Cultural Education Values of Canting by Arswendo Atmowiloto and Canting by Fissilmi Hamida

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Abstract

This research aims to explain and describe the values of cultural education contained in the Canting novel by Arswendo Atmowiloto and the Canting novel by Fissilmi Hamida. This research is a qualitative descriptive research with all citations related to the purpose of the research as the object of research. The data were collected using content analysis. They were then analyzed using interactive analysis techniques. The results of the analysis obtained from this research are Canting novels, both by Arswendo Atmowiloto and by Fissilmi Hamida, have similar educational values that teach to always obey and respect culture in terms of three elements, namely (1) rules in life related to marriage and the position of women, (2) action activities related to language patterns, performing traditional ceremonies and accepting fate, and (3) human products including canting and clothing used by Javanese for marriage. The difference is that Arswendo Atmowiloto’s Canting presents the priyayi culture which has a tradition of not saying much, but actively holding meetings to develop Javanese culture. Meanwhile, in the Canting novel by Fissilmi Hamida, it explains that various batik motifs from Yogyakarta and gending kodhok ngorek are the results of human works.

Keywords: Cultural Education Value; Novel; Literature

Introduction

Educational values are teaching values that can shape human characters. This was confirmed by Suyitno (2014: 40) by stating that educational values are the values that allow the character building. This is due to the fact that basically educating means building character. The students’ experience is embodied as experiences relating to the text because through a text, it allows a change in attitude and cultural meaning. Thus, education oriented towards character building can be realized through optimizing the role of literary works (Septiningsih, 2019).

The existence of literature indirectly supports the role of national education in Indonesia, which is used as a means of not only transfer of knowledge, but also civilization (Azra in Suyitno, 2014: 40). This is because literary works can be seen as culture in action (Valdes, 1986: 137). It means that literary works are used as a means to display social and cultural life models of a society represented in the attitudes and behaviors of the characters with the characters to be the example (Nurgiyantoro, 2013: 440-441). This can
be observed through three cultural elements as follows: (1) complexity of ideas, values, norms, and regulations; (2) complexity of activities and human patterned actions in society, and (3) human products (Koentraningrat, 2009: 150).

Regarding the values of cultural education contained in literary works, they are also a reflection of the reality of values in community life that aim to educate the reader to become a virtuous person. This is because the traditional or cultural values contained therein are also related to praiseworthy or despicable deeds, views of human life embraced or shunned, and things upheld (Purwaningtyastuti et al., 2014: 30). Therefore, cultural values are considered valuable, even so important that they are used as guidelines in life (Koentjaraningrat, 2009: 153)

like the Canting novel by Arswendo Atmowiloto and Canting by Fissilmi Hamida. Both novels introduce Java about its traditions, regions, arts, especially about the world of batik, and batik equipment especially canting (made of copper and bamboo for its handle) displayed as cultural symbols. This certainly can be used as an investment in the values of cultural education, especially in the practice of character education.

The Canting novel by Arswendo Atmowiloto tells the life of a priyayi (aristocratic) family in Solo, Central Java at the beginning of independence (starting from the Post-Revolutionary Independence, 1965 event, post 1965) Ni, the youngest of Sestrokusuman's descendants, was still trying to pursue a family batik business experiencing a setback even though she had to deal with Mr. Bei, the aristocrat who became her father, Mrs. Bei, a former batik worker who became her mother, and her five successful siblings. In the end, canting, Ngabean batik stamp cannot survive because it loses competitiveness with printing batik using more modern technology (Atmowiloto, 2017: 369).

Meanwhile, the Canting novel by Fissilmi Hamida with a cultural background in Yogyakarta, Central Java, tells of various problems experienced by Sekar (a batik worker) and Hadi (the employer) in undergoing their household. There were various trials and temptations from both the family and third person. However, in the end, Sekar realized that just like the canting she was holding and the white cloth lying in front of her, she was like a canting who wanted to paint beauty on it so is this life. There are many ways to be happy (Hamida, 2018: 17).

The values of education, especially regarding culture, are an interesting topic to discuss. In previous studies, Darojat (2019: 700) said the values of moral, customs or traditions, religion, and heroics education contained in Ki Brodonolo folklore are beneficial for not only the people of Karangkembang Village, Alian District, Kebumen Regency, but also the educational environment especially teachers and students in learning literature in junior high schools. Darojah (2018: 69) also states the same thing that innovative teaching materials, such as the local culture of Pardikan Cahyana, can motivate fifth-grade students in elementary schools to value fiction and make them more actively involved in the learning process.

