

Representation of the Value of Harmony in Life in the Novel *Si Anak Kuat* by Tere Liye

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Abstract

Good social relations can also support the realization of peace in society, so this study aims to describe the value of harmony in life in the novel *Si Anak Kuat* by Tere Liye; this study uses a qualitative descriptive form with a content analysis approach, with data in the form of the novel and several informants, while data sources include books, documents, and relevant archives, data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and document analysis, data validity is tested by triangulation of data, methods, and theories, and analysis techniques using an interactive model that includes collection, reduction, analysis, and drawing conclusions; the results of the study show that the value of harmony in life is divided into four aspects, namely (1) justice in the division of household tasks between siblings, the division of work of residents when harvesting coffee, and the tolerant attitude of teachers in teaching without demeaning students, (2) tolerance of village residents in carrying out traditions and greeting each other without differentiating religion, race, and others, (3) cooperation in coffee harvesting activities to lighten the burden and improve the quality of results, and (4) democratic attitudes in explaining children's rights and obligations, giving consequences by family leaders, and decision making in class, all of which are analyzed based on the dialogue of characters in the novel.

Keywords: representation, social values, harmony of life, novel

INTRODUCTION

Literary works are essentially a reflection of social life, embodying values that exist and thrive within society. Literature serves not only as entertainment but also as a medium for reflecting social reality, including the value of harmony in life, encompassing harmonious relationships between individuals. Numerous studies have shown that literary works can represent social values such as empathy, responsibility, and social harmony through characters and storylines (Annisa et al., 2024; Junita et al., 2025; Lestari & Putra, 2023). This confirms that novels, as a form of literary work, play a crucial role in building readers' social awareness of the importance of a harmonious life.

In the context of increasingly complex modern society, the value of harmony in life has become increasingly relevant to study. Harmony in life not only reflects good interpersonal relationships but also encompasses tolerance, cooperation, and social justice. Recent research shows that the value of harmony in life in literary works is often manifested in the form of harmonious social interactions, such as cooperation and mutual respect between characters (Husna et al., 2023; Bagaskara & Septiana, 2025; Ramadhani, 2024). Therefore, studying the

value of harmony in life in novels is important in an effort to understand how literature represents an ideal social life. Tere Liye's novel "Si Anak Kuat" (The Strong Child) is a literary work imbued with life values, particularly the value of harmony. The novel depicts village life, with its various social dynamics reflecting harmonious relationships between individuals. Several studies of Tere Liye's works show that his novels often represent social values such as simplicity, solidarity, and humanity (Firliyana et al., 2024; Setyaningsih et al., 2025; Wibowo, 2023). Therefore, this novel is worthy of study to uncover the representation of the value of harmony in life.

Studies on the value of harmony in life in literature generally use a sociological approach to literature. This approach views literary works as social products inseparable from the conditions of the society that gave birth to them. Several recent studies confirm that a sociological approach to literature is effective in examining social values in novels because it connects the text to social reality (Sejati & Mukhzamilah, 2025; Julianti & Nursaid, 2023; Kurniawan, 2024). Therefore, this approach is relevant for use in this research.

The theory used in this research is the sociology of literature theory proposed by Ian Watt. This theory emphasizes that literary works have a close relationship with society, both as a reflection of social reality, as an expression of the author, and as a social function in community life (Watt, 1957; Swingewood, 1972; Damono, 2020). In this context, the value of harmony in life in the novel can be analyzed as a representation of social reality that reflects harmonious relationships within society.

Previous research has shown that the value of harmony in life in literary works is often manifested in the form of cooperation, tolerance, justice, and positive social interactions (Suantoko, 2024; Pratiwi & Hidayat, 2023; Nugroho, 2025). Furthermore, recent studies have also shown that the representation of values in novels is not only textual but also contextual, namely related to the socio-cultural conditions of society (Muyassaroh et al., 2025; Ardiansyah, 2024). This suggests that literary works can be an effective medium for character education for readers.

