

## The Travelogues of Abdullah Munshi: A Retrospective Study

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### Abstract

The colonisation of Tanah Melayu (Malaya) by Western powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century influenced the Malay literature of the time. Those literary works have given different interpretation covering various aspects such as culture, religion and society in Malaya. Abdullah Munshi was a famous Malay writer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was dubbed the "Father of Modern Malay Literature" because he used modern writing techniques that were not found in older Malay literary works. This study aims to review Abdullah Munshi's travelogues as well as the studies that has been done on his travelogues. Qualitative method is used in this study. According to the survey findings, studies on Abdullah Munshi's travelogues can be divided into several aspects or main themes, including biography and contribution, language and literature, historiography, culture and society, guidance and advice, captivity, Occidentalism, and thought. Therefore, it is appropriate to highlight cultural and societal aspects because these are the aspects considered as potentially concordant with the criticism found in his travelogues. They also need to be detailed by raising issues of 19<sup>th</sup> century Malay society such as politics, unity, education, and attitudes. Therefore, it is hoped that future studies will focus on Abdullah Munshi's travelogues as they contain valuable insights of the Malay community especially from the aspects of national progress and civilisation.

**Keywords:** Malay Literature, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Abdullah Munshi, Travelogue, Adventure, Criticism

### Introduction

Travelogues or travel writings as a record of important moments in travellers' journeys have long existed. Lisda's account (2014) proves that the genre of travel writing existed since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Rahimah and Alya (2020) explain that controlling raw materials such as tin ore and gold and having power over the economy of Malaya was the reason for the colonisation of Tanah Melayu (Malaya) by the Western powers.

According to Rahimah et al (2019), these motives of the colonials resulted in various strategies to ensure the success of the main motive of exploitation of Malaya's natural

resources. Among the strategies was the requirement for British colonial officers in Malaya to understand and investigate Malay customs and traditions. They had to learn and master the Malay language and literature as well. As a result, Malay language teachers such as Abdullah Munshi were tasked with guiding and instructing British colonial officers.

Wilkinson (1907) in his book, *Papers on Malay Subjects. Malay Literature I: Romance, History, and Poetry*, describes Malay literature as having no literary value. Furthermore, he claims that if the Malays were to continue with such traditional literary trends, they could well fall behind in the current of national civilisation. As a result, the Western writing technique, emphasising the element of reality in a work, was introduced. Abdullah Munshi wrote *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan*, a Malay travelogue, in 1838, which describes his journey through Pahang and Terengganu on his way to Kelantan. His work, *Hikayat Abdullah* and *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah* came after his travel writing.

*Hikayat Abdullah* is a biographical work by Abdullah Munshi. However, this study classifies this Abdullah Munshi's work as a travelogue, since the content includes travel elements as well. This is supported by Nordin's (2013) claims that when Abdullah Munshi started working, he recorded every moment of his journey from Melaka to Singapore. Consequently, this study conducts a retrospective survey of Abdullah Munshi's travelogue by employing a qualitative method for thematic analysis. According to Othman et al (2008), retrospective survey is a form of research that looks back to obtain information about the past (p 83). This study focuses on only three of Abdullah Munshi's works, namely, *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* in 1838, *Hikayat Abdullah* in 1849, and *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah* in 1858.

### **Methodology**

A qualitative methodology is used in this study through the application of textual analysis. In this study, two processes are carried out: data collection and data analysis. For the data collection, the researcher uses library reading materials as data collection method. Authoritative materials such as journal articles, books, proceedings, and theses, are used. Next, the data is divided and categorised into several specific aspects and analysed in accordance with the thematic method.

### **Background of Abdullah Munshi**

Abdullah Munshi, or Abdullah bin Kadir, is a prominent figure in Malay studies and Malay political history. He was born in Kampung Pali, Melaka in 1796. Due to his close relationship with British colonials, he is frequently associated with controversy since he worked as a writer for Thomas Stamford Raffles at the age of 14. His father, a writer for William Farquhar, the Resident of Melaka in 1800, honed his reading and writing skills. The educational influence of family members such as those of two of his uncles who also worked as writers for the British, clearly had an impact on his intellectual development, particularly in the field of Malay studies (Mawar, 2014).