Based on the above background, this research aims to explain and describe the values of cultural education contained in Arswendo Atmowiloto's Canting novel and Fissilmi Hamida's Canting novel. By describing and explaining the educational values full of cultural content, it is expected to motivate readers' interest in choosing educative reading, especially for the use of character education practices.

**Method**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study. Moleong (2012: 6) explains that qualitative research is a research aimed at understanding the phenomena experienced by research subjects holistically and descriptively in the form of words and language. The phenomena in question are about the values of cultural education contained in the Canting novel by Arswendo Atmowiloto and the Canting novel by Fissilmi Hamida. The object of the research was in the form of all excerpts and words related to the
purpose of the research. The data collection technique used to examine the contents of the document (the two *Canting* novels) was content analysis (Warsiman, 2016: 78). The data were analyzed using interactive analysis techniques consisting of four parts, namely (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data presentation, and (4) drawing conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 2007: 16).

**Result and Discussion**

The discussion in this research focuses on the values of cultural education contained in the two *Canting* novels. The values of cultural education contained in the *Canting* novel by Arswendo Atmowiloto can be seen from the attitude of the figure who respects the prevailing customs seen from the load of three aristocrats’ cultural elements, namely (1) rules in life related to the marriage of aristocratic class, tradition of not saying much, and position women in the aristocrat's life, (2) action activities related to the activity of holding meetings to develop Javanese culture, language patterns among aristocrats, performing various traditional ceremonies, and accepting fate, and (3) human products including *canting* and clothing used by Javanese for marriage.

Meanwhile, the cultural education values of Fissilmi Hamida's *Canting* also teach adherence to customs viewed from three cultural elements, namely (1) the rules of life related to *wong gedhe* (*people having a high position*) marriages and the position of women, (2) action activities related to language patterns, conducting traditional marriage ceremonies, and accepting fate, (3) human products including canting and clothing used by Javanese for marriage, Yogyakarta batik motifs, and *gende ngorek kodhok*. The values of cultural education of Arswendo Atmowiloto’s *Canting* and Fissilmi Hamida’ *Canting* can be explained as follows.

**a. Values of Cultural Education in the Canting Novel by Arswendo Atmowiloto**

The values of traditional or cultural education express praiseworthy or despicable deeds, views of human life embraced or shunned, and things upheld (Purwaningtyastuti, 2014: 30). These values can be seen from three cultural elements, namely as a complex of ideas, values, norms, and regulations; as complex activities and patterned actions of humans in society, and human products (Koentjaraningrat, 2009: 150).

The prominent value of students in Arswendo's *Canting* novel lies in the awareness that we must obey the applicable traditional rules in people's lives. Basically, Javanese hold the principle of harmony or balance. This is also the basis for the rules of marriage for an aristocrat(nobleman). For a man of the aristocratic class, he must marry an aristocratic woman too. If he violates the rule, he must be ready to take the risk, including being considered as a weirdo. This is seen in the following excerpt.

“You know. I have been considered *aeng* since marrying your mother-in-law. Unusual. I left the house when your mother just passed away. What kind of Ngabehi am I? But, once again, yes this is how it is. It turned out that it was not my duty to maintain harmony. My duty is to restore the possibility of disharmony.” (Atmowiloto, 2017: 353-354)

In addition, the novel also reminds that as younger people, they must be sensitive in positioning themselves. For Javanese people, behaving rudely means that they are presumably ignorant of etiquette or ethics, especially when talking to the older. Talking a lot can be considered as not knowing tradition. This is seen in the following excerpt.

But anyone who hears can feel that saying a lot of nonsense addressed to a younger person has quite a heavy meaning. It means that he is considered impolite. Not
Javanese women work hard in their life. In the Canting novel, there is a shift in the role of culture because an aristocrat who acts as a husband is described as someone who is very comfortable with his life because he does not have to work. This is due to the old tradition of the Solo area that women were more instrumental in earning a living to meet their daily needs, for example working in the Klewer market. The husband only accepted the results. This is contained in the following excerpt.

But in Klewer Market? There are Chinese, students, aristocrats. However, women still play a role. Who controls the whole market. This is our real economic error. Men who have no skills, just because they have power, try to control. Let it be. Trust it to women. They can manage better. Market is indeed the world of women. If you are not supple, you won't make it. Women are more patient, so they can control themselves better. (Atmowiloto, 2017: 85)

The Canting novel also makes people aware that humans have a role as a cultural preserver. In addition, they must also be sensitive to the condition of cultural development that is increasingly declining by finding solutions to overcome this problem, for example, by holding meetings every Friday Kliwon to discuss efforts to develop Javanese culture. This is seen in the following excerpt.