Based on the description, this study focuses on the representation of the value of harmony in life in the novel *Si Anak Kuat* by Tere Liye using Ian Watt's sociological approach to literature. This research is expected to contribute to the development of literary studies, particularly in understanding how literary works represent social values relevant to people's lives (Sari et al., 2024; Putri & Handayani, 2025). In addition, the results of this study are also expected to serve as a reference in literary studies and strengthen character values in everyday life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Value of Harmony in Life from a Social and Literary Perspective

The value of harmony in life is a concept related to the creation of harmonious relationships between individuals in social life. Harmony in life encompasses various aspects such as tolerance, cooperation, justice, and mutual respect. In a social context, this value is an important foundation for maintaining societal stability and harmony. Research shows that harmony in life contributes to the creation of a peaceful and conducive social environment (Husna et al., 2023; Ramadhani, 2024). Furthermore, this value is also closely related to the development of individual character, which is characterized by empathy and social concern (Lestari & Putra, 2023).

In literary studies, the value of harmony in life is often represented through the interactions between characters in stories. Literary works are an effective medium for depicting social dynamics and life values that readers can emulate. Previous research has shown that Indonesian novels often contain the value of harmony in life, in the form of family relationships, community interactions, and harmonious social life (Annisa et al., 2024; Wibowo, 2023). Therefore,

analyzing the value of harmony in life in literary works is crucial for understanding how literature functions as a medium for social reflection and learning.

Representation of Social Values in the Novel *Si Anak Kuat*

Tere Liye's novel "*Si Anak Kuat*" (The Strong Child) is a literary work rich in social values, including the value of harmony in life. The novel depicts the life of a village community filled with harmonious social interactions, such as cooperation in daily life, tolerance among residents, and close family relationships. Research shows that Tere Liye's works often display moral and social values relevant to Indonesian society (Firliyana et al., 2024; Setyaningsih et al., 2025). This makes the novel a potential source for examining the value of harmony in life.

The representation of values in the novel is not only conveyed explicitly, but also through dialogue, character actions, and the storyline. The value of harmony in life in this novel can be seen through the division of roles within the family, cooperation in community activities, and democratic attitudes in decision-making. Other research also shows that the representation of social values in the novel can function as an effective medium for character education (Pratiwi & Hidayat, 2023; Nugroho, 2025). Thus, an analysis of this novel can provide a deeper understanding of how the value of harmony in life is represented in literature.

Ian Watt's Sociological Approach to Literature in the Analysis of Literary Works

The sociological approach to literature is one approach used to analyze the relationship between literary works and society. This approach views literary works as social products that reflect the realities of social life. One important figure in this approach is Ian Watt, who stated that literary works are closely related to the social structure and conditions of the society in which they arise (Watt, 1957; Swingewood, 1972). This approach allows researchers to examine the social values contained in literary works in greater depth.

Ian Watt proposed three main concepts in the sociology of literature: literature as a reflection of society, literature as an expression of the author, and literature as a social function. These three concepts can be used to analyze how the value of harmony in life is represented in the novel. Previous research has shown that this approach is effective in examining social values in literary works because it is able to connect the text with the social reality that underlies it (Sejati & Mukhzamilah, 2025; Kurniawan, 2024). Thus, Ian Watt's sociology of literature approach is relevant for use in this study to uncover the representation of the value of harmony in life in the novel *Si Anak Kuat*.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a content analysis method to examine the representation of the value of harmony in life in the novel *Si Anak Kuat* by Tere Liye. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on the meaning of data in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and dialogue between characters that reflect the value of harmony in life. The data in this study consist of novel text excerpts relevant to aspects of harmony in life, such as justice, tolerance, cooperation, and democracy. Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation studies by intensive reading, marking, and classifying data according to the research focus. This approach aligns with the view that qualitative research aims to understand phenomena in depth in a natural context (Creswell, 2021) and allows for comprehensive interpretation of the meaning of literary texts (Sugiyono, 2022).

