders. Multicultural values are reflected through professionalism and tolerance, while Indonesian national culture is represented by the value of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation).

3. The novel employs a communicative writing style and a first-person narrative perspective, enabling its moral and cultural values to be conveyed effectively and making them more readily accepted and appreciated by readers.

Saran-Saran

1. Untuk peneliti selanjutnya, penelitian ini dapat dikembangkan dengan menggunakan pendekatan yang berbeda, seperti pendekatan psikologi sastra
2. Untuk dunia pendidikan, novel ini dapat dipertimbangkan sebagai bahan ajar sastra, khususnya dalam pembelajaran nilai karakter dan kebangsaan
3. Bagi perpustakaan, agar menempatkan karya-karya Tere Liye
4. Untuk pengarang, yang berkaitan dengan manusia-Tuhan, lebih ditonjolkan dalam karya-karya berikutnya.

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