The idea of meeting every Friday Kliwon started from Ndalem Tumenggungan. Kanjeng Raden Tumenggung Sosrodiningrat gathered his relatives every 35 days, right on Friday Kliwon, to discuss Javanese culture. This idea originated from the concern of KRT Sesrodiningrat who saw Javanese culture, especially arts, experiencing a decline. Then, he tried to find a way out by holding a flexible meeting, which is called a sarasehan (casual meeting). (Atmowiloto, 2017: 16)

Another educational value in Arswendo’s Canting is that the Javanese have a unique pattern or ethics in language because there are levels in it. Besides being adjusted to the interlocutor (see age), the use of the language is also influenced by the degree or position in society. For example, the highest-level Javanese, krama inggil, is used by someone to another person with the higher level (degree) as the following excerpt.

Raden Ngabehi Sestrodiningrat looks older. Gold-plated eye glass handles do not add to his cheerful face. Meanwhile in the past, Darmasto was a family idol. The most handsome, obedient, smart in choosing a mate. His wife had more blue blood than he did. His wife's caste was still above his. Thus, Darmasto, a Ngabehi, speaks high level Javanese, krama inggil, to his wife. (Atmowiloto, 2017: 114)

Javanese customs and traditions are very complete depicted in the Canting novel. In this case, Arswendo carefully narrates matters relating to traditional ceremonies through the words of female figures (Mrs. Bei and Wening, daughters of the Ngabehans) who were very obedient to their traditions.
There are several ceremonies performed by the figures, which are related to the birth of babies such as *mitoni, procotan, brokohan, sepasar, and selapanan*. In addition, the funeral ceremony (*selamatan* (ceremonial meal) of three days, seven days, forty days, and so on).

*Mitoni* comes from the word *pitu* meaning seven. Therefore, this ceremony is carried out in the seventh month of pregnancy in the hope of pleading for God's safety and help for the baby and the mother so that everything during the labor runs smoothly. One of the dishes that must be present at the ceremony is ivory coconut to be painted by Kamajaya (male) and Dewi Ratih (female) as a symbol of the baby’s genital, as the following excerpt.

By the time the pregnancy reaches seven months of age, because this is the first child pregnancy, they should conduct *mitoni*, seven months of pregnancy. Wagiman dared himself to request ivory coconut to Mrs. Bei. Wagiman could buy in the market, but as suggested, he asked. (Atmowiloto, 2017: 130)

*Procotan* is a traditional ceremony performed when a baby is nine months old. *Procotan* is derived from the word *procot* meaning to escape. That is, this ceremony is carried out so that during labor, the mother can give birth easily and safely. This ceremony is usually carried out simply by using the *jenang* (porridge) *procot* or white porridge mixed with sweet potatoes. Meanwhile, *brokohan* is a *selamatan* ceremony for newborn children. There are various types of food to be prepared. One of them is *urap* rice. This is seen in the following excerpt.

“Ni is special. At birth, we didn't make *procotan*. Though *procotan* is to make the labor run smoothly because it is like *mrocot*, coming out quickly. But Ni didn't use white porridge mixed with sweet potatoes. She was just born. Also, when making *brokohan*, *urap* rice, everyone realized that there was a mistake. *Urap* rice should not have been be too spicy, because the newborn baby was a girl. But somehow, the *urap* was so spicy.” (Atmowiloto, 2017: 106)

*Sepasaran* is a traditional ceremony performed when a baby is five days old. At the age of five days, his/her hair is usually shaved for the first time. Meanwhile, the *selapanan* ceremony is a traditional ceremony that is usually performed when the baby is 35 days old. This is because 35 days is called *selapanan*. This ceremony is held to give a name to the baby and as a form of gratitude to God for the *momongan* (child) given to the mother.

The ceremony also runs like this now. The current *selapanan* ceremony also ended early. With praise, prayer, handshake, smile, and handshake. (Atmowiloto, 2017: 113)

Meanwhile, Javanese traditional ceremonies which are usually performed for people who have died are *selamatan* of seven days, forty days, and so on of the deceased. The ceremony is rationally carried out to pray for the spirits to go into the heaven faster and to avoid being considered as a weirdo because they obey the traditions of the ancestors. This is seen in the following excerpt.