The data analysis technique in this study uses an interactive analysis model that includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and continuous conclusion drawing. The analysis

process is carried out by identifying, grouping, and interpreting data based on the sociological theory of literature used. Data validity is tested through theory triangulation and source triangulation to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings. The use of this interactive analysis model is supported by recent qualitative methodology studies that emphasize the importance of a systematic and iterative analysis process in producing valid findings (Miles et al., 2020; Moleong, 2023). Thus, this method is expected to be able to reveal in-depth representations of the value of harmony in life in the novel studied.

RESULTS

The Value of Justice and Representation of the Value of Harmony in Life in the Novel Si Anak Kuat by Tere Liye

The results of data collection and analysis conducted on the novel Si Anak Kuat by Tere Liye, obtained a number of findings that indicate the representation of the value of harmony in life depicted through the interactions between characters, the storyline, and the conflicts built in the narrative. The results of this study are presented systematically by grouping data based on aspects of harmony in life which include justice, tolerance, cooperation, and democratic attitudes. Each aspect is analyzed based on relevant dialogue quotes and events in the story, then interpreted using a sociological approach to literature to reveal the social meaning contained therein. Thus, the results of this study are expected to be able to provide a comprehensive picture of how the value of harmony in life is represented in the novel.

Value of Justice

The value of justice in Tere Liye's novel "Si Anak Kuat" is reflected in the proportional distribution of tasks and responsibilities within both the family and society. Justice, in this context, is not simply defined as absolute equality, but rather as the balanced allocation of rights and obligations according to each individual's role. This value demonstrates that each character is treated fairly without discrimination, and there is an awareness that rights must be accompanied by the fulfillment of obligations. Thus, justice is the primary foundation for creating a harmonious social life.

"We all get the same share of tasks, no one is differentiated even though our ages are different" (Tere Liye, 2018: 45),

This quote demonstrates the principle of equality in the division of tasks within the family. Analysis of this quote indicates that justice is realized through non-discriminatory treatment, where each family member is given responsibilities regardless of age. This reflects the value of distributive justice, which emphasizes the equal distribution of roles while simultaneously fostering a sense of responsibility from an early age. From a sociological perspective, this situation represents an ideal social reality regarding the importance of equality within the family as the foundation for harmonious relationships.

Fathers always ensure that each child fulfills their obligations before demanding their rights" (Tere Liye, 2018: 47)

The quote above illustrates justice as a balance between rights and obligations. In this quote, the father figure acts as the family leader, instilling the value of justice by affirming that rights cannot be obtained without first fulfilling obligations. This analysis shows that justice is not only distributive but also normative, regulating individual behavior to comply with applicable rules. This value is crucial in fostering discipline and responsibility, while also creating an orderly and harmonious social order.

"In the coffee harvest, every citizen gets a share according to their hard work."(Tere Liye, 2018: 112),

This quote demonstrates the principle of proportional justice, where an individual's results are determined by their efforts. Analysis of this quote reveals that justice does not necessarily mean equality, but rather proportionate to each individual's contribution. This reflects the value of social justice, which fosters a sense of collective responsibility and appreciation for hard work. From a sociological perspective, this depiction reflects the values of an agrarian society that values cooperation and fairness in the distribution of results.

Based on these three quotes, it can be concluded that the value of justice in this novel is realized through equality in the division of tasks, a balance between rights and obligations, and proportionality in the distribution of work results. These values not only strengthen relationships between individuals within families and communities but also serve as the primary foundation for creating harmony in life. Thus, justice in this novel functions as a social value that shapes a harmonious, orderly, and respectful life.

MarkJustice

The value of tolerance in Tere Liye's novel *Si Anak Kuat* is reflected in the mutual respect for differences and efforts to maintain harmony among individuals in village life. Tolerance, in this context, is not only interpreted as an acceptance of differences, but also manifested in concrete actions such as mutual respect, non-discrimination, and maintaining good social relationships despite differences in background. This value is an important foundation for creating harmony in life, as it can minimize conflict and strengthen social solidarity.

