

Islamic Identity Politics in The Novel Amina's Voice by Hena Khan (2017) Based on Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Literature Studies

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explain the views on Islamic identity politics in Amina's Voice by Hena Khan (2017). The research theme was analyzed structurally using the Kuntowijoyo prophetic literature study approach. The discussion of prophetic literature is relevant to novel that express religious and universal values. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative; describing the narrative in the novel and analyzing it with prophetic elements. This research explains that several prophetic literary principles emerge and messages voiced by the author through Amina, an American Muslim girl of Pakistani descent, voicing that Islam is a structure and a unified whole, upholding human values, togetherness in diversity, and rejecting discrimination and violence.

Keywords: Islamic Identity Politics, Prophetic Literature, Amina's Voice by Hena Khan (2017)

INTRODUCTION

Religion is a process of human relations that are felt towards something they believe in (Darajat, 2005: 10); religion is also a set of systems that contain ideology, beliefs, life values and the implementation of a belief that is closely related to things that are sacred as well as uniting all adherents in one people who merge with society.

The emergence of literary works containing religious values is the topic of study in this article, including the novel Amina's Voice by Hena Khan (2017) which tells the story of the character Amina, a Muslim immigrant of Pakistani descent, voicing unity in diversity according to the values of teachings and religious identity she adheres to amid an atmospheric life of America, which still has issues regarding racism and vandalism that befell its community.

Her story in this novel is an inspiration, and one of these literary works can provide insight into religious values. In this context, this study tries to analyze the discussion related to the study of the prophetic

literature of Kuntowijoyo's thought. Prophetic literature is based on the prophetic ethics of The Holy Qur'an quoted in Surah Ali Imran verse 110, where the verse concludes three prophetic ethics, those are Humanization, Anti-liberation and Transcendental (Jabrohim, 2005).

One of Kuntowijoyo's ideas is about transcendentalism, which combines social themes and historical activities into literary works. Literary works must strike a balance between social and spiritual themes. This meaning is called as a prophetic literature.

To make conclusions relevant to Islamic identity politics, the discussion of the topic of study uses Kuntowijoyo's prophetic literature because this becomes a reference for contextual analysis of the novel *Amina's Voice* by Henna Khan (2017), which describes prophetic values and Islamic Identity Politics.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative descriptive oriented to the sociology of literature and used Kuntowijoyo's prophetic literature studies; analysis in this research comes from two data sources, those are Primary and Secondary. The primary data source taken was *Amina's Voice* Novel by Henna Khan (2017). Secondary data sources are quoted from textbooks, journals and e-books as well as the internet.

Data was collected by reading and citing every narrative related to Islamic identity politics based on Kuntowijoyo's prophetic literature study, analyzing and providing meaning in fragments of the story's contents and providing conclusions that describe Islamic identity politics from the prophetic values contained in the novel.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Discussing Islamic identity politics in literary works is closely related to prophetic literature. Prophetic literature is literature that has a transcendental and Sufistic spirit because it departs from the values of monotheism, but which after that, also has the passion for being involved in changing human history, which therefore has a prophetic spirit (Rifai, 2019); in short, prophetic literature is literature that brings prophetic messages, calling for a goodness and preventing evil.

Analysis of the Novel *Amina's Voice* by Hena Khan (2017) is considered relevant to the basis of prophetic literature; there are prophetic values in this novel because contextually Islamic identity politics appears in several story contents, which provide a view of Islam from the prophetic values obtained.

Amina's Voice Novel tells how the life of Amina, a Muslim immigrant of Pakistani descent who lives in America along with other immigrant communities, such as Soojin, who comes from Korea; this novel describes how they are treated by local people (Americans), it is inevitable sometimes Amina and other immigrants receive treatment that smells of racism and vandalism, especially towards Islam which is adhered to by the figure of Amina. This description can be found in several narrative fragments, there are :

*Doesn't Soojin remember **all the crappy things** that **Emily** has done for the past few years? She pinched her nose and squealed while Julie said something smelled like it had died when Soojin bought kimchee. Or, **worst of all** when she and Julie **spread a rumor** at school that Soojin's parents **served dog meat** at their downtown Milwaukee restaurant... Luke **would bark under his breath** everytime he passed Soojin for months. (Khan, 2017:14)*

*I catch a glimpse of a blast from the past poster, and the huge words "sign up" underneath seem to scream out "**You are Chicken**" to me. (Khan, 2017:16)*

You know there's some bad feeling in this country toward muslims, and all negative news these days. (Khan, 2017:19)

Julie took a big, exaggerated sniff from across the room and asked "Did somebody bring in Chinese food? Then like a bloodhound working a trail, she made her way over to me, where she finally said in her most offend tone, "OH MY GOD. It's you! (Khan, 2017:29)

