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Tsunami Memories in Poetry and the Potential of “Dark Tourism”

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Abstract

This paper will discuss about a major disaster that has occurred in Aceh, Indonesia. Gigantic tsunami that once occurred in 2004 has left a horrifying and gloomy memory to those who went through it. The objective of writing this paper is to analyze how the poets has recorded the reminiscences of disaster in their poems. This main issue has not been documented by poets in Indonesia, but also done by famous poets from Malaysia through beautiful verses and emotional impact. The second objective is to study the effects that occurred after the disaster in Indonesia. Based on that, this study will illustrate a question that there is still a positive impact on the local community as a result of the disaster. Even though the general associate this disaster with all forms of pain and suffering? Thus, this paper will look at the potential of "Dark Tourism" in Aceh that was created after the disaster. The method of research will be composed from dark tourism conceptual framework to analysis the selective poetry and also to answer the objective and problem statement of the study.

Keywords: Tsunami, Poetry, Sadness, Terror, "Dark Tourism"

Introduction

The tsunami disaster or big wave that occurred on December 26, 2004 is not a disaster that can be taken lightly. The catastrophic disaster that originally started in the Indian Ocean has had a huge impact on the daily lives of the people in Banda Aceh, Melaboh in Indonesia, Thailand and then also hit Batu Feringgi, Penang and Kuala Muda City in Kedah which borders Penang (Rostam et.al., 2009:34).

Although this tsunami happened again after 2004 and the most recent in Palu, Indonesia in 2018, but the memories of the Aceh Tsunami 2004 remain strong in the memory of the people of both countries to this day. It is possible that the large impact factor and also the tsunami that spanned several countries at that time caused the 2004 tsunami to have a profound emotional impact on the entire community in Indonesia. The data submitted by several sources also put that the 2004 Tsunami was very great and also horrible. In Indonesia alone, more than 200,000 people died, not including other missing victims (Rostam et.al., 2009:34).

Based on the situation, this paper will examine how the great tragedy was recorded in literary works, especially in the genre of poetry by some famous poets either in Indonesia or in Malaysia. The study will be focused to see what tsunami-related issues are raised by these poets in their poems. Indirectly will be able to detect what these poets noticed when revealing the great disaster in the verses produced. Apart from delving into the suffering of tsunami victims through this poem, this paper will also address a question that is, is there any other more positive impact on society after the Tsunami in Aceh? In this context, it will be studied to what extent this disaster is able to open the potential of tourism. More specifically, it is dark tourism or known as "Dark Tourism" which is the development of the tourism sector in areas that have experienced disasters and major catastrophes and involve many deaths. This question is very interesting to study because it is able to see the tsunami from the other side, which is something that can benefit the community and the country that has suffered as a result of the disaster.

This study uses qualitative research methods. Also, it will involve the analysis of poetry texts. Poetry texts were obtained through an anthology of poems from two poets, which is W.S Rendra, L.K Ara from Indonesia and Marzuki Ali from Malaysia. Through these poems, a study has conducted by how these poets describe the atmosphere of the tsunami disaster and also what feelings and emotions are embedded in the verses.

Although poetry and "dark tourism" have no direct relationship, but it is still interesting to study because these two mediums talk about the same disaster but in different tones. If the poem is loaded with the experience of the tsunami and also revives the spirit of its victims, "dark tourism" looks more at the current opportunities and potentials that can be utilized to continue and repair the lives of victims and the country hit by the tsunami.

Literature Review

Dark tourism is a term used to describe tourism that involves visiting places that are associated with death, tragedy, and suffering. This type of tourism has become increasingly popular in recent years, with many people seeking out experiences that offer a deeper understanding of history and the human condition. In this literature review, we will explore some of the key themes and findings in the field of dark tourism.

One of the main themes in the literature on dark tourism is the concept of "thanatourism," which refers to tourism that involves visiting sites associated with death and mourning. This concept was first introduced by the sociologist Lennon in the 1990s, and it has since become a key term in the study of dark tourism. According to Lennon, thanatourism offers visitors the opportunity to confront their own mortality and reflect on the fragility of life.

