

# **Tabuik: The Myth and Ontological Culture of Husein Ibn Ali's Death in Aesthetical Packaging in Pariaman Minangkabau-Indonesia**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This aim of this paper is to investigate the subject of *tabuik*: the myth and ontological culture of Husein ibn Ali's death in aesthetical packaging in Pariaman, Minangkabau. In the Pariaman community, the *tabuik* tradition is celebrated annually to commemorate the tragic death of Husein ibn Ali who was killed by the army of Yazid bin Umayyah on the battlefield at Karbala, Iraq on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the Muslim month Muharam. This historical event, which is "encased" in myth, is packaged in an aesthetical form. This is a study of a process that occurs between the subject, the object, and the values, with the parameters of 'attractiveness' and 'unattractiveness'. One of the most important elements in the *tabuik* ritual is the *gandang tasa*, a musical percussion ensemble, which plays an important role in arousing the passion of the supporters of the *tabuik* ritual, and helps create a sad or "heated" atmosphere that may spark conflict and lead to fighting between the *tabuik* supporters. A qualitative method is used, relying on the researcher as the instrument for collecting data through three stages of observation, documentation, and interviewing. The data analysis is based on a phenomenological approach in order to obtain a comprehensive picture about the phenomena of the research topic. The research concludes that *tabuik* in the Pariaman community is understood to be a religious symbol – history combined with myth – which represents the tragic death of Husein ibn Ali on the battlefield at Karbala at the hands of Yazid bin Umayyah's army.

## **Keywords:**

*Tabuik*, Myth, Ontological Culture, Husein ibn Ali, Aesthetic.

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## **Introduction**

From the perspective of oral history and oral tradition, there are numerous stories – narratives that can be expressed about a particular event that takes place in the life of a community and are packaged in the form of *pantun*. *Pantun* is a form of oral literature which uses alternate rhyme (ab-ab) and usually consists of 4 or 6 lines. The first two or three lines are known as *sampiran*, and the other two or three lines provide the main description or content of the *pantun*. Both the *sampiran* and the main content usually represent certain values or describe a particular event that takes place in the life of the community. See the example of *pantun* below:

Pariaman *tadanga langgang* (Pariaman sounds quiet)

**Batabuik** mangkonyo rami (The *tabuik* makes it lively)

Diak kanduang *tadanga sanang* (Little brother sounds happy)

*Bao tumpang badan kami* (Our bodies carry the load)

The lyrics of the *pantun* above are arranged in four lines. This *pantun* was made popular in the 1970s by Amir Sampuraga, through the performance of the traditional West Sumatran art known as Dendang Kim. Kim's game was invented by Baden Powell, and is based on a story from the book *Scouting for Boys*. The story tells about a clever young boy by the name of Kimball O'Hara, the son of a sergeant from the Irish Regiment who was assigned to India. In the game, a player looks at a number of objects for a short time and after they have been covered, attempts to remember as many of them as possible (<http://kumpulanmateri.pramuka.blogspot.com>). In Pariaman, Minangkabau, Kim's game is packaged in the form of song, in a musical art performance. The Kim singer holds a piece of paper containing a series of numbers that are to be sung in certain rhythms. Members of the audience,

meanwhile, buy pieces of paper which also contain different series of numbers that are then matched to the numbers sung by the Kim artist.

This kind of game has also developed in Pariaman and in the general Minangkabau community. Dendang Kim originally came from North Sumatra, and was a type of gambling game packaged aesthetically in the form of sung *pantun*. The keywords in the two lines of *sampiran* in the *pantun* above are Pariaman and *batabuik*, which refer respectively to the name of an area (Pariaman), known administratively as the District of Padang Pariaman, and the religious – mythical – ritual activity of *batabuik* which refers to the construction associated with the death of Husein ibn Ali at the hands of Yazid bin Muawiyah's troops on the battlefield at Karbala, Iraq.

The word *batabuik* is a verb that comes from the root word *tabuik* (Bengkulu; *tabot*), which in Arabic means to parade or process. The Indonesian synonyms is *tabut* (ark), which according to *Ensiklopedi Indonesia Edisi Khusus* (Special Edition of the Indonesian Encyclopaedia) and *Kamus Bahasa Umum Indonesia* (Indonesian Dictionary), written by Purwadarminta, the word *tabut* refers to a wooden chest containing two stone tablets with the ten commandments that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai, decorated with a gold lid and a pair of golden cherubim at either end. This ark was considered sacred and kept in the holiest of all places inside the temple of God. It is known as the Ark of the Covenant because it is regarded as a symbol of God's promise to accompany the people of Israel who remained faithful to His Word (Ensiklopedi, 1991: 3115-3116; Purwadarminta, 1984:989). In line with this, Bey Arifin, in his book entitled *Rangkaian Cerita dalam Al-Qur'an*, writes as follows: The ark was an object shaped like a chest, a gift from God which had great significance for the people of Israel from the time of Moses until long after Moses's death. It may be described as a sacred object, in the true sense of the word, because when the people of Israel were facing a terrible war

or in a precarious situation, if they looked at the ark, they would at once feel peace and steadfastness in their hearts, enabling them to take on and defeat their enemies. Likewise, if any conflict broke out amongst them, by looking at the ark, the dispute between the different groups would at once be resolved and they would again become united. The ark had the ability to give them a spirit of courage and make their enemies weak and afraid (Arifin, 1971:18-190).

Meanwhile, Karl-Edmund Prier SJ describes the ark in the Hebrew bible as follows: In the book of Joshua, which tells about the conquering of Jericho, immediately after Joshua spoke to the people, seven priests carrying seven trumpets of ram's horns marched forward before God. They blew their trumpets and the Lord's Ark of the Covenant followed them...then the people shouted while the trumpets were being blown; as soon as the people heard the trumpets sounding, they gave a loud shout (Joshua 6:8-9; Prier, 1991:13).

If we look at the explanations of Ensiklopedi, Purwadarminta, Bey Arifin, and Karl-Edmund Prier SJ, all four of these sources describe the same principle of the ark, as a wooden chest containing two stone tablets with the ten commandments, which God gave to the Prophet Moses for the people of Israel. This ark gave an additional spirit of courage – patriotism – to the people of Israel, enabling them to defeat their enemies.

Two other words that are similar to the Indonesian word *tabut* (ark) are *tabot* and *tabuik*, which are both found in different areas. In the Indonesian language, the word *tabut* is associated with the Prophet Moses and the history of the people of Israel. The word *stabot* and *tabuik* (used respectively in Minangkabau and Bengkulu), however, appear in the religious-ritual procession which commemorates the tragic death of Husein ibn Ali (the grandson of the Prophet Nabi Muhammad) and his men, on the battlefield at Karbala, Iraq, at the hands of Yazid bin Muawiyah's army.

In the lexicon of the Minangkabau and Bengkulu communities, their respective pronunciation of the word *tabut* is *tabuik* and *tabot*. Based on this fact, it can be said that etymologically, the words *tabot* and *tabuik* have a historical connection with the word *tabut* – although philosophically they may differ. This can of course be justified with the logic that if similar words occur in different places, it is likely that these words – *tabut*, *tabot*, *tabuik* – can be connected – genealogically – to the same word, which in this case is *tabut*. The pronunciation of the words *tabuik* and *tabot* is more the result of the local dialect of the Minangkabau and Bengkulu communities. This is of course not limited to the word *tabut* alone, but also occurs in numerous other cases, such as the words ‘*sabut*’, ‘*lembut*’, and ‘*kabut*’. These three words, if uttered by the Minangkabau people, will be pronounced in a similar way to the word *tabut* (*tabuik*), thus becoming *sabuik*, *lambuik*, and *kabuik*.