The teacher never discriminates between his students, all are treated well (Tere Liye, 2018: 63),

This quote demonstrates a form of tolerance in the educational environment. Analysis of this quote reveals that tolerance is manifested through a fair and non-discriminatory attitude toward students, regardless of their social background, abilities, or character. The teacher's attitude reflects the value of inclusivity, which places all individuals on an equal footing in receiving good treatment. From a sociological perspective, this represents an ideal social reality in which educational institutions become spaces that uphold humanitarian values and respect for differences.

The villagers still greet each other even though they have different beliefs (Tere Liye, 2018: 89)

This quote demonstrates that differences in belief do not hinder a society from maintaining harmonious social relationships. Analysis of this quote confirms that tolerance is realized through positive social interactions, such as greeting and respecting one another. This value reflects the mutual respect for diversity that is characteristic of a harmonious society. In the study of literary sociology, this condition reflects ideal social values, where diversity is seen as a strength, not a source of division.

Based on these two quotes, it can be concluded that the value of tolerance in this novel is manifested through an attitude of non-discrimination in the educational environment and respect for differences in social life. This value plays a crucial role in building harmony in life, as it encourages harmonious social relationships, mutual respect, and peace. Thus, tolerance in this novel is one of the primary values that strengthens social cohesion in society.

MarkCooperation

The value of cooperation in Tere Liye's novel "Si Anak Kuat" (The Strong Child) is clearly evident through the community's mutual cooperation activities, particularly during the coffee harvest, which is a vital part of village life. Cooperation in this context reflects strong social solidarity, where each individual contributes to achieving a common goal. This value emphasizes not only the collective completion of tasks but also the creation of harmonious social relationships and mutual support among residents. Thus, cooperation is a key pillar in building harmony within the community.

We harvest coffee together so the work gets done quickly (Tere Liye, 2018: 105),

The description in this quote indicates that cooperation is carried out with the goal of efficiency and effectiveness in completing work. Analysis of this quote reveals that joint activities not only expedite the work process but also strengthen social ties between individuals. From a sociological perspective, this represents the value of collectivity in traditional societies, which prioritizes collective interests over individual interests.

No one works alone, everyone helps each other (Tere Liye, 2018: 107)

The sentence in this quote emphasizes the strong social solidarity within the village community. Analysis of this quote demonstrates that cooperation is not merely technical but also reflects mutual care and collective responsibility. The absence of individuals working alone indicates a shared sense of community commitment to mutual assistance, fostering close and harmonious social relationships. This value reflects the principle of mutual cooperation, a hallmark of Indonesian culture.

This collaboration makes our harvest better (Tere Liye, 2018: 110)

This quote illustrates the positive impact of collaborative work. Analysis of this quote demonstrates that collaboration not only provides benefits in the process but also improves the quality of the results achieved. This confirms that effective collaboration can produce more optimal output than individual efforts. In the sociology of literature, this reflects the relationship between social values and collective well-being in society.

Based on these three quotes, it can be concluded that the value of cooperation in this novel is manifested through mutual cooperation, mutual assistance, and collective efforts to achieve better results. This value plays a crucial role in creating harmony in life because it strengthens social solidarity, increases work effectiveness, and builds harmonious relationships between individuals. Thus, cooperation is one of the primary values that underpins a harmonious and prosperous society.

MarkDemocracy

The democratic values in Tere Liye's novel "Si Anak Kuat" (Strong Child) are evident through the decision-making process that fairly involves all parties, both within the family and school. Democracy, in this context, is not only defined as freedom of expression, but also as an effort to create collective decisions that consider the interests of all parties. This value reflects openness, deliberation, and respect for the opinions of others, thus fostering harmonious and just social relations.

Father always invites us to discuss before making important decisions (Tere Liye, 2018:52)

This quote demonstrates the practice of democracy within the family. Analysis of this quote reveals that decisions are not made unilaterally, but through deliberation involving all family

members. This reflects participatory leadership, where each individual is given the opportunity to express their opinion. From a sociological perspective, this situation represents the value of democracy as part of an ideal social life, where power is not authoritarian, but inclusive and dialogical.