According to Merican (2011), Abdullah Munshi was named "The Father of Modern Malay Literature" because the writing style of his works has the elements of Western writing style, which do not exist in works of traditional Malay literature. He was also considered the Malay author or writer of Melaka and Singapore in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His writings are mostly about the Malay community. Thus, he is considered as the earliest Malay journalist because of his presentation of narratives about the community.

Mawar (2014) states that his earliest works such as *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan in 1838*, *Syair Singapura Terbakar in 1843*, and *Hikayat Abdullah in 1849*, were among the earliest printed works of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, earned Abdullah Munshi the label of "Father of Malay Printed Works". Some of his other works are *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah in 1858*, *Dawai'il Kulub in 1820*, *Hikayat Panca Tanderan in 1835*, *Darihal Cerita Kapal Asap in 1841*, *Syair Kampung Gelam Terbakar dan Kampung Tengah Dimakan Api in 1847*, *Syair Tahun Baru in 1848*, and *Darihal Cerita Sabur Ali in 1851* (Che-Ross, 2013, p 190-210).

### **The Travelogues of Abdullah Munshi in Retrospect**

This study focuses on the works of Abdullah Munshi that contain elements of travel narrative, namely, *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan*, *Hikayat Abdullah*, and *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah*. The researcher briefly describes the essence of each of the travelogues, as presented in the following sections:

#### **(1) Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan in 1838**

According to Firuz (2018) in her study, "Notions of Captivity in Arab, Malay, and Persian Travel Narratives", *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* is considered an innovative travel record in the field of Malay literature. This is because it is the first Malay travelogue to apply Western writing style and techniques. In March 1838, Abdullah Munshi was hired as a carrier of letters to Kelantan and as a personal interpreter to Grandpe, a British officer. He and his companions used waterways throughout their expedition to Kelantan.

Abdullah Munshi's decision to narrate his journey was prompted by a British missionary named Alfred North. The publication of his travelogue to Kelantan received help and support from Alfred North. His travelogue is said to have sparked controversy among critics because he made disparaging statements about the Malays and the Malay royal family. Ahmad, K. (1960) describes Abdullah Munshi as a careful observer and sharp critic of his people at the time, for instance:

*Dia sa-orang pemerhati yang amat teliti terhadap keadaan2 zaman-nya dan sa-orang pengeritik yang sangat tajam terhadap masharakat Melayu dalam zaman-nya itu.*

(Ahmad, 1960, p 1-2)

A frequent topic of discussion on *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* is the decline and fall of the Malays in Pahang, Terengganu, and Kelantan. According to Abdullah Munshi's thought, poverty is the primary cause for the backwardness of the east coast Malays. Abdullah condemned the Malay royal family for the tyranny and persecution of the people in this work. According to Ahmad (1960), Abdullah Munshi's life was formed in a colonial environment. Consequently, Abdullah's significance would be lost without colonialism. As a consequence of his close relationship with British officials, Abdullah Munshi was exposed to new ideas introduced by the West. Malay literature was indirectly pushed forward and modernised following *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan*.

#### **(2) Hikayat Abdullah in 1849**

*Pengarang lebih banyak memaparkan senario kemasyarakatan tetapi juga banyak menggarap perjalanan hidup pegawai-pegawai kolonial yang dekat dengan kehidupannya.*

(Nordin, 2013, p 2)

The above quote is a statement of Nordin (2013) in her study entitled *Proses dan Kesan Kamsukan British ke Singapura 1819: Catatan Abdullah Abdul Kadir Munshi Dalam Hikayat Abdullah* (p 2). Nordin (2013), in her study explains that *Hikayat Abdullah* is a work that mainly exhibits social scenarios and focuses on his life's journey with the British colonial officers who were familiar to him. This work is considered as a showcase of the policies of the British officials in their administration in Malaya. The first lithograph print of *Hikayat Abdullah* in the Jawi script was published in 1849 in Singapore. Nordin (2013) describes *Hikayat Abdullah* as an autobiographical work even though it contains various historical events of the 19th century.