Hartman (2014) has research more dept regarding dark tourism and thanatourism with refine studies. Rudi focuses on tourism to heritage sites with a controversial history and sites associated with death, disaster, and the macabre. Several new concepts and research directions have emerged in the study of such sites. Particular attention is given to the dark tourism and thanatourism approaches as well as to an analysis of dissonance in the management of heritage sites.

Abdul Rahman (2019) focuses on sacred narratives found in Malaysia, in particular in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia and their potential contribution to the cultural tourism sector in Malaysia. Sacred narratives refer to oral stories regarding beliefs that were regarded as sacrosanct and inherited since time immemorial by the Malay society. Apart from its correlation with traditional beliefs, Mohamad Luthfi argues that sacred narratives have an

enormous potential to be fostered as one of the factors that can help to boost the country's tourism industry. This study has included method used by some tour operators particularly in Langkawi Island and Mount Jerai, Kedah to highlight sacred narratives in those tourist locations that they were operating in as a tactic to attract tourists.

Rajasekaram et al (2022) done systematically reviews previous studies on the dark tourism experience by utilising the theory-context-characteristics-methodology (TCCM) based approach. The review shows that only half of existing studies use pre-defined theoretical frameworks, and other studies do not report any theories (T); there is a lack of understanding about tourists' experience from the lighter end of the dark tourism spectrum compared with the darker end (C); most dark tourism destinations generate an emotional experience rather than a cognitive experience (C) and qualitative research approaches are employed more than quantitative approaches (M).

Overall, the literature on dark tourism is complex and multi-faceted, reflecting the diverse experiences and motivations of visitors to these sites. While there is ongoing debate about the ethics and implications of dark tourism, many researchers agree that these experiences offer unique opportunities for learning, reflection, and personal growth.

The Tsunami Disaster in Poetry

As is well known, some scholars whether Western or Eastern have given various definitions of poetry. Starting from the classical view by Wordsworth who described poetry as "... a very strong outpouring of feelings spontaneously recalled in a calm atmosphere" or the view of Coleridge who said poetry is "the best words in their best order" (see Salleh, 2005: 5) has given an impression that poetry is not something that can be taken lightly or lightly because it contains all forms of feelings, beauty, memories composed using the best and most structured words.

In this context, poets such as Rendra, Ara and also Ali have expressed the story of the tsunami disaster by using a beautiful arrangement and choice of words to show the tone of the tragedy to the audience more clearly and loaded with various feelings and emotions. The description of the atmosphere on the day of the tsunami was described by Rendra (2016 print) through his poetry "*Di Mana Kamu, De'Na?*"

Akhirnya berita itu sampai kepada saya:

Gelombang tsunami setinggi 23 meter

Melanda rumahmu.

Yang tersisa hanya puing-puing belaka.

Di mana kamu De'Na?

Sia-sia telefonku mencarimu.

Bagaimana kamu Aceh?

Di TV kulihat mayat-mayat

Yang bergelimpangan di jalan.

Kota dan desa berantakan.

Alam yang murka

Manusia-manusia terdera

dan sengsara.

Rendra has given a true picture of the tsunami in Aceh that occurred in 2004 in the first stanza of this poem. Clearly and implicitly, he described the 23 -meter -high tsunami that hit Aceh that day. Rendra described the condition of the houses that were destroyed and destroyed after being hit by the waves and only visible remnants were destroyed. The poem

also tells of the chaotic atmosphere immediately after the incident when the survivors began to search for missing family members in various ways. Certainly at that time it could not be ascertained whether the missing had met his death or was rescuing himself somewhere.

The first stanza of this poem also Rendra also gives a visual description of the bodies that were first found after the tsunami waves calmed down. The bodies are said to be lying all over the city of Aceh as well as the condition of houses and buildings that have been destroyed. The poet gradually gave a horrible picture of the day of the incident so that the audience who read this poem could 'see again' the incident that had taken place in Aceh. However Rendra is not just displaying but at the end of this first stanza he has given an affirmation and warning to the audience that nature is angry and has shown his power through the disaster.