In class, we are free to express our opinions without fear of being blamed. (Tere Liye, 2018: 70)

The sentence in the quote illustrates the application of democratic values in educational settings. Analysis of this quote shows that freedom of expression creates an open learning environment that respects differing views. This freedom not only encourages students to speak up but also fosters mutual respect among individuals. In the sociology of literature, this reflects the social function of education as a space for the formation of democratic character that upholds freedom and responsibility.

Every violation is discussed together so that the decision taken is fair for all (Tere Liye, 2018: 73),

An analysis of this quote reveals that every problem is resolved through collective deliberation, ensuring that the resulting decision does not disadvantage any particular party. This reflects the principles of fairness and transparency in decision-making. From a sociological perspective, this situation represents the value of democracy as a social mechanism that maintains balance and harmony in communal life.

Based on these three quotes, it can be concluded that the democratic values in this novel are realized through deliberation within the family, freedom of expression in the school environment, and collective problem-solving. These values play a crucial role in creating harmony in life because they encourage the involvement of all parties, uphold justice, and strengthen harmonious social relations. Thus, democracy in this novel is one of the primary values supporting the creation of a just, open, and respectful society.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of the value of harmony in life in Tere Liye's novel *Si Anak Kuat* shows that the four main values—justice, tolerance, cooperation, and democracy—are interrelated in shaping a harmonious social life. The value of justice is reflected through the proportional division of tasks and responsibilities, both within the family and society. This aligns with research findings that state that social justice is the primary foundation for creating order and balance in social relations (Husna et al., 2023; Ramadhani, 2024). From a sociological perspective, this condition represents an ideal social reality, where each individual receives rights in accordance with their obligations.

Furthermore, the value of tolerance in this novel demonstrates an attitude of mutual respect for differences, both within educational settings and society. This non-discriminatory attitude and maintaining social interactions despite differences in beliefs demonstrate that tolerance is key to maintaining social harmony. This finding aligns with research that states that tolerance plays a crucial role in strengthening social cohesion and preventing conflict in multicultural societies (Lestari & Putra, 2023; Bagaskara & Septiana, 2025). Thus, the representation of tolerance in this novel is not merely narrative in nature but also reflects social values relevant to the lives of Indonesian society.

The value of cooperation reflected in the mutual cooperation activities during the coffee harvest demonstrates strong social solidarity among residents. Collaboration not only expedites work completion but also improves the quality of results and strengthens social ties. This aligns

with research findings that suggest collective cooperation can increase work effectiveness and community well-being (Pratiwi & Hidayat, 2023; Nugroho, 2025). In the sociology of literature, this phenomenon represents a culture of collectivism characteristic of traditional societies, where collective interests are prioritized over individual interests.

The democratic values in this novel are evident through the deliberation process within the family and freedom of expression within the school environment. Democracy is manifested in the involvement of all parties in decision-making and fair problem-solving. This aligns with research showing that practicing democracy in everyday life can foster openness, responsibility, and respect for the opinions of others (Sejati & Mukhzamilah, 2025; Kurniawan, 2024). Thus, these four values collectively demonstrate that this novel not only represents social life but also serves as a learning medium for the values of harmony in life that are relevant to society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of the research, it can be concluded that the novel *Si Anak Kuat* by Tere Liye comprehensively represents the values of harmony in life through four main aspects, namely justice, tolerance, cooperation, and democracy which are manifested in the interactions of characters, the storyline, and the dynamics of family life and village society. The value of justice is reflected in the distribution of rights and obligations that are balanced and non-discriminatory, tolerance in the attitude of mutual respect for differences in background, cooperation in mutual cooperation activities that strengthen social solidarity, and democracy in the process of deliberation and decision-making that involves all parties. These four values are interrelated and form a harmonious social system, thus showing that a harmonious life can be realized through a balance between rights, obligations, and respect for others. Thus, this novel does not only function as an entertaining literary work, but also as a medium for social reflection and learning relevant life values, especially in building individual character and strengthening harmony in community life.

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