In essence, this work is a description of Abdullah Munshi's life and experiences from childhood to adulthood, with a focus on his time in Melaka. This work also includes his experiences and journey from Melaka to Singapore as he grew older and started working. Furthermore, this work served as a vehicle for him to project all the perspectives, experiences, and events that occurred. *Hikayat Abdullah*, according to Nordin, can also be described as a travelogue. This is because, as documented in the work, Abdullah's journey from Melaka to Singapore to begin his service as a teacher includes element of travel.

### **(3) Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah in 1858**

According to Ahmad (1960), *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah*, the narrative of Abdullah Munshi's journey to Makkah is considered lighter than his journey to Kelantan. He says:

*Bunyi-nya sa-akan2 sa-buah laporan berita yang panjang, yang ditulis oleh sa-orang pemberita yang tidak shak lagi pandai mengarang.*

(Ahmad, 1960, p 14)

Ahmad (1960) compares Abdullah Munshi's presentation style in this travelogue as if it were a long news report written by a reporter, at the same time proving Abdullah Munshi's ability as a talented author. This travelogue of his journey to Makkah provides readers with information related to history and relevant matters regarding rituals of the *hajj*, or Muslim pilgrimage. The writing patterns in *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah* are freer and more interesting due to Abdullah Munshi's use of language. Unfortunately, Abdullah Munshi's story of the journey to Makkah was never completed because he passed away while still in Makkah.

## **Review of Literature**

Based on the review conducted by the researcher, studies on Abdullah Munshi's work have been classified according to several aspects. The review includes only the previous studies of his works with travel elements, namely *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* in 1838, *Hikayat Abdullah* in 1849, and *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah* in 1858. The aspects of previous studies on this notable writer's works are classified as follows:

### **(1) Biography and Contribution**

Based on observation, studies that focus on the biography of Abdullah Munshi and his contributions have gained attention in the field of research. Studies by Embong and Merican (2013), *Abdullah Munshi - A Modern Malay Intellectual of New Century*, and Marina Munira (2012), *The Contribution of Abdullah Munshi in Malay Literary Works* focus on Abdullah

Munshi's contribution to literature as The Father of Modern Malay Literature, based on his work, *Hikayat Abdullah*. Embong and Merican (2013) state that the modernity and innovation brought by Abdullah Munshi in the field of Malay literature covers the aspects of language, culture, feminism and printing. Meanwhile Marina Munira (2012) argues that the modernity of Malay literature by Abdullah Munshi is through the tone of criticism and sarcastic messages about the Malays that has become a controversy among scholars as well as an inspiration for the renewal of Malay literature.era.

The study conducted by Che-Ross (2013), *Kehendakku Mengarang Hikayat Ini: Senarai Ringkas Karya-karya & Mashaf Asal Karangan & Salinan Munshi Abdullah Bin Abdul Kadir* shows Abdullah Munshi's contribution in a summary of his original works as well as his biography in greater depth. Ibrahim's study (1986), *The Printing of Munshi Abdullah's Edition of The Sejarah Melayu in Singapore* focuses on the contribution of Abdullah Munshi's printed works by examining the details of the works and the publication background. Traill (1981), in his study *Aspects of Abdullah Munshi*, presents works by Abdullah Munshi with Western elements influenced by British colonial officers. In addition, Traill (1982), in his study, *The "Lost" Manuscript of The Hikayat Abdullah Munshi*, reveals the loss of the original *Hikayat Abdullah* written by Abdullah Munshi himself.