*And then Luke, always the most obnoxious kid in the class, started **calling me "Hunan Express"** (Khan, 2017 : 30)*

Then, to make matters worse, Bradley delivers unexpected challenges to our westward journey. "Amina has cholera. And our wagon lost a wheel. (Khan, 2017:38)

Someone broke into the Islamic center and did some damage. Imam Malik called and asked Baba to come right away. (Khan, 2017:81)

He said the main hall is badly damaged. Mama's voice, a low whisper quavers. I picture the Islamic center—the two story community building holds the main hall, but mama says she doesn't know what shape they are in... The mosque is the worst part, mama says, trembling. (Khan, 2017: 82)

Worst of all are the walls, once creamy white, now covered with black spray paint. My eyes scan the hateful phrases written in thick, crooked lines—sloppy writing that screams Go Home, Terrorists, Towelheads, and bad words so terrible that I squeeze my eyelids shut tight. The writing cuts deep, as the fear of whoever could do something like this grips me. I reach for Mustafa, feeling dizzy, and realize that I'm holding my breath. (Khan, 2017:86)

Based on contextual meaning of the story, particularly in Western countries (America), there are many assumptions that Islam is a radical religion, so gets improper treatment, such as racism and vandalism, Amina and her community do not retaliate with a sense of revenge. However, with patience and tawakal (trust), as ordered by religion and guided by The Holy

Qur'an and Sunnah, with this attitude, Amina shows her identity that Islam is a religion that teaches good values.

Islam is a religion of peace and upholds the values of tolerance, unity and humanity; this context can be seen from several fragments of the narrative:

.....how he was inviting local churches, synagogues, temples, and interfaith organizations to attend. I wondered if Soojin's Korean church would participate again this year and made a mental note to ask her about it. But then I thought about her and Emily, and whether Soojin was starting to think the two of them had more in common than we did. Emily goes to church too. (Khan,2017:57)

.....And there are so many others who have come, like Pastor Stevens, Rabbi Weiss, local officials, my principal, and a bunch of teachers from my school and the others in the county. Mrs. Barton is sitting next to a man I recognize from the photos on her desk as her husband. And Ms. Bixler and Mr. Nelson are there too. Ms. Holly sits in the row behind them, her usual smiling face drawn and tight. But when she meets my eye, she gives me a sympathetic look. (Khan,2017:94)

"Our center is known for being active in the community—we work with local charities and have a free health clinic. We help people. So I just don't understand why. Why would someone want to do this to us?" (Khan,2017:95)

"Assalaamwalaikum. My name is Amina Khokar, and I'm going to recite surah Fatiba for you today," I begin. "But rst I want to thank my friend Soojin Park and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Park, for generously arranging to have our Quran competition here at the Milwaukee Central Presbyterian Church." (Khan,2017:101)

"I'd like to donate part of this to help set up a little kids' basketball league at the Islamic Center when it reopens," he says, and the room erupts into cheers. His cheeks turn redder as he continues to speak quickly, waving his hands to settle everyone down. "We'll use it to buy equipment," he says. "I'm sure some of my friends from the Greendale team will help me coach." (Khan,2017:104)

"So are you guys," I say as I look around at all the different people from their churches who have gathered together. □ e carnival is spread out across the expansive church lawn, and parents and friends work at a dozen booths. Justin and his mom are running the bean bag toss. I spot Bradley handing out prizes for a basketball-shooting game. (Khan,2017: 105)

The narrative above shows that Islam is a religion that upholds the principles of tolerance and humanity. Islam is a religion of peace in multiculturalism, as the concept of Rahmatan lil Alamin spreads love in mankind,through several dialogues and narratives that have been described in terms of communicating and interacting with other ethnicities; the figure of Amina and her family reflect good attitude as prophetic values are taught in religion.

In more detail, the storyline above describes what Amina and her community did according to the guidance of the Holy Quran; as a Muslim, in socializing with other ethnic groups, mutual respect and appreciation should be the main pillar.

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that a prophetic value is found in the novel *Amina's Voice* by Hena Khan (2017). Based on this prophetic value, Islamic identity politics can be described as follows:

1. The Novel *Amina's Voice* is the author's means of voicing that Islam is a religion that loves peace and humanity
2. The Novel *Amina's Voice* seeks to break the negative stigma of Western (American) society towards Islam.
3. The Novel *Amina's Voice* conveys the message that Islam teaches the nature of human relations with God (Vertical) and all of His creation (Horizontal) in all aspects of life, including ethics in society (Social Life), and Describes the Concept of *Rahmatan lil Alamin* as a Religious Construction.
4. The Novel *Amina's Voice* describes Islamic Identity Politics well; this is an essential point because the image of Muslims in the Western world (America) is still tarnished by certain groups (radicals) for political purposes who abuse Islamic teachings

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