Ara also did the same thing as Rendra to display the description of the 2004 tsunami. Through his poem entitled "Kain Kafan", Ara re -imagined the atmosphere of the day of the incident where he was in Pangkal Pinang. He got the news that his hometown was in a tsunami and he was unable to provide any assistance due to lack of money, long distance and also had lost contact with Aceh at that time due to the disaster¹. In fact he could only afford to buy a few sets of shrouds to send to Aceh. In his poem "Kain Kafan", Ara has described the situation:

"Kain Kafan"

Masihkah sempat kain kafan

Yang kami kirimkan

Untuk membungkus tubuhmu saudaraku

Tubuhmu begitu cepat lunglai

Dan tak bernyawa lagi

Oleh badai tsunami

Masihkah sempat kain kafan

Yang kami kirimkan

Untuk membungkus tubuhmu saudaraku

Mengingat tempat kita

Kini berjauhan

Dipisahkan pulau

Dipisahkan lautan

...

As an Aceh -born poet, Ara was more impressed with the tsunami disaster. Therefore, his poem entitled "Kain Kafan" has talked about the atmosphere of the day of the incident with full tragedy. This poem tells the story of how a person who had heard of the disaster but was unable to help because he was somewhere else far away. The poet can only imagine how many victims and bodies of tsunami victims in Aceh at that time. Ara also narrated the relationship situation that was completely severed at that time. However out of compassion, love and sympathy the poet has done his best to help by sending shrouds to be used while managing the corpses. However, in an interview with reporters, Ara himself was not sure whether the shroud he sent managed to reach Aceh or vice versa.

¹ The reporter's interview with L.K Ara can be viewed via the web <https://aliansisastrawanaceh.wordpress.com>

Implicitly, the shroud itself symbolizes death among the people of Aceh who face the disaster. Ara's effort to send the shroud is also symbolic of the sympathy and efforts of outsiders to help the victims. However, when Ara mentioned about the shroud that had not yet arrived, it indirectly showed how difficult the situation was in Aceh during and after the incident. They lost contact with outsiders, lost transport routes, may even have lost routes to find other victims has finally resulted in rescue efforts and the distribution of aid became difficult. This poem really gives a picture of the hardships and difficulties that the communities and rescuers had to face to provide immediate assistance immediately after the tsunami hit.

The terrible picture of the tsunami was also sketched by the poet from Malaysia, Ali. The poem produced a year after the disaster was composed during his visit to Lhokseumawe. The poem entitled "Korban Pasang Besar di Meulaboh" has detailed the atmosphere of the tsunami that struck suddenly in Aceh. Although there were signs that nature was beginning to change, no one expected a major disaster to arrive. This passage clearly conveys the meaning:

...

*Sekian lama layar senja berwarna jingga, Bonda
 Sekian pula kita berkumpul di Musala
 Sujud syukur kepada Yang Maha Esa Sang Penguasa
 Tapi kerlipan alun-beralun persada air
 Mula berubah mesra
 Dan kembali mengisyaratkan bencana
 Tapi, bagaimanakah kita harus membacanya, Bonda
 Segala tanda dan resam hanya unggas dan haiwan liar
 Yang mahir isyaratnya... (Ali, 2016)*

Implicitly the poet shows that humans are actually not able to read signals or predict the occurrence of a tsunami at that time. Only the power of nature through the permission of its Creator knows that such a situation will occur. Because of that, when the disaster occurs, the situation becomes panic and fear, causing people to lose direction to face the gripping situation. In this poem, Marzuki Ali also shows how the tsunami appeared at that time:

*Begitu tanggal hari hari menyatakan lengkingannya
 Yang maha dahsyat
 Raksasa laut yang tampak sejuk apa dingin
 tiba dengan wajah hitam
 tiba dengan segala keperkasaan
 tiba dengan deru yang tak tertanggung
 menyapu lantai
 menyapu paya
 menyapu pinggiran
 menyapu perbukitan
 dan sekujur air melimpah
 menguak di mana-mana*

...