## **(2) Language and Literature**

There are many studies on Abdullah Munshi's travelogues that highlight aspects of language and literature. Among them, a study by Subagiharti et al (2015), *Classical Malay's Anthropomorphic Metaphors in Essay of Hikayat Abdullah*, focuses on metaphors in *Hikayat Abdullah* with its characteristics such as long, repetitive, convoluted and passive sentences, specific vocabularies and preceded conjunctions. Meanwhile, Ho-Abdullah et al (2010) in *Lexical Associations of Malayness in Hikayat Abdullah: A Collocational Analysis*, examine collocation in the same work and the result shows that there is a relationship between the lexical collocation of Malay words in the field of semantics. Yusoff et al (2020) in *Analisis Stilistik dalam Teks Melayu Hikayat Abdullah*, analyse Abdullah Munshi's language style in *Hikayat Abdullah*. The study of the language style in his works is based on the implicit language art elements found in his works. The result shows that the abstracted lexical usage is still maintained. While the lexical pattern and knowledge in his work show the emphasis of event elements.

Furthermore, Ungku and Washima (2019) analyze the elements of realism in the work *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* in their study, *Pemartabatan "Real" dan "Realisme" ke Status Konvensi Sastera dalam Kesusasteraan Melayu*. This study affirms the continuation of the use of realism found in Abdullah Munshi's works, therefore making it easy for writers and critics to make the realism element as a legitimate literary convention. Meanwhile, Mawar (2020) studies two of Abdullah Munshi's works, namely, *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* and *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Makkah*, to examine Hadijah Rahmat's perspective on the two works from a literary point of view through her study, *Abdullah Bin Abdul Kadir: Hadijah Rahmat's Focal Point in Malay Literature*.

## **(3) Historiography**

Based on observation, the historical aspect appears as a point of focus among researchers. A study by Nordin (2013), *Proses dan Kesan Kemasukan British ke Singapura 1819: Catatan Abdullah Abdul Kadir Munsyi dalam Hikayat Abdullah* examines the the implications of British

colonisation in Singapore where the desire, process, strategic framework and actions are very important to be understood as best as possible. Whereas Putten (2013) studies the travelogue *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* and in his article *Abdullah Munshi and the Missionaries*, he discusses the history of the relationship between Abdullah Munshi and the missionaries who have given implications to his writing style. On the other hand, the study by Lawrence (2019), *Greed, Guns and Gore: Historicising Early British Colonial Singapore Through Recent Developments In The Historiography Of Munshi Abdullah*, which examines the early colonization of Singapore through the elements of greed, guns and violence in his historiographical analysis of *Hikayat Abdullah* and *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan*.

Next, *Manuskrip Melayu dari Kelantan: Satu Tinjauan Awal* by Nik (1992) is a historical analysis to identify remains of Malay manuscripts in Kelantan through his travels to Kelantan. There are 77 Malay manuscripts that have been identified. Meanwhile, *Munshi Abdullah, Konfusianisme Melaka dan Keterlibatan dalam Polemik Identiti "Sianu"* by Qiongwen et al (2022) examines Abdullah Munshi's relationship with Malacca Confucianism in the context of the arrival of the British, along with his connection to the polemic on Sianu identity. The result shows that Abdullah Munshi may have known about Confucius as a result of his close relationship with Malacca Confucianism, the Chinese teacher for British priests and the local Chinese community. The Sianu's identity probably refers to Claudius Henry Thomsen and Abdullah Munshi used to work with him as a reporter and translator.

#### **(4) Culture and Society**

There are also found studies focussing on aspects of culture and society. Sweeney (2006) in *Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi: A Man of Bananas and Thorns* focusing on the views of Abdullah Munshi who put the issue of Islam as a priority over ethnic issues through the criticism he made in his work entitled *Hikayat Abdullah*. Meanwhile, Hamdan (2014) in his study, *Kritikan Abdullah Munshi terhadap Sosioekonomi Penduduk Terengganu melalui Autobiografi "Hikayat Pelayaran Abdullah dari Singapura Sampai ke Kelantan,"* portrays the economic situation of the Terengganu community in the 19<sup>th</sup> century through Abdullah's criticism in his work, *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan*. However, the mention of Terengganu people's specialty in Islamic education has led to confusion whether Abdullah's criticism is positive or negative. Norhaili Massari et al (2019) analyze the writings of the four Malay figures namely Abdullah Munshi, Za'ba, Syed Hussein Al-atas and Mahathir Mohamad about their thoughts regarding the identity and culture of the Malay community. Abdullah Munshi's selected work for the study in *The Malays: A Retrospective Examination on Identity through Selected Writings by Munshi Abdullah, Za'ba, Syed Hussein Alatas and Mahathir Mohamad* is his travelogue *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan*.