Returning to the subject of *tabut* and *tabuik*, despite their association with different events, both are used to arouse a spirit of courage – patriotism and heroism – in different contexts. From a historical perspective, *tabut* is connected with the symbol of God’s promise to remain faithful to the people of Israel in confronting their enemies. Meanwhile, in the Pariaman community, *tabuik* is related to the event of Husein ibn Ali’s death in Karbala on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharam. Hence, both exist in different ideologies.

In the *tabuik* ritual, this spirit of courage is stimulated by the clamour of the music played by the instruments of the *gandang tasa* (a percussion ensemble). *Gandang* and *tasa* are the two types of instruments in this ensemble. The *gandang* is a double-headed cylindrical drum, or membranophone, and in this ensemble there are 6 of these drums, each carried by a different player. The *tasa* is a single-headed drum, in this ensemble played by a single musician. Musicologically, the *tasa* player (*tukang*) is the leader, or ‘*imam*’ or the perf

ormance.

As the ‘*imam*’, the *tukang tasa* is required to have a good command of all the music in the repertoire for the entire procession of the religious-ritual of the *tabuik* ceremony, which is essentially a dramatic reconstruction of the event of Husein ibn Ali’s death at the hands of Yazid troops on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharam in Karbala. The historical account tells of Husein’s resistance to the troops of Yazid bin Muawiyah while he was camping out on his return from Kofah, ending with Husein’s death. His body was buried to the sound of wailing and crying, and his soul was flown to the heavens by the mystical *buraq* bird—the three highlighted words above indicate that the account is beginning to enter into a mythical domain. The myth continues to describe the *buraq* as having the face of a woman, the body of a horse, with four legs, and wings like those of a peacock.

The myth that tells of the events of Husein ibn Ali’s death is dramatized in the form of a *tabuik* performance, which takes place from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharam, beginning with the collecting of soil and ending with the raising of the *tabuik* structure which is carried along the streets with all its attributes and in all its glory. The *tabuik* procession is accompanied by groups of supporters and the loud clamour of the *gandang tasa* music, arousing a spirit of heroism. From the perspective of an aesthetical ritual, the *gandang tasa* plays an important part in the myth and ontological culture of Husein ibn Ali’s death, which is transformed into a religious-ritual procession by the Pariaman community. The topics that are addressed as the main focus of this research are: *tabuik*: the myth and ontological culture of the death of Husein ibn Ali; and the *tabuik* ritual in aesthetical packaging.

## Literature Review

In this research, the literature study examines books or other written sources related to *tabuik* in relation to Shi’a, myth, and aesthetics. Literature that discusses the historical aspects of

*tabut* (*tabuik*) includes Ensiklopedi Edisi Khusus (1991), while Purwadarminta (1984), in Kamus Bahasa Umum Indonesia, explains that in connection with the Prophet Moses, *tabut* was known as the ark of the covenant because it was regarded as a symbol of God's promise to stay with the people of Israel as long as they did not go against His Word. Meanwhile, Bey Arifin (1971) mentions the existence of the *tabut* and its connection with the people of Israel since the time of Moses; the *tabut* gave a spirit of courage to the people of Israel in confronting their enemies. Karl-Edmund Prier SJ, in his book *Sejarah Musik Jilid 1* (1991), explains that God's Ark of the Covenant followed the Hebrew people when they conquered the city of Jericho.

Hamka (1974), in his book entitled *Antara Fakta dan Khayal Tuanku*, explains that the existence of the *tabut* (*tabuik*) in Pariaman as a religious symbol is related to the events of 10 Muharam on the battlefield at Karbala, and was brought by the Cipai people (from India), the majority of whom were Shi'a Muslims. Yusril Ardanis, in his article "*Tabuik Piaman Arsitektur Rakyat*", in *Tabloid Limbago*, 36<sup>th</sup> edition, 3-13 July, Padang, talks about how the *tabuik* celebration portrays Husein's resistance to the troops of Yazid bin Muawiyah, while he was camping out on his return journey to Kofah, resulting in Husein's death.

Gusfen Khairul (1993); in his article "*Tabuik Piaman*", in *Harian Singgalang Minggu*, 4 July, Padang, describes the beheading of Husein ibn Ali, and the procession of angels from heaven who carried away Husein's body. Along the same lines as Ardanis and Khairul, Tanjung (1993), in his article in *Harian Singgalang*, describes how angels put the parts of Husein's body into a casket on the back of the *buraq* to be flown up to the heavens. In another section, he tells how one of Husein's Cipai soldiers asked to join the group of angels on their journey.

Other literature on the subject of *tabut* in relation to the Hebrew people includes the book

by

Abdul Qadir Djailani (1996) entitled *Koreksi Terhadap Ajaran Tasauf*, published by Gema Insani Press, and more specifically on this subject, the book by Musanif Efendi (1979) entitled *Berita Alam Gaib Sebelum dan Sesudah Hari Kemudian*, published by M. A. Jaya, which explains the meaning of a woman's appearance in the *tabuik*. A. Rahman Zainuddin et al. (2000), in the book *Syi'ah dan Politik di Indonesia*, discusses the influence of the development of the Shi'a school of thought in the political life of Indonesian Muslims. One of the topics covered by Heddi Shri Hamimsa-Putra (2001) is myth based on the views of Levi-Strauss.

Meanwhile, literature related to aesthetics includes an article by Deni Junaedi (2017), which discusses the definition of aesthetics, and the main focus of his study is the parameters of 'attractiveness' and 'unattractiveness' in the subject's experience of the object, and its aesthetical value. From a philosophical perspective, Melvin Rader and Bertram Jessup, in the book *Art and Human Values*, translated by Johny Prasetyo, analyze value as three components, namely K-O-H. "K" is the interest of the subject, "O" is the object of the interest, and "H" is the relationship between the two. Martin Suryajaya (2015), in his book entitled *Sejarah Estetika: Era Klasik Sampai Kontemporer*, published by Gang Kabel, explains the term "aesthetics" from an etymological perspective. In its noun form, the word *aesthesis* means sensory perceptions, which include sight, hearing, and feeling.

This literature is used as a scientific reference for the current research to explain the subject of *tabuik*: the myth and ontological culture of Husein ibn Ali's death in aesthetical packaging in the Pariaman Minangkabau community. It should be emphasized that none of the literature used as a reference in this research has the same focus on the material object, and as such, the originality of the current research can be preserved.



## Method

As the main instrument, the researcher is directly responsible for collecting data on the material object – the performance of *tabuik* in the community of Pariaman, Minangkabau. The collection of primary data was carried out through participant observation, interviews, and documentation. The primary data obtained through these three models of investigation formed the basis of the analysis in accordance with the focus of the research: “*Tabuik: The Myth and Ontological Culture of Husein Ibn Ali’s Death in Ritual Aesthetical Packaging in Pariaman Minangkabau – Indonesia*”. The secondary data, in the form of references from a number of writers, was needed to strengthen the analysis of the research focus.