“Wening can stay. At least until tomorrow morning. Is it okay, Ning?”
“Yes, Dad.”
“It’s just. Because you know what should be given to whom. Don’t miss it and for *selamatan* of three days, seven days, forty days, and so on. I trust you, Ning.” (Atmowiloto, 2017: 253)

Another educational value of Arswendo’s *Canting* novel relating to human products is presented by Arswendo through the narrative of a female character (Ni’s sister-in-law) who understands one of the
results of Javanese culture and is proud to introduce tools to make batik, especially various canting models with their uses. This is seen in the following excerpt.

Meanwhile, I know that canting has many models. There is canting cecek to make check or dots and rembyang, consecutive and rhythmic dots. There are canting klowongan to make circular or curved lines and canting sawutan to make galar or lines. (Atmowiloto, 2017: 314)

Through his Canting novel, Arswendo also reminds to love local cultural products more. This can be seen from Ni’s attitude who really loves her family batik business by trying to understand the making of batik from making patterns to the packaging process even though at first, he did not know anything about batik. This is seen in the following excerpt.

Making a pattern with a pencil, ngengrengi, drawing batik in parts that have been drawn with a pencil, which are then dyed, soaked in batik dye for a basic color. After the color turns blue, it is scraped, washed thoroughly, dried, drained, and blued. The stripes and dots are covered to avoid exposure of sogan-batik dye that turns brown when it is browned. Then, it is washed thoroughly, dried under the sun, given starch while being dried under the sun. Then, the cloth is folded, pressed in order to smooth the folds, rechecked, given a Canting stamp, put into a plastic bag, and set aside according to its price and type. (Atmowilto, 2017: 132)

Arswendo's Canting novel also reminds us that we must maintain our cultural identity by feeling pride in wearing local traditional clothing. This can be seen from the attitude of the Ismaya figure (Ngabehan's son) who continued to wear Javanese traditional clothes in his marriage as shown in the following excerpt.

... His busyness did not decrease when Ismaya became an engineer, and then married in the Purbyan church, the oldest and antique church in Solo. They continued to dress in Javanese and with the group, the priest came along, giving a speech in the middle. In the room between pendapa and ndalem.

b. Values of Cultural Education in Canting Novel by Fissilmi Hamida

The prominent educational value in Fissilmi’s Canting novel lies in the character of Hadi who has an awareness of not judging someone from his/her social status. On the other hand, he is also confronted with the reality of customary marriage rules for wong gedhe (people having a high position) who must still hold the principle of harmony, that is, highly-respected men must marry women who come from highly-respected families as well. If it is violated, they must be ready to take the risk even if it is used as a topic of discussion by others. This is seen in the following excerpt.

All his high school friends, college friends, colleagues, and family ask the same thing. Unfortunately, instead of saying goodbye because his proposal was accepted, some of the messengers were actually busy questioning his decision to marry his rewang (servant). A decision that is considered reckless by some of them. (Hamida, 2018: 47)

Fissilmi’s Canting novel also gives a reminder that as a woman, she has three irresistible positions. In Javanese traditions, women are referred to as wadon, wanito, and estri. This indeed also reminds us of the traditional role of women who only work in the domestic realm (home). This is seen in the following excerpt.
“In the Javanese culture, the woman has three predicates, wadon, wanito, and estri. Wadon is derived from the Kawi language, wadu which means kawula or servant. That is, she has indeed become her husband's servant,” explained the maid.

… Secondly, a woman is also called wanito, which means wani ditoto or wani noto. Wani ditoto or dare to be managed, meaning that the woman would later become a wife who is willing to be managed. Wanito also means wani noto or dare to manage. That is, if you later become a mother, you must also be responsible for managing or educating your children, certainly not alone. But together with your husband.

… “Estri is derived from the Kawi language which means panjurung or a supporter. It means that no matter how great a man is, behind him there must be the role of a wife who supports him,” said the maid. (Hamida, 2018: 15-16)

The educational value related to cultural activities is that Javanese women can also develop their potential in running a business while still upholding the values of their traditions. This can be seen from the attitude of the female figure in the novel who has a sense of pride in the local wisdom culture, especially various advices full of cultural values.