#### **(5) Guidance and Advice**

Furthermore, aspects of guidance and advice are emphasised through Abdullah Munshi's travel works. The article *Panduan Keibubapaan Yang Perlu Dimanfaatkan Menurut Hikayat Abdullah* by Rahimah (2019) outlines the parenting guidance and advice from *Hikayat Abdullah*. This study describes Abdullah Munshi's view about parenting guidance as a serious matter in order to nurture a dignified and civilized generation. Nur and Rahimah (2018) also compare the advice provided in *Hikayat Abdullah* with the advice of the Quran and Hadis in their study, *"Abdullah Paderi": Perbandingan Unsur Nasihat dalam Hikayat Abdullah dengan*

*Al-Quran dan Hadis*. This study proves that Abdullah Munshi's criticism has made the people of his time aware about the superstition culture that had been practiced since generations

### **(6) Captivity**

There are also studies outlining aspects of captivity in Abdullah Munshi's travelogues. Rahimah et al (2019) in *Abdullah Munshi as The Captured Character in His Own Autobiography* examine the character of Abdullah Munshi as a captive in *Hikayat Abdullah*. The finding of the study shows that Abdullah Munshi meets the five characteristics in the concept of a captive character as proposed by Syed Hussien Alatas. Meanwhile, Firuz-Akhtar (2018) in her study compares the aspect of captivity in Arabic, Persian, and Malay travelogues. Among the Malay travelogues studied in the comparison is *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan*.

### **(7) Occidentalism**

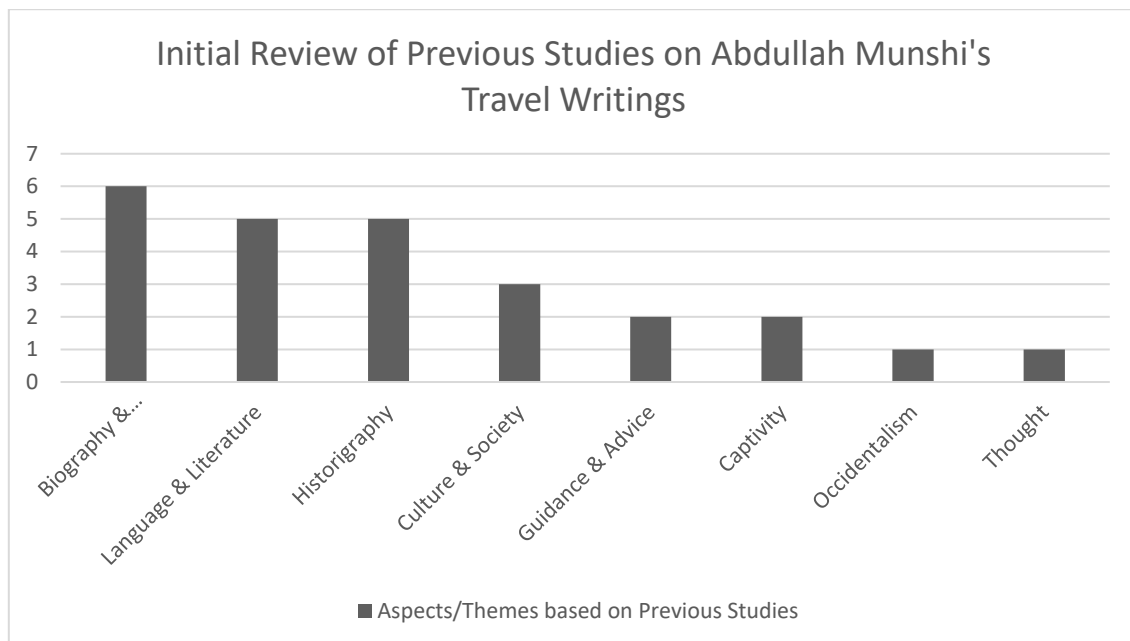
There is also a study that shows aspects of occidentalism in *Hikayat Abdullah*. Merican (2011) in *Occidentalism in The Malay World: The West Through The Eyes of Abdullah Munshi* examines Abdullah Munshi's perspective on the West from the view of Occidentalism. Although Abdullah Munshi is seen as a pro-British person, there is also his negative criticism of British colonial officials in *Hikayat Abdullah*. Abdullah Munshi is seen as a rational person who only admires 'white people' in terms of scientific and worldly progress but still holds fast to the religious teachings within himself.