The first step performed was participant observation, which aimed to observe at first hand a number of *tabuik* performances in Pariaman, Minangkabau, from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharam in the year 2018. The information and empirical data were collected through direct involvement in the performance event, and this was used as a guide for interviewing a number of important figures and heirs of the *tabuik* tradition in Pariaman.

The second step included interviews and documentation of audio-visual and visual media. The purpose of this was to enhance the data and strengthen the argumentation that this event really did take place and was in accordance with its context. The documentation process was also important for helping the writer to reproduce the *tabuik* performance in accordance with its context for the needs of the analysis. The data analysis combined emic and etic concepts related to the reality of the *tabuik* performance in the community of Pariaman, Minangkabau as the material object.

## Results and Discussion

### ***Tabuik: The Myth and Ontological Culture of Husein ibn Ali’s Death***

In the community of Pariaman, Minangkabau, *tabuik* is a representation of the historical event of Husein ibn Ali’s death on the battlefield at Karbala, Iraq, in the year 61 Hijriyah (680 AD). This historical event subsequently changed into a myth, and was transformed into the form of a colossal drama – the *tabuik* ritual. C.A. van Peursen, in his book *Strategi Kebudayaan* (1994), writes that a myth is a story which provides a precept and direction to a group of people – human behaviour. Through myth, human beings can participate in an event (Peursen, 1994:37). *Tabuik* is a representation of the myth of Husein’s death in the Pariaman culture, which inspires the Pariaman community to participate physically in the form of a ritual procession.

The understanding of myth in Levi-Strauss’s structuralism is not the same as the common understanding of myth in mythology. In accordance with the general view of anthropologists, Heddi Shri Hamimsa-Putra states that Levi-Strauss’s understanding of myth is not necessarily contradictory with history or reality, because the difference in meaning between the two concepts appears to be increasingly difficult to maintain in the current day (Hamimsa-Putra, 2001:77). What one community or group considers to be a historical account of something that really happened may be considered by another group to be no more than a fairy tale, the truth of which cannot be affirmed. Levi-Strauss’s concept of myth is none other than a fairy tale (Hamimsa-Putra, 2001: 77).

A fairy tale or legend is a story that is born out of a person’s imagination, or a human fantasy, although the elements of this fantasy originate from a real event, such as the story of Husein ibn Ali’s death in Karbala, Iraq. In this event, there are a number of things that do not make sense, or cannot possibly occur in our day to day lives. According to Yusril Ardanis, as reported by Najir Yunus, the *tabuik* celebration portrays Husein’s resistance the troops of Yazid bin Muawiyah while he was camping out on his return from Kofah, ending with Husein’s death. His body was

buried to the sound of wailing and crying, and his soul was carried by the mystical *buraq* bird to heaven (Ardanis, 1993: 2). The word *buraq* comes from the Arabic word *barqun*, which means light, or flash, and in the understanding of the Indonesian people, specifically in Minangkabau, the *buraq* is a winged horse with a girl's head, as shown in the illustration below:



**Illustration 1. Profile of the *Tabuik* Portraying a Winged Horse**

(Photo: Documentation Asril 2018)



**Illustration 2. The side of a *Tabuik* Portraying a Girl's Head**

(Photo: Documentation Andar 2018)

In line with the description of Yusril Ardanis, Gusfen Khairul also writes that when

Husein was beheaded, a procession of angels came down from the sky. Husein's body was carried away by a *buraq*. This procession is referred to as *tabuik*. Therefore, when the *tabuik* is shaken and rocked (*dihoyak*), it is accompanied by cheering and shouting of Husein's name: *hoyak Hosen, hoyak Hosen, hoyak Hosen* (Khairul, 1993: 8).

On the other hand, the local Pariaman government presents a narrative of Husein's death in a guidebook about *tabuik*, as outlined by Parsi Tanjung in *Harian Singgalang*, as follows: After Husein was killed, and his body chopped into pieces by the Yazid troops, suddenly the bright light of a procession appeared from the sky, with a group of angels and a *buraq*. When the procession landed on the ground where Husein had been killed, the angels put the pieces of Husein's body into a casket that the *buraq* was carrying on its back, and the procession then ascended from the ground. On the way up to the sky, the angels smelled the presence of a human in the procession, and when they checked, they found one of Husein's surviving soldiers, a Cipai (Keling) Indian, who begged to join the mission, but the angels advised him to continue performing the procession that he was witnessing, and that procession has now become known as *tabuik*.

A similar myth exists concerning the *tabot* of Bengkulu. Based on the records of Dutch commanders in Bengkulu at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as described by Asril, quoted from Helfrich et al., (1888:192-193); the *tabot* myth can be outlined as follows: Husein's headless corpse was left on the battlefield at Karbala. A man by the name of Natsal, Husain's assistant, found a valuable diamond or talisman inside Husein's belt. Natsal thought it better to keep the precious stone himself to prevent anyone else from stealing it. When Natsal opened Husein's clothes to take the stone, Husein's hands moved, pushing Natsal away. Natsal then cut the hands off Husein's body, but at the same time he heard thunder, followed by lightning that struck in all directions with a terrific crash. When he saw this, Natsal fell

to the ground. In his conscious state, Natsal witnessed, as though in a dream, a royal palace shaped like a pyramid emerging from the ground where he lay, accompanied by the sound of sweet music. Then he heard the words, give way to the Prophet Adam, the Prophet Ibrahim, the Prophet Moses, the Prophet Isa, Siti Fatimah, and the Prophet Muhammad to pay their respects to Husein. Natsal saw the face of the Prophet Muhammad, who slapped Natsal's face, and said that in order to pay for the bad deed he had committed, not only Natsal's face would turn black, but all his descendants would be born with black faces. So Natsal regretted his actions and went to Mecca to beg for God's forgiveness at the Ka'bah. While Natsal was praying, a Muslim scholar by the name of Ja'far Ibnu Muhammad Siddik, who was circling the Ka'bah, came to ask Natsal what his problem was. Natsal explained all that had happened to him and Ja'far told him that his sins would be forgiven on condition that each year he and his descendants would always remember and commemorate the death of Husein in a solemn ceremony (Asril, 2013: 313).

In myths, we find interesting contradictions. There are many events in myths that we believe could not possibly happen in the reality of everyday life. Heddi Shri Hamimsa-Putra states that anything may happen in a myth, from things that are plausible, or semi-plausible, to things that are completely irrational. Therefore, we often feel that there is no logic at all in a myth (Hamimsa-Putra, 2001: 82). This is also true in the myth of *tabuik* and the death of Husein ibn Ali, as explained by Parsi Tanjung in *Harian Singgalang* in the previous section.

Looking closely at the various myths – narratives – about *tabuik*, as explained in the guidebook about *tabuik*, it is interesting to discuss these myths from the perspective of an ontological (rational-modern) culture. The reason for this is that there are certain words which need to be observed from the perspective of ontological culture. These are: (1) the idea of a procession of

ls, (2) the angels putting the pieces of Husein's body in the casket, (3) the angels smelling the scent of a human, and (4) the angels giving advice. These points will be discussed in more detail below:

First, the idea of the angels in procession. This is a fabrication that is difficult to accept logically; how could a person witness a group of angels descending from the sky in procession with a *buraq*? This is an interesting and extraordinary occurrence for an event of death to include a visual sighting of angels. This visualization is commonly only found in the Christian religion, in which there are several stories that describe angels in this way. Similarly, the creature known as the *buraq* is related to the event known as Mi'raj in which the Prophet Muhammad undertook a spiritual journey from the Aqsa Mosque to Sidratul Muntaha to fulfil his sacrifice to Allah. In this story of the prophet's journey, it is said that he travelled on the back of a *buraq*, or in Arabic *barqun*, which means "flash" or "light". The storyteller associated Husein's death with the events of Israk and Mi'raj. This is a dangerous deception, the death of a man – Husein ibn Ali – being compared with the experiences of the Prophet Muhammad when he rose to heaven in his capacity as Allah's prophet.