This passage shows Ali using the image of a monster coming from the sea to imagine the huge tsunami waves that approached Aceh at that time and also other countries including in the north of Peninsular Malaysia. He described the atmosphere in detail how the waves began to pound the beaches, swamps, lowlands, hills and then drowned the whole of Aceh. These lines of poetry seem to be in line with the visual footage of the day of the disaster that

was widely disseminated through Youtube as well as television channels that could be watched by people around the world.

Based on the three poems of this famous poet, it was found that they were earnest and full of imagination to describe the hustle and bustle of human life during the day of the incident. All three seem to have a collective understanding in providing visuals when the tsunami occurs through their poems. The description given is able to evoke a sense of fear, fear and sadness to the general public who read this work even though they have never been through it. The efforts of Rendra, Ara and Ali were once mentioned by Salleh (2005) about the greatness of poets who not only work on happy and beautiful things but also able to express tragic, horrible and sad things in the order of words that good and soft to hear

Tema puisi ialah ialah kehidupan dalam semua bentuk, dari semua segi...puisi tidak mempunyai batasan. Ia mengisahkan kehidupan yang cantik dan hodoh, yang gembira dan yang sedih. Terpulanglah kepada penyair dan bakatnya untuk menukarkan bahan mentah itu untuk dijadikan puisi yang mempunyai nilai kesenian (Salleh, 2005:75)

Based on the view of Salleh (2005) as well, the tsunami poems produced by Ara, Rendra and Ali not only display the tense atmosphere during the incident. On the other hand, the three poets also expressed sadness and grief towards the victims. In the poem *Di Mana Kamu*, by Rendra, He expresses his sadness at the death, loss and surrender of the helpless tsunami victims at the time:

*De'Na, kita tak punya pilihan
Untuk hidup dan mati
Namun untuk yang hidup
Kehilangan dan kematian
Selalu menimbulkan kesedihan
Kecuali kesedihan, selalu ada pertanyaan:
Kenapa hal itu mesti terjadi
Dengan akibat yang menimpa kita...*

Ahmad (1994: 130) once stated that 'Words used in poetry often evoke impressions and emotions'. Rendra has justified such a view when this poem has conveyed a great sense of grief among the survivors. The survivors must have lost family members, parents, children or friends who died in the tsunami. Rendra described the survivors as always in a state of wonder, wonder and possibly still wonder about the cause of the incident. Apart from that, the terrible incident will also continue to haunt the memories of those who are still alive.

In a similar tone, Ali through his poem entitled "*Engkau Tsunamikan Bumi Kota Aceh Kami, Serambi Mekah*". This poem is from his collection of poems *Dongeng Patalawati* (2015) has expressed the sadness of the lives of orphans who lost their families during the tsunami. His first stanza reads:

*Anak kecil itu tidak punyai sesiapa lagi di dunia ini,
Keluarga, rumah, halaman bermain-
Semuanya telah musnah
Semuanya telah dirampas pergi
Semuanya telah dilenyapkan dalam sekelip pandang*

Musibah yang membawa padah...

Ali has focused his concern in this tsunami issue on orphans in Aceh. He gives a picture of the fate of this orphan who has lost everything. They have lost not only the home but also the parents in the blink of an eye. Although the fate of orphans has been defended by some parties, but their lives are not the same as children who live in their own homes with their parents. That is the fate and feeling that the children of this tsunami have to go through throughout their life memories. Therefore, the grief and sorrow of the orphans recorded in this poem can also be appreciated and felt by the audience of readers.

This is the role and function of poetry in talking about the great tsunami disaster. Although the incident happened almost 15 years ago, but when presented in the form of literary works, especially poems, memories and the atmosphere of gamat on December 26, 2004, it seems as if it has just happened. The role of poetry in being able to re-record events as well as re-record the emotions felt makes the audience of readers also repent and cultivate lasting sympathy.