### **(8) Thought**

Jaya (2019) in *Konsep Nation-State Dalam Pemikiran Ideologi Politik Melayu Islam Pada Abad ke-19 M (Studi Pemikiran Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi 1787-1854)* analyzes Abdullah Munshi's thought and political ideology based on the concept of nation-state through his work, *Hikayat Abdullah*. This study finds that Abdullah Munshi proposed the formulation of Malay identity in the system of national formulation in the 19th century which provided opportunity for the Malay community to determine the Malay political format. In addition, his close relationship with the British colonial side has shaped liberal thinking that dismantles the manipulation of royal ideology and gives a new perspective on the existence of humanist individuals.

### **Findings**

Based on the initial review, 25 previous studies that focus on Abdullah Munshi's works with travel element had been analysed. The works are *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* in 1838, *Hikayat Abdullah* in 1849, and *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah* in 1858. In general, eight aspects have been highlighted in past studies of Abdullah Munshi's travelogues. The following graph indicates the number of references for each aspect or theme captured in the study of Abdullah Munshi's travel writings:



**Graph 1 Number of References to Specific Aspects Mentioned in Previous Studies**

Graph 1 above shows the number of previous studies on each aspect or theme that has been highlighted. In comparison to other themes, most studies on three Abdullah Munshi's works of travelogue writing focus on aspects of his biography and contribution. Researchers consider Abdullah Munshi's travelogue writing to be more interesting to be studied. Previous studies that highlight aspects of Abdullah Munshi's biography and contribution focus on his background and life, his contribution to the field of Malay literature as displayed in summaries of his works, the field of printing works and manuscripts, the context of his writing style showing the influence of Western writing style, and the loss of the original *Hikayat Abdullah* manuscript written by Abdullah Munshi himself in retrospect.

Following that are studies dealing with literature and language and history. These two themes show that scope or aspects of this nature are still relevant to any study related to Abdullah Munshi's travelogue works. In addition, the aspects of community and culture, though few, do receive attention from researchers, as may be seen in several studies. The same may be said for the scope of research on advice and guidance in the works of Abdullah Munshi. This needs more emphasis from other researchers. Meanwhile, past studies with perspectives on aspects of Abdullah Munshi's thought from the point of view of Occidentalism have received little attention from researchers.

### Discussion

The result of the initial review clearly shows that studies that highlight aspects of biography and contribution are more interesting among the researchers of Abdullah Munshi's travel writings. For future studies, aspects of society and culture in Abdullah Munshi's travel writings should be given more attention. This is because the essence of his travelogues focuses more on the Malay society and culture.