Second, the angels putting the pieces of Husein's body into a casket carried on the back of the *buraq*. This is clearly no more than a fantasy. How could angels possibly appear in the event of death, let alone gather up the pieces of Husein's body. What is the angels' interest in this event? Was not the death of Husein the same as the death of any other human being? Although people have different experiences when they die, it is certain that – according to history – in the battle at Karbala, all of the men in Husein ibn Ali's group met their death.

Therefore, the death of Husein ibn Ali and all his men was a regular event that is ultimately experienced by all human beings and cannot be transformed into the visual form of a group of angels appearing, such as in this story – myth –

and carrying away Husein's body. The person who told this misleading story is synchronizing the events of Israk Mi'raj with the death of Husein ibn Ali. This is nothing more than a deception or an attempt to mislead. How is it possible that the event of Mi'raj could happen twice? On one hand, this event – Israk Mi'raj – is a spiritual event experienced by the Prophet Muhammad in his capacity as a prophet of Allah. On the other hand, the death of Husein ibn Ali was a political matter – related to ideology. From the point of view of the creed of Islam, this can be described as a systematic 'corruption' of those who adhere to the Islamic faith, in the form of an imaginary story that appears quite convincing, in which the Prophet Muhammad is equated to Husein ibn Ali. This is a perverted idea, despite the fact that it appears in the form of a story about the fanaticism of the Shi'a Muslims towards the descendants of Ali bin Abitalib. Hamka writes that this kind of fanaticism is related to the radical beliefs of the Shi'a sect, some of whom believe that the angel Jibril was misguided when bringing the revelation to Muhammad, just like the beliefs of the Hebrews – followers of Abdulah bin Saba (Hamka, 1974: 92).

Third, the angels smelled the scent of a human. At this point in the story, on the journey to the heavens, the angels smelled the presence of a human, and discovered that one of Husein's soldiers, a Cipai (Keling) Indian, was alive. Historical records state that all members of Husein's troops were killed – 100 or more men from Muhammad's family and his descendants. How is it possible that a Keling soldier, whose country is situated thousands of kilometers from Mecca, could be amongst the Prophet Muhammad's family? It is impossible that the angels could be fooled or tricked by this event of death, as stated in the words, "the angels smelled the scent of a human, and after checking, discovered one of Husein's soldiers". This story is like an action film, in which someone infiltrates a secret mission and escapes the notice of intel

ligence officers.

In the subsequent dialogue, (4) the angels give advice to Husein's soldier who is said to have escaped death and joined the angels on their mission. Incredibly, the angels were deceived by a man – a Keling follower of the Shia' school of thought – who pretended to be dead, but turned out to be alive, and moments later the angels recommend that the Cipai Indian should create a procession like the one that is now known as *tabuik*. The question here is: could the angels possibly have been deceived in matters of death? There are as yet no words to explain this. What is certain is that in historical records, none of the men in Husein ibn Ali's troops were spared in the events at Karbala – only women and children survived.

In the previous account of the events, it was said that "the angels put the pieces of Husein's corpse into the casket that the *buraq* was carrying on its back, then carried it in a procession, which has come to be known as *tabuik*". This sentence is closely related to the understanding of the Hebrew Ark of the Covenant described in Ensiklopedi Indonesia Edisi Khusus and Kamus Bahasa Umum Indonesia, written by Purwadarminta, as well as the explanation given by Bey Arifin (1971: 18 & 190) in his book entitled *Rangkaian Cerita dalam Al-Qur'an*, as mentioned in the previous section. The ark (*tabut*) was shaped like a chest and was an important gift from God to the Israelites from the time of the prophet Moses until long after his death.

In this context there are two contradictory facts. **First**, the term *buraq* appears in two different events; **second**, the casket or coffin referred to as a *tabut* or ark. These two contradictions can be regarded as a hidden mission to influence the minds of Muslim followers. The stories were 'smuggled' by Shi'a Muslims into stories about the Prophet Muhammad in the events of Israk Mi'raj. In this context, Abdul Qadir Djailani writes that the originator or founder of the Shi'a sect was Abdullah bin Saba. He was a Hebrew from San'a,



Yemen, and the son of a black woman. He became a Muslim during the reign of the Caliph Usman bin Afan, and later moved to various places, including Hejes, Basrah, Khufah, Syam, and Egypt (Djailani, 1996: 130).

With regard to the problem of the *tabut* (Minang; *tabuik*), Musanif Efendi states that the *eburaq* and the *tabut* tradition portray imaginary events created by the Hebrew people (Efendi, 1979: 242). The purpose of creating the picture of the *buraq* is explained as follows: It was made thus with the intention of demeaning the Prophet Muhammad. Its face was made like a woman, because the Prophet Muhammad had several wives. It had wings like a bird, it is said, because the Prophet Muhammad liked greatness, and a body like a horse, because the Prophet Muhammad is said to have had a huge appetite. This is based on the information of a number of Muslim scholars who have investigated this subject in depth. Hence, it can be said that this is not the type of vehicle the Prophet Muhammad used on his Mi'raj journey (Efendi, 1979: 242).

Therefore, it is natural that this story spread to Bengkulu and Pariaman, because it was taken there by Cipai Indians who were followers of the Shi'a school of thought and came from a country renowned for its many amazing fairy tales and legends. Although the Cipai were not Hebrews, the idea of a story about the ark associated with the death of Husein was adopted and inspired by the Hebrew Ark of the Covenant, which was combined with the events of Israk Mi'raj experienced by the Prophet Muhammad. Next, let us compare this with the similar phenomenon that exists in communities of Shi'a Muslims in Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan, where the event of Husein ibn Ali's death is commemorated in the form of a demonstration or act of remorse, in which people take to the streets, wailing and beating themselves, tearing their clothes and harming their bodies.

The commemorations of Husein ibn Ali's death in these three countries do not include anything known as an ark or *tabuik* such as is found

in Pariaman. Hamka emphasizes that in Iraq and Iran, countries that follow the Shi'a school of thought, there is no such thing as an ark or *tabut* (*tabuik*) (Hamka 1974: 117). What, then, are the *tabuik* celebrations that have emerged in the Pariaman community in relation to the events of Husein ibn Ali's death? This is a misleading scenario that continues to be upheld as a tradition in the Pariaman community in the form of a traditional festival that has become a commodity for tourists, and is said to contain religious values – at least according to the understanding of the local community.

### **Tabuik Ritual in Aesthetical Packaging**

The *tabuik* ritual is a performance that is closely associated with the event of Husein ibn Ali's death, packaged aesthetically in the form of a colossal drama. Deni Junaedi defines aesthetics as “the study of a process that occurs between the subject, the object and the values contained in the object, the experiences, properties, and parameters of attractiveness and unattractiveness” (Junaedi, 2016: 14). The relationship between the subject and object, as described by Suryajaya, includes sight, hearing, and also feeling (Suryajaya, 2015: 1), in this case with *tabuik* as the material object. In addition to discussing the relationship between the subject and the object, Suryajaya explains that aesthetics is not limited to a discussion of values, but also includes the aesthetical experiences, ontological status of a work of art, and relationship between art and the community (Suryajaya, 2015: 3).