Behind the bitter memories of the Tsunami, the emergence of the potential of "Dark Tourism"

Although the tsunami disaster has brought various episodes of death and grief as recorded in the poems discussed earlier, but the tsunami disaster is also open to other opportunities and potentials for the communities and countries affected by the disaster. Countries hit by these catastrophes and catastrophes will usually get the world's attention. Starting from the date of the tragedy until the post -tragedy. There is a tendency for the outside community to go and see again the locations that were once hit by the bitter situation. The outside community witnessed for themselves how the appearance and condition of the effects of a major disaster that had occurred at a location. So if there is an effort by the local government to promote the location, eventually the place will become a new tourist attraction location. This kind of tourist location is called "Dark Tourism".

There are various views and ideas of scholars to describe the concept of black tourism or "dark tourism". The term was first introduced by Foley and Lennon in 1996. The focus of both of them is "dark tourism" related to tourist attractions that are associated with death, disaster, war or violence (see Stone & Sharley, 2008: 576). There are several other terms that are similar to the concept of "dark tourism" such as "thanatourism" Seaton (1996), "Morbid" Blom (2000) and also "Black Spot" Rojek (1993), but in tourism studies the term "dark tourism" is more frequent and is generally accepted by researchers.

There are several examples of world locations that have emerged as "dark tourism" tourism sites. A special portal related to this tourism, www.dark-tourism.com has listed some of the world's famous black tourism locations. Among them

- National Memorial 9/11 & Museum (Ground Zero) New York
- Alcatraz, San Francisco
- Pearl Harbour/ USS Arizona Memorial Site, Hawaii
- Hiroshima, Jepun

The above examples are indeed locations where torture, murder, war and even assault have taken place. During the incident, these locations can be said to be the distance field of the tekukur field as displayed in the mass media, youtube and so on. Yet today, the same location has become a world tourist attraction and many people revisit it for a closer look. Stone (2012: 1568) describes the situation as

“Dark tourism as visitations to place where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives”.

Based on Stone’s (2012) view, the places where such disasters usually occur usually have a long-term impact on the memory of the audience. Although the incident took place decades ago, the audience still remembers it. A big event like this will be a dark tourist attraction as the general public wants to witness the memories of the disaster up close. Therefore, it is not impossible for these locations to record a high number of visitors every year.

In the context of the discussion of this paper, Aceh also has potential and has also initiated this concept of tourism either directly or indirectly. The construction of the tsunami museum in Aceh in 2009 is one of the big and important efforts to realize this black tourism or "dark tourism". In fact, the portal has also named the museum as one of the "dark tourism" products. Indirectly the international world has recognized the efforts of the construction of the museum. Indirectly the portal has helped promote this black tourism in Southeast Asia.

Apart from that, Aceh also promotes several other tourism products that are also related to the tsunami disaster. Among them is ‘Boat Above the House’ located in Lampulo village, Jalan Tanjong, Banda Aceh. A boat that drifted during the tsunami and came to rest on the roof of a house has maintained its condition until now. The location is now a tourist area that is always visited by many people. The boat is unique not only because of its position on the roof of the house, but also the boat has been a savior to dozens of residents there who took refuge during the tsunami. More interestingly, the location also provides a narrator who will present the narrative of the events of December 26, 2004 carefully and also full of drama. All these elements can help the potential of tourism ("dark tourism") that is truly successful.

Foreign tourists visiting Aceh must have realized that Aceh had been hit by a major disaster and they certainly wanted to find something in Aceh that could remind them of the tragedy. In the context of more spiritual memories, the Baiturrahman Mosque in Banda Aceh and the Baiturrahim Mosque in Ulee Lheue really provide great nostalgia. Based on information from tour guides and also evidence written in the mosque area, it was found that the mosques were the only buildings that remained standing when the entire building and the surrounding houses were destroyed by the tsunami². Both of these mosques often receive tourist visits all the time to witness for themselves the power of Allah S.W.T during the occurrence of the disaster.

"Dark Tourism" as *Rahmah/Rahmat* (Blessing) Tourism in Aceh?