... On the other hand, Hadi must remain in Indonesia to run his business which is increasingly growing, including running a new business, a business of typical souvenir Yogyakarta in the form of t-shirts and accessories with Javanese proverb writing. Sekar initiated it. She wants to lift up the wisdom of Javanese culture in her business while hoping that these Javanese proverbs can be encouraging for anyone who reads them. (Hamida, 2018: 301)

Fissilmi’s Canting novel also teaches to adhere to traditions when holding a wedding reception by doing a Sungkeman procession. Sungkeman in Javanese culture has an important meaning as a form of gratitude to parents for contributing to giving birth and raising their children. This is seen in the following excerpt.

Sekar could not bear her tears pouring when gending ketawang mijil wigaringtyas was played along with the Sungkeman procession at a Javanese traditional wedding. She imagined her sacrifice, patience, all her pain and sincerity. Sekar reached for her fragile fingers and kissed them reverently. (Hamida, 2018: 72-73)

Ungah-unngguh is one of the characteristics of Indonesian people, especially the Javaneses. Therefore, the Javaneses always uphold morality or ethics. One of them is by paying attention to how to speak (pattern of speech) with an older person. This is evident in the female figure in the following excerpts from Fissilmi’s Canting novel.

“You are the servant at Mrs. Sundari's house, aren’t you? What do you want to marry Hadi?” said someone next to her while she was sorting vegetables at the Gentan market this morning. Sekar nodded politely. “Yes, Aunty. I,” she replied with a perfect unggah-unngguh (etiquette). (Hamida, 2018: 62-63)

Canting novel, full of Javanese culture, also introduces various human products such as tools for making batik, especially canting. Fissilmi is very careful in describing the cultural products physically, which of course aims to make the reader get a clear picture. This can be seen in the following excerpts.
Canting, a tool used to make batik. This tool has three parts, namely the handle or stem which is usually made of wood or bamboo, nyamplung or a place to store the liquid wax, which is usually made of copper, and the cucuk which is a part for the discharge of the liquid wax when it is etched to paint beauty on a cloth. (Hamida, 2018: 193)

It is one of the cultural and artistic heritage of Javanese tradition that is still preserved to date and is even used to accompany the wedding couple’s panggih (meeting), which can give a sacred nuance to anyone who hears, namely gending kodhok ngorek. This is seen in the following excerpt.

Gending kodhok ngorek is a Javanese song/smusical instrument that is specifically played to accompany the panggih temanten procession when the bride, accompanied by both parents, meets the bridegroom waiting in front of the entrance to the reception building. (Hamida, 2018: 66)

Each region has a unique batik motif, including Yogyakarta. There are various motives with their own uniqueness. However, one of the motifs most sought after by many people in Yogyakarta, Central Java, is the truntum batik motif. This is due to the history of its creation. Truntum means appearing or accumulating, which means the return of Pakubuwono III's love to the Queen Beruk. Similarly, Hadi's feeling for Sekar as the following excerpt.

There are many Yogyakarta motifs displayed at this event, such as the grompol motif, kawung motif, parang motif, nitik motif, semen motif, and of course the truntum motif, the batik motif that cannot be separated from Hadi's love for Sekar which continues to grow every time he sees Sekar dancing her canting on a cloth to make the batik motif. (Hamida, 2018: 130)

Fissilmi’s Canting novel also introduces regional traditional clothing worn when the Javanese get married. Women normally wear black velvet kebaya with various decorations, each of which symbolizes hope. Meanwhile, men wear black beskap and belangkon (parts of traditional clothing used as a hat, usually made of batik). This is like the figure in Canting who holds Javanese wedding traditions as shown in the following excerpt.

... Sekar looks so elegant with black velvet kebaya typical of a Javanese bride, with a golden color adorning several parts. In various regions, black is considered a symbol of wisdom and nobility.

... Hadi looks very handsome in a black beskap shirt and also a belangkon with the same batik motif as the batik cloth worn by Sekar. (Hamida, 2018: 67-68)

**Conclusion**

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion above, it can be concluded that basically the Canting novels by Arswendo Atmowiloto and Fissilmi Hamida have similar educational values that teach to always obey and respect culture in terms of three elements, namely (1) the rules in living relating to marriage and position of women, (2) action activities related to language patterns, performing traditional ceremonies, and accepting fate, and (3) human products including canting and clothing used by Javanese for marriage. The difference is that Arswendo Atmowiloto’s Canting presents the priyayi culture which has a tradition of not saying much, but actively holding meetings to develop Javanese culture. Meanwhile, in the Canting novel by Fissilmi Hamida, it explains that various batik motifs from Yogyakarta and gending kodhok ngorek are the results of human works.
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