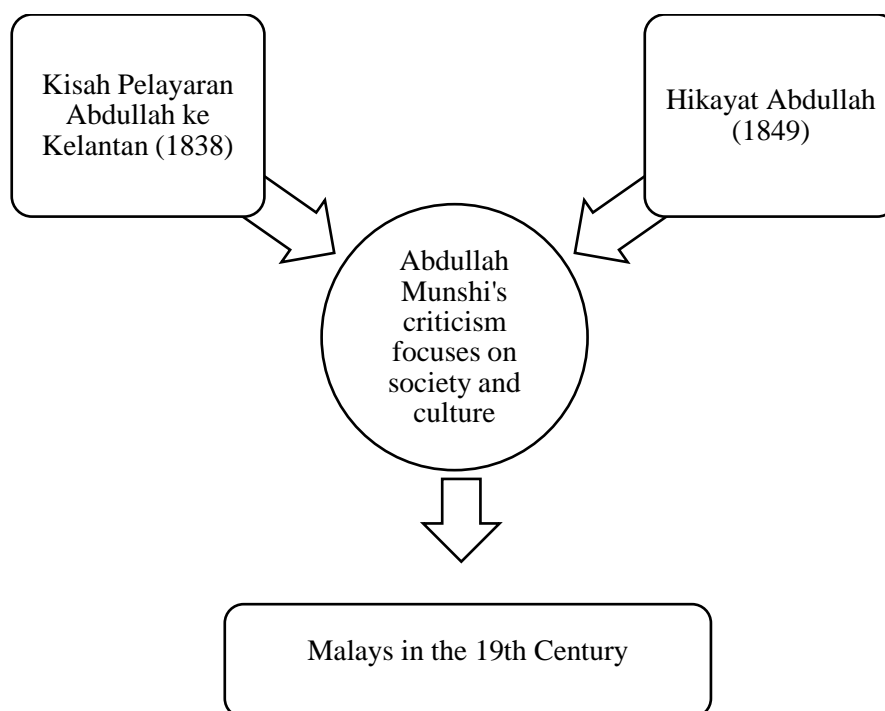


Figure 1 Criticism in Abdullah Munshi's Writings

As illustrated in the diagram above, majority of previous studies emphasized Abdullah Munshi's criticism in his writings. Two of his travelogues clearly show sharp criticism, especially of the Malays, namely in *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* in 1838, and *Hikayat Abdullah* in 1849. There is a clear point of commonality in these two works which is Abdullah Munshi's criticisms are more directed towards the society and culture of the Malays. Here is the proof for the statement about Abdullah Munshi's criticism that focuses on the Malay community in both of his works:

*Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah in 1838 and Hikayat Abdullah in 1849 are two seminal works of Munshi Abdullah that earned him the title, "Father of Modern Malay Literature". These partly autobiographical work and narrative contain Abdullah's criticisms towards the Malays based on his observations of the Malays in Malaya and Singapore during his work trips accompanying Sir Stamford Raffles.*

(Norhaili et al, 2019, p 218)

Norhaili et al (2019) states that *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* in 1838 and *Hikayat Abdullah* in 1849 are two Abdullah Munshi's seminal works which gave him the title 'Father of Modern Literature'. Those two works mostly contain Abdullah Munshi's criticism of the Malays through his observations in Malaya and Singapore during his work tour accompanying Sir Stamford Raffles. The next statement points to Abdullah Munshi's sharp criticism of the Malays in *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* in 1838:

*Abdullah dalam tulisan membuat kritikan yang tajam dan kadangkala melampau terutama struktur sosial masyarakat. Boleh dikatakan tidak ada yang terkecuali daripada menjadi objek kritikan beliau termasuklah kumpulan pemerintah sehingga kepada rakyat jelata. Abdullah menggambarkan status sosioekonomi*

*penduduk Melayu Pantai Timur pada abad ke 19 berada dalam keadaan naif dan daif.*

(Hamdan, 2014, p 1136)

Hamdan (2014) states that the criticism made by Abdullah Munshi in *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* in 1838 was sharp and sometimes extreme, especially on the issue of society social structure. The object of his criticism includes the ruling class and the common people, as no one is exempted from being the object of his criticism. Abdullah Munshi also describes the socioeconomic status of the naïve and poor Malay population in the East Coast states in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This statement points to Abdullah Munshi's criticism of the Malays in *Hikayat Abdullah* in 1849:

*Ada segolongan sarjana menganggap Abdullah Munshi membawa pembaharuan dalam kesusasteraan Melayu menerusi keberanian beliau mengkritik adat dan budaya yang diamalkan sejak turun-temurun. Terdapat segolongan sarjana yang tidak menyetujui penobatan tersebut dan menganggap kritikan Abdullah Munshi dalam karyanya adalah 386eality yang menyimpang jauh daripada penulisan sebelumnya.*