With regard to the *tabuik* ritual, in aesthetic terms the discussion is limited to the relationship between the subject, the object, and the values contained in the *tabuik* ritual as the material object. The reason for this limitation is not because the study fails to complete the scope of the aesthetical discussion defined by Junaedi and Suryajaya, but rather is based on the consideration of space available for the needs of publication in the form of an article.

Aesthetically (in terms of beauty), the relationship between the subject and the object places more emphasis on the construction of the procession of the *tabuik* ritual as the material object. Asril et al. explains that the *tabuik* ritual consists of a number of rites: (1) *maambaiak tanah* (collecting soil); (2) *maambiak/manabang batang pisang* (pulling out/chopping down a banana stem); (3) *maatam* (circling an imitation vault [*gobah*] of Husein's grave); (4) *maradai* (asking for donations); (5) *maarak jari-jari* (parading the trellis); (6) *maarak sorban* (parading the turban); (7), *tabuik naiak pangkek* (joining together the upper and lower sections of the *tabuik*); (8) *hoyak tabuik* (shaking and rocking the *tabuik*); and (9) *tabuik tabuang* (submerging the *tabuik* in the sea) (Asril et al., 2018: 62).

In Indonesia, the ritual commemorating the death of Husein is commonly known as Asyura. Asyura is marked by communal activities such as cooking porridge (*bubur suro* and *bubur merah putih*) (Sjarifoedin, 2011: 489). Asyura is a small-scale or simple ritual in which the activities generally take place indoors, and include a performance with the recitation of the story of Husein in Karbala, poetry or texts expressing grief, and eating *bubur suro* porridge (Sjarifoedin, 2011: 489-490). Asril writes that in Pariaman this ritual has developed into a colossal performance which presents various processions and attractions that are performed in an outdoor arena such as a field or on the main streets of Pariaman city. Each part of the ritual procession depicts a different mood or atmosphere, such as solemnity, ferocity, anger (portrayed through fighting), and predominantly joy or excitement (Asril, 2016: 4-6). The series of ritual processions begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Muharam and continues until the 10<sup>th</sup> day.

### **Maambaiak Tanah (Collecting Soil)**

*Maambiak tanah* is a ritual procession in which a lump of soil is collected from the river. This activity takes place in the afternoon of the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Muharam, with a parade that includes a perf

ormance of *gandang tasa*. *Maambiak tanah* is performed by two *tabuik* groups, namely the *Tabuik Pasa* (Tabut Pasar) group and the *Tabuik Subarang* (Tabut Sebrang) group. Both groups collect soil from a different place, from a small river pointing in a different direction from that of the other group. The *Tabuik Pasa* group takes soil from a small river in Galombang, while the *Tabuik Subarang* group takes soil from Batang Piaman River in the Pauh district. Asril et al. explains that collecting soil (*maambiak tanah*) from the river is intended to portray the search for any trace of Husein's body in Karbala (Asril et al., 2018: 64), see the illustration below:



**Illustration 3.** <https://ganaislamika.com/festival-tabuik-di-pariaman-4-delapan-prosesi-dalam-tabuik-1/>, downloaded on 12 January 2019.

Before performing this procession, both of the *tabuik* groups must first make a *daraga* (the place where the *tabuik* is constructed). The *daraga* is square-shaped with an area of approximately 5 meters square, and is surrounded by a bamboo fence and white cloth. The soil is collected by the *Tuo Tabuik*, a man dressed in a white robe to symbolize Husein's honesty. The soil is collected just before evening prayers, and subsequently carried to the *daraga* which symbolizes Husein's grave. According to local elders, the symbolic meaning of collecting the soil is that man comes from the earth – see the illustration below:



**Illustration 4.** The *Tuo tabuik* from Nagari Pasaplaces soil inside the *daraga* (the home of the *etabuik*) after the *maambiak tanah* procession at a river in Pariaman City

(Photo: Documentation Iggo El Fitra 2018 in <https://ganaislamika.com/festival-tabuik-di-pariaman-4-delapan-prosesi-dalam-tabuik-1/>, downloaded on 12 January 2019).

The procession leading to the location of the *maambiak tanah* is a parade. Children walk at the front carrying a pot covered in white cloth in which the soil from the river will be placed. They are followed by people carrying flags and oil lamps, and the *gandang tasa* players walk at the back of the parade. The soil symbolizing the corpse of Husein is placed inside the pot and covered in white cloth, then paraded towards the *daraga* (the place representing Husein's grave, located next to the home of the *tabuik*) – see the illustration below:



**Illustration 5.** Procession to the location where the soil is collected, with the *gandang tasa* being played at the back of the parade  
(Photo: Documentation Asril 2018)

### Construction of the *Tabuik* Frame and *Buraq*

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Muharam, the frame for the *tabuik* is constructed, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> day construction of the *buraq* begins. It is said that the *buraq*, known as the vehicle that transported the Prophet Muhammad during Israq and Mi'raj, carried the soul of Husein to the heavens – see the illustration below:



**Illustration 6.** Constructing the frame of the *tabuik*

(Photo: <https://www.indonesiakaya.com/jelajah-indonesia/detail/kebersamaan-masyarakat-pariaman-dalam-pembuatan-tabuik>, downloaded on 12 January 2019)

### *Manabang Batang Pisang* (Chopping Down the Banana Stem)

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of Muharam at 11 o'clock at night, there is a ceremony to chop down a banana stem. This ceremony, known as *manabang batang pisang*, is a reflection of the sharpness of the sword Husein used in battle. It symbolizes revenge for Husein's death and is performed by a man dressed in *silat* attire. It is important to cut right through the banana stem in a single chop. Other versions of the story say that the chopping down of the banana stem is a symbolic representation of the Yazid troops robbing Husein's family of all their wealth. After the banana stem has been chopped down, it is stored inside the *daraga*.

*Manabang batang pisang* is a rite that represents symbolically the suffering of Husein and his men when they were killed by the enemy in the battlefield at Karbala. Asril et al. explains



that the *manabang batang pisang* ritual is implemented in three stages: the procession to the location of the banana tree that is going to be chopped down, the chopping down of the banana stem, and the *basalisiah*, when the two groups in the procession (*Tabuik Pasa* and *Tabuik Subarang*) pass by each other at the Simpang Tugu Tabuik junction, on their way back home after chopping down the banana stems (Asril et al., 2018: 66).

