

## REPRESENTATION OF CULTURAL AND MORAL VALUES IN ACEHEN ORAL LITERATURE: A REVIEW OF FOLKTALE LITERATURE “MISTERI BATU TERBELAH”

Imelda Hutabarat\*<sup>1</sup>, Gea Sabrina Putri<sup>2</sup>, Zakiyatul Khaira<sup>3</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Aceh Language and Literature Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Bina Bangsa Getsempena, Aceh, Indonesia

\* Corresponding Author: [imeldahutabarat@bbg.ac.id](mailto:imeldahutabarat@bbg.ac.id)

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### ABSTRACT

Oral literature is a folktale or fairy tale conveyed orally in an engaging language that captivates listeners. This study aims to explain the representation of cultural values in morals in the Acehese oral literature, Misteri Batu Terbelah. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a literature review. Data collection techniques include identification, screening, feasibility, and inclusion. Data analysis techniques include data collection, data presentation, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The research findings indicate that the Acehese folktale, Misteri Batu Terbelah, presents strong cultural and moral values, including local wisdom in utilizing nature, family structure and roles, responsibility, and the belief system of the Acehese people. In addition, this story contains a moral message about the importance of patience, compassion, emotional control, and harmony within the family. Thus, the story functions not only as entertainment, but also as an educational medium and a means of preserving oral literature, which plays an important role in passing on the noble values and cultural identity of Aceh to future generations.

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### INTRODUCTION

Oral literature is an important part of a nation's cultural heritage, serving as a medium for transmitting values, norms, and outlooks on life from generation to generation. Oral literature conveys the traditions, culture, beliefs, ways of thinking, and intellectual property of local communities (Nabil & Bismel, 2023).

Folktales, myths, legends, and fairy tales not only provide entertainment but also instill moral teachings, social ethics, and cultural identity that serve as the foundation of communal life. Folktales were initially passed down orally, then written down and used as reading material and teaching materials in schools to introduce regional literature (ZA & Winarni, 2024). This is in line with the opinion expressed by Setiawan et al. (2025) oral traditions, such as folktales, legends, and myths, serve as effective media for educating the

younger generation about moral and spiritual values essential to everyday life. In the context of Acehese society, oral literature holds a very strategic position because it serves as an informal educational tool that shapes character, strengthens religious values, and preserves local wisdom that has existed and developed for a long time.

However, developments marked by technological advancements, cultural globalization, and changes in societal communication patterns have led to a decline in the practice of directly transmitting oral literature. Younger generations tend to be more familiar with popular culture and digital media than with traditional folklore, which was once a part of everyday life. Yet, oral literature, or spoken word, serves as a primary means of communication and a medium for teaching philosophical values (Mardiah, 2022). This situation has implications for the fading knowledge and understanding of Acehese oral literature, including the cultural and moral values it embodies. Therefore, efforts to document and academically study oral literature are crucial as a form of cultural preservation.

One form of Acehese oral literature rich in symbolic meaning and moral messages is the folktale "Misteri Batu Terbelah." This story depicts the relationship between humans and the environment, the value of obedience, the consequences of behavior, and the social norms upheld in Acehese society. Through its storyline and characters, "Mystery of the Split Stone" represents cultural values such as obedience to parents, honesty, responsibility, and justice, which are relevant to social life today. Cultural values are local customs passed down across generations and endure, but their sustainability is threatened by the declining interest of the younger generation in local culture (Hasanah & Andari, 2020). Nilai-nilai tersebut tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai pedoman perilaku, tetapi juga sebagai refleksi cara berpikir dan sistem nilai yang dianut oleh masyarakat Aceh.

This issue demonstrates that scholarly studies specifically addressing the Mystery of the Split Stone as an object of Acehese oral literature are still relatively limited and tend to be fragmented across various literature sources. Some studies focus more on Acehese oral literature in general without delving deeply into the representation of cultural and moral values within a particular folktale. However, a focused and systematic study of a single oral literary text can provide a more comprehensive understanding of its narrative structure, symbolism, and socio-cultural functions.

Based on these conditions, this research is structured in the form of a literature review to examine and synthesize various previous studies that are relevant to Acehese oral literature, especially folk tales "Misteri Batu Terbelah". This study hopes to provide a comprehensive picture of the cultural and moral values contained in the story, while also

emphasizing the role of oral literature as a cultural heritage with relevance and educational value for today's society. Furthermore, this research is expected to serve as a starting point for further research and encourage efforts to preserve Acehese oral literature through ongoing academic study.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research method uses a qualitative approach with library research. The purpose of this library research is to explore in-depth relevant literature on cultural representations and moral values in Acehese oral folklore "Misteri Terbelah Dua". The data sources in this study come from several relevant literature such as folklore books, fairy tale manuscripts, cultural journals, educational journals and other websites.