(Rahimah, 2019, p 12)

Through the statement above, Rahimah (2019) argues that there are some scholars who believe that Abdullah Munshi's courage to criticize Malay customs and culture which has been practiced for generations in *Hikayat Abdullah* in 1849 has led to a renewal and innovation in the field of Malay literature. These three statements prove that the criticisms in the travelogues was Abdullah Munshi's way of displaying his concern about the Malay society and culture in the 19th century. Therefore, studies on the aspects of society and culture should be given more emphasis as it is in line with Abdullah Munshi's criticism and views of the Malays.

Abdullah Munshi's criticisms in his travelogues are seen as appropriate and relevant to be used as a guide and guideline for the community, especially the Malay community. However, his criticisms of his nation have not been specialized in most studies about his works. This statement is supported by Rahimah (2019) who states that none of the studies highlighted Abdullah's criticism as his guidance and guidelines for the community. Therefore, it is insisted that the future studies of Abdullah Munshi's travelogues focus on the aspects of society and culture as it is a gap in the research regarding Abdullah Munshi.

In connection with that, it is suggested that the study of society and culture highlights the issues of the Malays that was quite prominent in Abdullah Munshi's travelogues. Among the suitable issues to be raised are politics, unity, attitudes and education. The problems may be studied appropriately based on literary theories such as postcolonial literary theory. According to Nugraheni and Widyahening (2020), 'postcolonialism' is a theory that came into existence after several colonized countries achieved independence. Therefore, it is suitable to apply postcolonial theory in analyzing Abdullah Munshi's travelogues which are seen to have colonial elements.

Besides that, the aspects of society and culture through the criticism of Abdullah Munshi have the potential to be studied by applying the theory of civilization and culture of Malik Bennabi. The civilization of the Malay society in the 19th century faced a phase of decline due

to the culture practiced in their lives. This culture is not only limited to customs, but it also covers the attitudes and morals of individuals and communities. According to Abdul Razak et al (2022), Malik Bennabi shows that culture refers to a character trait and social values, where it affects individuals and society since birth and has a relationship that binds behavior to be applied in their lives.

In short, studies on aspects of society and culture, especially the Malay community in the 19th century in the work of Abdullah Munshi's travelogue should be carried out as they have not yet received full attention in the field of research. In addition, the study is capable of stimulating the minds of the Malay community to be used as a lesson and guide for the future of Malays in order to become a more civilized society.

### **Conclusion**

The 19th century has seen the creation literary works including the travel-based writings by Abdullah Munshi. His travelogues *namely Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan* in 1838, *Hikayat Abdullah* in 1849 and *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Makah* in 1858 have have clearly been the focus of researchers as research material. Based on observation, the studies of Abdullah Munshi's travelogues feature various aspects such as biography and contribution, language and literature, history, society and culture, guidance and advice, captivity, occidentalism, and thought. This retrospective research finds that studies about biography and contribution of Abdullah Munshi are more prominent compared to other aspects. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies on Abdullah Munshi's travelogues should consider focusing on the aspects of society and culture as it is noticeable in his cynical criticism of the society. In addition, this kind of study is able to give accurate implications to the Malay community to become a civilized and advanced society in all aspects comparable to other nations.

This retrospective study on Abdullah Munshi's travelogues as well as past studies regarding them has proven the importance of deeper studies on Abdullah Munsh's valuable writings. The research gap has been emphasized, hence other researchers can examine Abdullah Mushi's writings comprehensively, especially regarding his criticisms which are considered sarcastic and controversial among the Malay community. Various aspects can also be studied about the Malay community of the 19th century through the observant Abdullah such as attitudes, leadership, education, geography and others. Overall, this retrospective study showcases the importance of Abdullah Munshi's writings as sources for other interdisciplinary studies. It is hoped that this study will generate other valuable studies especially those that can repel negative stereotypes regarding the Malays.

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