The location chosen for chopping down the banana stem is in the part of the town that belongs to the 'opposing' group. The *Tabuik Pasa* group chops down a tree in Galombang, which is in the Subarang district, and the *Tabuik Subarang* group chops down a tree in Kampuang Kaling, which is in the market (*pasa*) district. In each of the two locations between 4 and 6 banana trees and sugar cane are planted in one or two rows, and these are the object of the ritual. The location of the *manabang batang pisang* ritual takes place in the district of the opposing group so that on their way home, the two groups will pass by each other in the street. This implies that the *manabang batang pisang* ritual also includes another element, namely an element of fighting between the two groups at Simpang Tabuik. The first part of the ritual is performed at the same time by both the *Tabuik Pasa* and *Tabuik Subarang* groups (Asril, 2018: 66) – see the illustration below:



**Illustration 7.** Chopping down the banana stem as a symbol of the sharpness of Husein's sword that was used in battle at Karbala

(Photo: Documentation Asril 2018)

### **Maradai and Maatam**

The *maradai* and *ma'atam* ritual takes place on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> days of Muharam. It symbolizes the gathering together of the pieces of Husein's body that were scattered on the battlefield. *Maatam* is essentially a ritual that portrays the sorrow felt by Husein's family. The *maatam* procession takes place after midday prayers and is performed by women from the family of the *Tabuik* house. The women walk in procession around the *daraga* while carrying the equipment used in the *tabuik* ritual (the trellis, turban, sword of Husein, and so on) while weeping and wailing. This procession is accompanied by the *gandang tasa* ensemble which plays sorrowful music, and eventually the women all come together in the *daraga*. This symbolizes the sorrow over Husein's death, and the *daraga* symbolizes Husein's grave – see the illustration below:



**Illustration 8.** Women circling the *gobah* (vault) inside the *daraga* during the *maatam* ritual, while the musicians stand at the side of the *daraga* fence playing the *gandang tasa*

(Photo: Documentation Asril 2018)

The *gandang tasa* is played to enhance the mood of sadness during this ritual. The music played is *maatam* music, which has a slow tempo and is played only to accompany this ritual. In other contexts, including other parts of the *tabuik* ritual and other events unrelated to the *tabuik* ritual, this special *maatam* music is never played. Asril et al. writes that *maatam* music is played throughout the duration of the procession circling



the *gobah* (vault), which includes 9 laps and lasts for around 15 to 20 minutes. During the *maatam* ritual, the *maatam* music is combined with other pieces, including the piece known as *sosoh*. *Sosoh* is usually played after the procession circling the *gobah* (vault), and at the end of the ritual, a prayer is recited by the leader of the ritual – a woman from the *tabuik* family. The fast tempo of the *sosoh* piece changes the mood to one of excitement, and the women taking part in the procession dance to the beat of the *gendang* (Asril, Andar, Adjuotoza, 2018:70).

### **Mangarak Jari-Jari (*Parading the Trellis*)**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Muharam, at around 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the trellis or frame of the *tabuik* is paraded around the local *kampung*. *Mangarak jari-jari* is a ritual which depicts the gathering together of the pieces of Husein's body and the bodies of his family that were scattered on the battlefield at Karbala. These fragments, representing the remains of Husein's body, are carried in procession around the *kampung* so that the local people can witness the brutality of the Yazid forces, accompanied by the beating of the *tasa* in rhythmic patterns. According to Asril et al., this ritual was originally designed to evoke sympathy and empathy for the grief and suffering experienced by Husein and his family. However, there has been a shift in meaning and nowadays this is no longer the main focus. Instead, the ritual focuses more on the fighting between the members of the two groups (*anak tabuik pasa* and *subarang*). The mood of grief is drowned by one of anger and ferocity. The ritual includes parading the *tabuik* frame and fighting between the two groups of *anak tabuik* when they pass by each other at a junction in the road (Asril, 2018: 71).

The *gandang tasa* ensemble continues to play to build an atmosphere of excitement and ferocity. At the beginning of the ritual, the role of the *gandang tasa* is to create excitement through the *sosoh* music. Gradually, the tempo of the *gandang tasa* music becomes faster and the mood chan

ges to one of anger and violence, as the *anak tabuik* release their emotions – see the illustration below:



**Illustration 9.** The emotions of the *gendang* players are aroused, shown by the raising of the *gendang* above the head, as the supporters prepare to fight

(Photo: Documentation Asril 2018)

### **Mangarak Sorban (*Parading the Turban*)**

In the next stage of the ritual, on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Muharam, Husein's turban is paraded as a symbol of the truth that Husein was defending in battle against the Yazid troops who were attempting to seize the position of Caliph by force. Asril et al. writes that the ritual of parading the turban is a representation of the actions of Husein's followers after discovering his turban. In the battle at Karbala, Husein was beheaded by his enemies. The goal of this ritual is to arouse people's sympathy for the suffering Husein endured. Through this suffering, a spirit of self-pride is developed, encouraging people to defend the truth in the same way as Husein, when he was fighting for his rights (Asril et al., 2018: 72). At night, the *tabuik* makers work hard to prepare for the *tabuik naiak pangkek* ritual the following day, when the *tabuik* structure is raised.

#### **4.1.7. *Tabuik Naiak Pangkek* (Raising the *Tabuik* Platform).**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharam, the *tabuik* is raised onto its platform (*naiak pangkek*) at 4 o'clock in the morning. *Tabuik naiak pangkek* is a

ritual in which the upper section of the *tabuik* structure (*pangkek ateh*) is joined to the lower section (*pangkek bawah*), after the two sections have been completed separately. Asril et al. describes this ritual as follows: The *pangkek bawah* is the lower part of the *tabuik* construction and consists of the legs of the *tabuik* and the *buraq*, which shows a trace of Shi'a culture and symbolizes the vehicle that transported Husein's body. The *pangkek atas* is the upper part of the *tabuik* construction and consists of several elements which are visualized as elements of Minangkabau or Sunni culture, including *bungo salapan* (eight flowers), *biliak-biliak* (chambers), *gomaik* (a water jug), and the uppermost section of the *tabuik*. All the elements of the *pangkek ateh* represent a new interpretation for the Pariaman community after *tabuik* was accepted as a part of their culture at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century" (Asril, 2018: 73).

The *tabuik naiak pangkek* ritual begins early in the morning after dawn prayers and continues until late morning, in both places. The *tabuik pasa* group performs the ritual in Lapangan Merdeka field in Pariaman while the *tabuik subarang* group performs the same ritual at the Simpang Tabuik junction – see the illustration below:



**Illustration 10.** The *tabuik naiak pangkek* ritual performed by the *anak tabuik* from the *tabuik Subarang* community (Photo: Asril, September 2018).

The *tabuik naiak pangkek* ritual involves numerous participants from several different elements of the community, including *tuo tabuik* (elders of the *tabuik* tradition), *ninik mamak*

(customary leaders), *anak tabuik* (ritual performers who are members of the young generation, including *gandang tasa* players), and *tabuik* makers. Throughout the ritual, the *gandang tasa* is played in both locations to create a lively atmosphere. The *gandang tasa* performance may last for two hours or more, for the duration of the entire *tabuik naiak pangkek* ritual. The musicians take turns to play the *gandang tasa*. Asril et al. states that the pieces played by the *gandang tasa* ensemble are *oyak tabuik* and *sosoh*, both of which are special pieces played only for the *tabuik naiak pangkek* ritual. The two pieces have a fast tempo, and an energetic, lively mood which raises the spirits and arouses the passion of the ritual performers and those raising the *tabuik* platform. During the performance of *sosoh*, the *gandang tasa* musicians also display their joy and excitement through spontaneous movements as they react to their own music (Asril et al., 2018: 75). Similarly, the audience members, and especially the women, dance around and mingle with the *gandang tasa* players – see the illustration below:



**Illustration 11.** *Gandang tasa* played by the *tabuik Subarang* group during the *tabuik naiak pangkek* ritual at Simpang Tabuik, Pariaman, which is the location for the ritual of the *tabuik Subarang* group. Members of the audience can be seen mingling with the musicians (Photo: Asril Muchtar, September 2018).