Although this concept of tourism is referred to as dark tourism, but in the context of Aceh the tsunami tragedy can also be associated with *Rahmah/Rahmat* from Allah S.W.T. This matter is raised because tourism in Aceh is able to open a space of high awareness of the power of God. Based on the testimonies and stories told by tour guides in these tourist areas, they felt the tsunami tragedy left a very deep impact on their lives in the context of religious appreciation and awareness of the greatness of God’s power. The tragedy made them more vigilant, maintaining good relations among the people and the land of Aceh has now highlighted many of the characteristics of a state that adheres to Islamic law. Tourists who

² Information was obtained through a field study conducted in Bandar Aceh on 27 March-31 March 2019.

come to Aceh will also be able to feel the same feeling through the stories heard and also the real evidence that can still be seen to this day.

Rajab (2016) a writer and researcher has outlined some evidence that the tsunami that hit was a blessing to the land of Aceh and its people. Rajab (2016: 39) has stated that the 2004 tsunami has successfully ended the armed conflict between Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) with the Indonesian government that has dragged on for decades and has resulted in the loss of 38 thousand lives. Once the tsunami was over, a peace agreement was successfully reached and there were no more fighting and killings between the two sides. In addition, the tsunami disaster has also made Aceh's name famous all over the world. Dozens of countries have entered Aceh to provide various assistance. In fact, some world leaders also came to Aceh after the tsunami.

The tsunami can also be considered as a blessing because the land of Aceh has been successfully redeveloped with better and tidier infrastructure than before the tsunami. The construction assistance of houses and buildings received by various countries has made Aceh a more beautiful state. In the field study conducted, it was also found that the Baiturahman mosque in the middle of Banda Aceh is very beautiful in terms of its appearance and also the facilities provided for the local community and also foreign tourists. In fact, the mosque has also been equipped with a large umbrella as in the Prophet's Mosque, Medina. According to tour guides, the construction of the umbrella was fully sponsored by the Saudi Arabian government. Therefore, it is not surprising that this mosque has become one of the main tourist attractions in Aceh at this time.

The greatest blessing in the economic context is through the arrival of tourists to Aceh. The influx of tourists has driven economic development through hotels, local restaurants, the growth of tour companies that are wholly owned by the people of Aceh and so on. These profits are also not limited to large entrepreneurs but can also be shared by small traders around the tourist areas. Therefore, the concept of "Dark Tourism" in Aceh is actually symbolic of the tourism of mercy which not only benefits the state of Aceh but also the tourists who visit there. A sense of remorse and awareness of the qada 'and qadar of Allah S.W.T will surely be ingrained in the souls of tourists, especially Muslims.

In conclusion, the tsunami disaster has left a tremendous impact on communities in the archipelago and around the world. Although it happened 15 years ago, the memories remain to this day. The emergence of poems about the tsunami written by famous poets has made the disaster remain in the memory of society. Through poetry, the community seems to be watching the 'replay' of the events of December 26, 2004. Through poetry, all feelings of grief and sadness due to the loss of life and destruction of property will continue to be sculpted in the heart. However, all the images of horror and grief also have a positive impact in different contexts. Now Aceh has emerged as one of the tourist destinations that is "dark tourism" when all the sad and horrible memories are embodied as tourism products. Indirectly, the country's economic income in the field of tourism and hospitality will also increase.

This paper has contributed to the study of dark tourism and poetry through the analysis text method. Through this research has shown that two different field which is dark tourism and literature can be interpreted, and showcase thought of poet regarding the tsunami disaster thru poetry. General thought of disaster which are bad or negative impact for the society, has been change that disaster such as Tsunami can be blessed in disguised. Tsunami occurs at 2004 as introduce dark tourism in Aceh and enhance development of tourism and hospitality which lead to economy growth of the Aceh community.

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Appendix



Figure 3: Illustration of the tsunami atmosphere
Source: Researcher Collection



Figure 4: The Quran successfully found and saved
Source: Researcher Collection



Figure 5: Former sites and buildings of houses hit by the tsunami also displayed in the gallery area.

Source: Researcher Collection