The data collection technique in this research begins with the Identification Stage (Input), which involves searching databases for relevant literature. This research process is completed in four methodical steps. The study then proceeds to the Screening Stage (Initial Screening), where the selection of found literature is carried out using abstracts and titles. To ensure the data is appropriate, the researcher conducts a thorough text analysis during the eligibility stage. The process of selecting the final literature that will form the basis of the study in this research ends with the Inclusion Stage (Final Results). Through the process of data collection, presentation, reduction, display, and drawing conclusions, the data analysis technique examines the literature. The data analysis technique analyzes the literature through the processes of data collection, data presentation, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the study of the problems to be studied above, this research aims to explain the representation of cultural and moral values in Acehese oral literature, namely folk tales "Misteri Batu Terbelah". The discussion focuses on the synthesis of various relevant literature sources to uncover the cultural meaning, moral messages, and function of oral literature in the lives of Acehese people. The results and discussion are presented as follows:

### **Representation of Cultural Values in Folk Tales *Misteri Batu Terbelah***

Acehese folk tales *Misteri Batu Terbelah (Atu Belah Atu Bertangkup)* Represents various cultural values that are alive and upheld in Acehese society, particularly the Gayo community. These cultural values are reflected through the depiction of the lives of poor families who depend on nature as their primary source of livelihood. The activities of

farming, hunting, and gathering grasshoppers demonstrate the local wisdom of the Acehese people in utilizing natural resources in a simple and sustainable manner as a form of adaptation to environmental conditions and economic limitations. This is in line with the findings Junaidi et al. (2023) that local wisdom is local ideas that are wise, full of wisdom values, and have good value, which are embedded in and adhered to by members of society.

Other cultural values are evident in the family structure and division of roles within the household. The father is depicted as the head of the family, responsible for earning a living, while the mother plays the role of caregiver and maintainer of family harmony. The mother's loving and self-sacrificing role reflects Acehese cultural values that highly value a mother's devotion to the family. Conversely, the father's harsh nature also reflects the traditional view of the strong authority of the head of the family, although in this story, this is depicted as having negative consequences when not balanced with wisdom.

Furthermore, this story also embodies the cultural values of discipline and responsibility, as reflected in the message about the importance of safeguarding trust. The incident of the eldest son forgetting to close the barn door, allowing the grasshoppers to escape, symbolizes negligence that results in the loss of the family's livelihood. This reflects the Acehese cultural view that negligence in responsibilities can have significant consequences for the community.

Cerita *Atu Belah Atu Bertangkup* it also contains cultural values about the relationship between humans and forces beyond themselves. The incident of the mother's disappearance and the appearance of the split stone is understood by the community as a symbolic phenomenon related to traditional beliefs. The split stone serves as a symbol of moral and cultural warning that human actions, especially within the family, are inseparable from social and spiritual consequence.

Thus, folklore *Misteri Batu Terbelah* it serves not only as an entertaining story, but also as a representation of Acehese cultural values, including local wisdom, family structure, responsibility, and community belief systems. These values are passed down orally from generation to generation as part of an effort to preserve the cultural identity and local wisdom of the Acehese people.

### **Representation of Moral Values in Folk Tales *Misteri Batu Terbelah***

Acehese folk tales *Misteri Batu Terbelah* (*Atu Belah Atu Bertangkup*) Contains various moral values that serve as guidelines for behavior in society, particularly in the context of family life. The most prominent moral value in this story is the importance of

mutual respect and maintaining harmony within the family. The conflict that occurred in this poor family began with the father's lack of patience and wisdom in responding to his son's mistakes, which ultimately led to the tragedy of the mother's disappearance. According to (Maula & Mukhlis (2025), this story highlights the importance of mutual respect, tolerance, and cooperation despite differences in beliefs, creating a harmonious society.

The moral value of responsibility is also illustrated by the incident of the eldest son who neglected to close the barn door. This negligence had a major impact on the family's life, as it lost the food supplies they had painstakingly gathered. Through this incident, the story teaches that every action, no matter how small, has consequences that must be accounted for, especially in communal life. Thus, the meaning of the folktale contains noble values such as honesty, cooperation, perseverance, responsibility, and religion (Fatina & Iskandar, 2022). Therefore, in line with the findings in the mystery story of the split stone.

This story emphasizes the values of patience and compassion, represented through the figure of the mother. Her compassionate, self-sacrificing, and protective nature, despite the pressure, reflects a noble moral example. The loss of her mother is a turning point in the story, conveying the message that the loss of a loving figure in a family will bring deep regret and emotional devastation to the rest of the family.

Folklore Misteri Batu Terbelah it also contains a moral message about emotional control. The father's uncontrolled anger is depicted as the primary trigger for the family disaster. Through this plot, the story emphasizes that anger, expressed without consideration, can damage social relationships and lead to regret. This message is relevant as a moral warning for humans to be able to control their emotions and act fairly when facing problems.

Thus, folklore Misteri Batu Terbelah It functions as a medium for conveying moral values that emphasize the importance of responsibility, patience, compassion, and self-control in family and social life. These moral values are conveyed symbolically and narratively so that they are easily understood and internalized by listeners and readers across generations.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the results of the literature review that has been discussed previously, it can be concluded that Acehese folk tales Misteri Batu Terbelah (Atu Belah Atu Bertangkap) represents strong cultural and moral values relevant to the lives of the Acehese people. Cultural values are reflected through local wisdom in utilizing nature,

family structures and roles, responsibilities, and traditional belief systems that interpret natural events as symbols of social and spiritual consequences. Moral values are seen through messages about the importance of responsibility, patience, compassion, emotional control, and harmony within the family. This story emphasizes that negligence and uncontrolled anger can have negative consequences, while a loving and sacrificial attitude is the foundation of family unity. Thus, *Misteri Batu Terbelah* not only functions as entertainment, but also as an educational medium and a means of preserving oral literature which plays an important role in passing on the noble values and cultural identity of Aceh to the next generation.

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