After the *tabuik naiak pangkek* ritual has finished and the large *tabuik* structure (*tabuik gadang*) has been assembled, along with all the attributes needed to form a complete *tabuik*, the

two *tabuik* structures are raised to an upright position in a strategic position at the two separate locations. The *Tabuik Pasa* structure is erected at the crossroads of Pariaman Market, while the *Tabuik Subarang* structure is erected at the Simpang Tabuik junction. The positions of the two *tabuik* structures point to the districts of their own groups, which are separated by a bridge across the Batang Air Pampan River (Asril, 2016: 192-193). The rituals of the two *tabuik* groups are accompanied by their own supporters and the clamour of the *gandang tasa* which arouses a spirit of heroism and patriotism as the *tabuik* structures are rocked, shaken, and pounded (*hoyak tabuik*).

### **Hoyak Tabuik (Rocking the Tabuik)**

*Hoyak tabuik* is the climax of the entire *tabuik* ritual, from the first stage for collecting the soil (*maambaiak tanah*) to the end of the ritual when the *tabuik* structure is submerged in the sea. *Hoyak tabuik* is a combination of the words *hoyak* and *tabuik*. *Hoyak* comes from the word *oyak*, which means to rock, shake, or pound (KBBI, 2014: 992). Thus, *hoyak tabuik* is the activity of rocking, shaking, or pounding the *tabuik gadang* structure. More specifically, according to Asril: “*Hoyak tabuik* is an attractive performance using the *tabuik gadang* as the object of attraction, which is rocked, shaken, lifted up and down, spun around, pounded, laid on the ground, and carried around at high speed” (Asril, 2016: 151) – see the illustration below:



**Illustration 12.** The *tabuik* is paraded around the

accompaniment of *gandang tasa*

(Photo: documentation Andar 2018)



**Illustration 13.** The *tabuik* is thrown into the sea  
(Photo: documentation Andar 2018)

In the illustrations above, the photo on the left shows the *tabuik* being carried around in the performance arena, accompanied by the *gandang tasa* ensemble. The photo on the right shows the end of the procession when the *tabuik* is submerged in the sea at Gandoriah Beach, Pariaman. The procession begins with the *Tabuik Pasa* community and is followed by the *Tabuik Subarang* community. Asril et al. explains that during the procession of the two *tabuik gadang*, the *gandang tasa* is played all the way along the road. The people watching join the procession to Gandoriah Beach and the streets are full, both with people watching the procession and those taking part in the ritual (Asril et al., 2018: 78). This is the end of the *tabuik* ritual. It is an event which remains in the minds of the Pariaman community, as a memory and a source of pride, and even though they are not followers of the Shi'a school of thought.

### **Aesthetical Value**

The phrase aesthetical value consists of the two words: aesthetical and value. Melvin Rader and Bertram Jessup define value as a common noun that refers to all kinds of predicates, both pro



and contra, in comparison with the description of factual matters (Rader & Jessup, 1976: 20). They continue to explain that value can be divided into three components: K-O-H. “K” is the interest of the subject, “O” is the object of the interest, and “H” is the relationship between the two (Rader & Jessup 1976: 20). Based on this definition and the components of value proposed by Rader & Jessup, *tabuik* as the material object is a noun such as has already been explained in the previous section. In connection with the basic principle of value K-O-H, the researcher as the subject (“K”) has an interest in *tabuik* as the material object (“O”), and the relationship between the subject and the object – “H” – is founded on the basis of aesthetical interests.

According to Deni Junaedi, aesthetics refers to the parameter of attractiveness or unattractiveness of an object (Junaedi, 2016: 14). Hence, aesthetical value can be defined as the relationship between the subject’s interest and the object of aesthetical interest. Aesthetical value is not limited to beauty or ugliness, but to attractiveness and unattractiveness. Attractiveness is the compatibility between the aesthetical value that exists in the subject and the aesthetical form or properties found in *tabuik* as the material object. At this point, we can talk about the level of relational values between the subjective and objective components that are related to one another, as explained by Samuel Alexander: In every value there are two sides: the subject appraising and the object being appraised. And the value is situated in the relationship between the two. The object has value like that of the subject, and the subject has value like that of the object ...the real mind is that of a good person with aesthetical feeling (Alexander, 1920: 302).

A subjective value is a characteristic of the subject, and an objective value is a characteristic of the object. However, neither one is complete in itself. The combination of a complete relationship K-O-H – is the only complete and actual value when we look at *tabuik* as the material object, as expl

ained below.



**Illustration 15.** *Bungo salapan* (Eight flowers)

<http://ronic21.blogspot.com/2017/10/tabuik-pariaman.html>, downloaded on 14 January 2018

*Bungo salapan* (eight flowers) is one of the properties of the upper section of the *tabuik* and provides aesthetical value from the point of view of the subject. Asril states that *bungo salapan* is like an open umbrella, consisting of eight sections. Symbolically, the four upper sections represent the four basic Islamic laws upheld by the Sunni Muslims of Pariaman. The *bungo salapan* underneath, meanwhile, point to the four customary laws that are upheld in the community. The difference in position indicates that Islamic law takes precedence over customary law, although both form an integral unit that lays the foundation for the guidelines followed by the Pariaman community in their day to day lives (Asril, 2016: 100).

The philosophical foundation of *bungo salapan*, which is a property of *tabuik*, is a representation of the concept “*adaik basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah – syarak magato, adaiak mamakai*” (customs based on Islamic law, Islamic law based on *kitabullah* –law states, custom uses), proposed in the Bukik Marapalam Treaty in 1837 in Puncak Pato, Tanah Data District. The Bukik Marapalam Treaty was



the climax of the conflict between “Traditional Groups” and “Religious Groups” in Minangkabau, conflict that is historically more often referred to as the Padri War. Suryadi writes that the solution of “*adaik basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah – syarak magato, adaiak mamakai*”, adopted by both sides in the Bukik Marapalam Treaty, was not only an attempt to end the physical conflict between “Traditional Groups” and “Religious Groups” but was also intended to neutralize any intervention by a third party – the Dutch (Suryadi, 1996: 22).

In order to bring together these two systems, a “treaty” was needed, and Suryadi states that the Bukik Marapalam Treaty can be likened to a Memorandum of Understanding rather than a declaration to reconcile in an integration. This means that the two sides did not agree to merge but rather to exist in two conceptions. They did not integrate but established lines of demarcation (Suryadi, 1996: 22). This is the only utopia that has become a reality. In truth, the solution of “*adaik basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah – syarak magato, adaiak mamakai*” was no more than an attempt to avoid physical conflict. However, behind this, in terms of concept, the conflict was long-lasting, and gave rise to prolonged psychological conflict that is unique to the Minangkabau area.

Returning to the *bungo salapan* that constitute one of the *tabuik* properties, it can be said that they possess both aesthetical and philosophical value. The aesthetical value lies in the relations that are founded on the interest of the subject in the object of the aesthetical interest, and the relationship between the subjective and objective components that are related to one another, from both the perspective of text and context, as already discussed.

### Position of Aesthetical Value

The position of aesthetical value is related to other values, such as social, legal, political, and so on. Deni Junaedi explains that aesthetical value

can be grouped into two types, namely ‘independent aesthetical value’ and ‘dependent aesthetical value’ (Junaedi, 2018: 96). Independent aesthetical value is that which is not affected by other values. Independent aesthetical value is found in the grammatical elements of a work of art or in the most basic aesthetical properties of an aesthetical object – in this case *tabuik* as the material object.

*Tabuik* as the material object is a form of art work that has been transformed from the event and myth of Husein ibn Ali’s death by *tabuik* artists in Pariaman. The grammatical elements of *tabuik* as an independent work of art can be grouped into three parts: (1) dramatization of the myth of Husein ibn Ali’s death; (2) the visual form of *tabuik* as a work of art; and (3) *gandang tasa* as a musical ensemble.

The dramatization of the myth – rite – of Husein ibn Ali’s death has been discussed in the previous section, and includes: (1) *maambaiak tanah* (collecting soil); (2) *maambiak/manabang batang pisang* (pulling out/chopping down a banana stem); (3) *maatam* (circling the imitation vault (*gobah*) of Husein’s grave); (4) *maradai* (asking for donations); (5) *maarak jari-jari* (parading the trellis); (6) *maarak sorban* (parading the turban); (7) *tabuik naiak pangkek* (joining the upper and lower sections of the *tabuik* structure); (8) *hoyak tabuik* (rocking the *tabuik*); and (9) *tabuik tabuang* (submerging the *tabuik* in the sea). The myth surrounding Husein ibn Ali’s death is a work of literature that begins with a historical event. This can be considered an independent work of art.

The visual form of *tabuik* as a work of art is an objective reality that is realized in an aesthetical procession – a performance. Asril et al. writes that the performance is arranged in a number of rites which present the fragments of the event of Husein’s death in the form of a parade, the attraction of *hoyak tabuik*, and a dramatization of grief, violence (such as fighting), and excitement (Asril et al., 2018: 62). At the end of the ritual (a Sunday) two large *tabuik gadang*

structures measuring 10-14 meters in height are used to portray Husein's coffin. In the afternoon, the two *tabuik* constructions are submerged into the sea as an act of 'burying' the imaginary coffin. This ritual takes place every year from the beginning to the middle of the month of Muharam (Asril, 2016: 3).

*Gandang tasa* is a musical ensemble that participates in the ritual procession of Husein ibn Ali's death. However, not all parts of the ritual include the *gandang tasa*. In the *maradai* ritual, for example, the *gandang tasa* is only used to enhance the atmosphere during the procession, until it enters the area of Pariaman Market. After that, all the participants in the *maradai* procession ask for donations from nearby food stalls, kiosks, shops, and houses, and the *gandang tasa* stops following the *maradai* group. This is also the case in the *tabuik tabuang* (discarding the *tabuik*) rite, or the procession to throw the *tabuik* in the sea in the afternoon, when the *gandang tasa* is not required to play.

'Dependent aesthetical value' is influenced by other values. Deni Junaedi states that when the aesthetical properties or grammatical elements in an aesthetical object are composed in the form of a particular story, it is possible that some spectators [researchers] will connect this form with other values besides aesthetical values (Junaedi, 2018: 97). Therefore, 'dependent aesthetical value' can appear alongside independent aesthetical value in a work of art, such as in the *tabuik* ritual with its Syi'ah political ideology.

This ideology is concerned with who would replace the prophet Muhammad as head of government after his death, or who would become the next caliph. A. Rahman Zainuddin et al. state that the group of Sunni Muslims by the name of Ahl Al-Sunnah wa Al-Jama'ah believe that the Prophet Muhammad never specified who should take his place as the leader of Islam after his death (Zainuddin, 2000: 39). According to the Sunnis, Muslims were given the authority to appoint one of

their own as leader or ruler of all Muslims.

In addition to the Sunnis, who make up the majority of Muslims, there is another minority group that holds different beliefs, namely the Shi'as, (Shi'a literally means "party"). According to Rahman Zainuddin, the full name of this group is Shi'a Ali, which means "Ali's party", but to simplify the name, the group is better known simply as Shi'a (Zainuddin, 2000: 39). This group believes that before his death, the Prophet Muhammad decided who would become his replacement, and this person was Ali, his own cousin and also his son-in-law, husband of Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet. In the history of Islam, this group is known as the Shi'a Muslims or Shiites (Zainuddin, 2000: 39).

If "politics" is understood to mean a form of active or real "struggle" or "opposition" against an order that is considered to be unfair, then it is true to say that the Shi'a Muslims are more political than the Sunnis. Thabathba'i writes that the Shi'a Muslims were born due to a political factor – in the sense of power – concerning who had the right to replace the Prophet Muhammad as the leader of Islam. The group of Shia' Muslims referred to here is the Shia' Imamah Muslims, the majority of Shi'a followers from whom other branches of Shi'a Islam originated, who are known as the Twelve Imam Shi'as or *Imamah* (Thabathba'i, 1989: 88).

According to Hamka, a Shi'a sect that has extreme views can be described as *ghulat*, which means it has overstepped the boundaries or has greatly exaggerated views. Some members of this sect even believe that Ali bin Abi Talib is God (followers of Abdulah bin Saba), and also that Jibril was misguided when bringing the revelation. God ordered it to be given to Ali but instead it was mistakenly given to Muhammad. "God was incarnated into the form of five individuals: the prophet Muhammad, Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husein. The spirit of God was incarnated in Ali and became one with his body. For this reason, Ali knew all that was a mystery" (Hamka, 1974: 92).

Fazlur Rahman also states that the majority of Shi'a Muslims are followers of the 12 imams, and believe that these imams are incarnations (*madhhar*) of the original light and that their characters possess divine qualities. However, the more extreme *muktazilah* Shi'a believe that these religious leaders are actually an incarnation of God and carry the divine substance of God. Some, such as Ali Illahis, even believe that these imams are literally God (Rahman, 1992: 277). It is the problem of Imamiah that was one of the sources of the "split" in Islam between the Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. In another sense, it can be said that the official demands of Ali's descendants were the beginning of Shi'a political teachings or ideology.

### Conclusions

In the Pariaman community, *tabuik* is understood to be a religious symbol – of history and myth – that represents the tragedy of the death of Husein ibn Ali on the battlefield at Karbala, at the hands of the troops of Yazid bin Umayyah. This religious symbol is constructed in the form of a colossal drama which depicts a group of the Prophet Muhammad's family being captured and killed by Yazid bin Umayyah's army in Karbala, Iraq. This dramatic interpretation of Husein's death personifies the angels travelling on the *buraq* and carrying Husein's body up to the heavens. This historical event that is shrouded in myth is re-enacted and celebrated in the form of the *tabuik* ceremony in the Pariaman community of Minangkabau, West Sumatra.

Aesthetics is the study of a process that occurs between a subject, an object, and the values related to experience, with parameters of attractiveness and unattractiveness. Attractiveness is the compatibility between the aesthetical value that exists in the subject and the aesthetical form or properties found in *tabuik* as the material object. Aesthetical value can be defined as the relationship that is built on the subject's interest in the object of interest. The position of aesthetical value

is connected with other values, such as social, legal, political, and so on. The position of aesthetical value can be grouped into two types, namely 'independent aesthetical value' and 'dependent aesthetical value'. Independent aesthetical value lies in the grammatical elements of a work of art or in the most basic aesthetical properties of an aesthetical object, in this case the *tabuik* as the material object. 'Dependent aesthetical value' is influenced by other values; in this case *tabuik* in the context of community life. As a work of art, *tabuik* represents the values that in a normative way have become basic knowledge in the life of the community at least on a level of value and ideology.

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