
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Sociological Aspects in Siti Nurbaya's Novel by Marah Rusli

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ABSTRACT

There is a close relationship between literature and life because the social function of literature is how it involves itself in people's lives. The purpose of this research is to find out the sociology of literature, which examines it through three contexts, first, the social context of the author; second, literature as a mirror of society; third, the social function of literature in the novel *Siti Nurbaya* by Marah Rusli. The method in this research uses descriptive qualitative. In this case, the writer first describes the social context of Marah Rusli's novel *Siti Nurbaya*, then analyzes the content of the novel and then looks at the relationship between the problems in the novel, and then adjusts it to socio-cultural conditions. The results of the analysis show that *Siti Nurbaya's* novel, in terms of the author's social context, that in *Siti Nurbaya's* novel, is based on the bad experience of the author, Marah Rusli. *Siti Nurbaya's* novel reflects the many problems of society in *Siti Nurbaya's* era, such as polygamy, pride in nobility, customs in Padang, child sacrifices for their parents, and so on. Meanwhile, there is a social function of literature in the novel, which includes rebellion, literary works as entertainment, and entertainingly teaching something.

KEYWORDS

Sociological, literature, novel

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1. Introduction

Literature is a depiction of life that is poured through the media of writing. In the development of Indonesian literature, literary results have various forms—one form of Indonesian literature is the novel. Novels have an important position in the development of Indonesian literature. The development of Indonesian novels has experienced a golden age in the era of Balai Pustaka and the New Pujangga, which at that time was known as romance (Lokita, E., 2019). Marah Rusli is an example of a great Indonesian writer who truly transcended his time with his writing entitled *Siti Nurbaya*. There is a close relationship between literature and life because the social function of literature is how it involves itself in people's lives. Literature has a function as a refiner of character, increasing sensitivity, a sense of humanity or social care, growing cultural appreciation, and channelling ideas, imagination, and expression creatively and constructively, both orally and in writing (Saragih, AK, Manik, NS, & Br. Samosir, RRY., 2021; Yulianto, A., 2021). Sociology of literature cannot be separated from humans and society, which relies on literary works as the object being discussed. Like sociology, literature deals with people in society, Human efforts to complete themselves and their efforts to change society, Human relations with their families, their environment, politics, the state, and so on. In pure research, it is clear that the novel deals with social, economic, and political textures, which is also a matter of sociology. The difference between the two is that sociology carries out objective science, while the novel penetrates the surface of social life and shows how humans live society with their feelings (Nasution, W., 2016; Lowenthal, L., 2020). In this study, the writer uses a sociological approach to literature to examine the novel *Siti Nurbaya* by Marah Rusli. This research focuses on the problem of sociology of literature, namely researching through three contexts, first, the social context of the author; second, literature as a mirror of society; third, the social function of literature. So, a literary work never departs from a social vacuum. This means that literary works are written based on the social life of certain people and tell the cultures that lie behind them.

2. Literature Review

Literature is a manifestation of an individual's ideas through views and thoughts on the social environment around him by using beautiful language. Literature is present as a result of the author's reflection on existing phenomena, or literature can also be present as a way for the author to express his ideas or ideas in writing that can be enjoyed by all circles of society (Rifai, SA, 2021). The process of creating literary works cannot be separated from the process of the author's imagination in carrying out his creative process of making a literary work. Literary work is a human creation that contains a high value of beauty because all forms of literary works are made based on a clear heart and mind (Slamet, YBM., 2018; S, ASW, Ansari, & Mahmuda, 2020). Literary works express the reality of people's lives figuratively. That is, literary works are a representation or reflection of society.

Sociology of literature is derived from the words sociology and literature. Sociology comes from the root word socio/socius (Greek), which means society, logic/logos means science. So, sociology means the science of the origin and growth (evolution) of society, the science that studies the entire network of relationships between humans in society, which in general, are rational, and empirical (Wiyatmi, 2013; Tyas, 2018; Doe, J., 2019). Sociology of literature is a reflective branch of literary research (Franssen, T., & Kuipers, G., 2015). This research is in great demand by researchers who want to see literature as a mirror of people's lives. The basic assumption of sociological research on literature is that the birth of literature is not in a moral vacuum (Nurholis, MH, 2019; Majid, A., 2020). Social life will trigger the birth of literary works. A successful literary work is a literary work that can reflect its era.

Sociology is an approach to literary works that still consider literary works and social aspects; Welck and Warren divide the sociology of literature as follows. *First*, the sociology of the author, the author's profession, and literary institutions, the issues related here are the economic basis of literary production, the social background of the author's status, and the ideology of the author involved in various activities of the author outside of literary works, because every author is a citizen, it can be studied as a social being. Author biographies are the primary source, but the study can also extend to the environment in which you live and originate. In this case, information about the author's family background or economic position will have a role in revealing the author's sociological problem. *Second* is the sociology of literary works, which questions the literary work itself, which is the subject of its study or what is implied in the literary work, and what is its purpose. The general approach taken by sociology is to study literature as a social document as a portrait of social reality; literature is also a storehouse of customs, a sourcebook for the history of civilization. *Third*, the sociology of literature which concerns the reader and the social impact of literary works, the author is influenced and influences the community; art not only imitates life, it shapes it. Many people imitate the lifestyle of fictional world figures and apply it in their lives.

3. Methodology

In this study, the authors chose to use a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative description is done by describing the facts, then followed by describing the stage of providing understanding and explanation. In this case, the writer first describes the social context of Marah Rusli's novel Siti Nurbaya, then analyzes the content of the novel and then looks at the relationship between the problems in the novel, and then adjusts it to socio-cultural conditions.

Sources of data in this study include primary data sources. Primary data sources are sources that directly provide data to researchers. The primary data source, in this case, is the text of the novel Siti Nurbaya by Marah Rusli. The research technique is divided into two, namely data collection techniques and data analysis techniques. The data collection technique used in this research is the reading and note-taking technique. The reading and note-taking technique is a technique used by reading the written text; then, it is recorded on the data card that has been provided according to the problem to be described. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique is based on the existing problems; the steps taken to analyze the data are: (1) reading Siti Nurbaya by Marah Rusli ; (2) mark sentences or paragraphs that describe the author's social context as reflected in the novel Perempuan Jogja, social descriptions, and social functions in the novel Siti Nurbaya by Marah Rusli ; (3) analyzing the findings of the author's social context, social description, and social function in the novel Siti Nurbaya by Marah Rusli; and (4) describe the findings.

4. Results and Discussion

Siti Nurbaya's novel is a novel written by Marah Rusli. In the history of Indonesian literature, Marah Rusli is known as the Father of Modern Indonesian Romance. Even Siti Nurbaya's novel received an annual prize in literature from the government of the Republic of Indonesia in 1969 and was translated into Russian. He called for the emancipation of women through literature. The story of Siti Nurbaya is still embedded in people's memories to this day. The results of the analysis of the sociology of literature in the novel Siti Nurbaya by Marah Rusli are presented as follows.

1. Author's Social Context

The social context of the author is the factor that influences the author in creating literary works. These factors include livelihoods, staffing professions, and the author's community. In Siti Nurbaya's novel, in terms of the author's social context, Siti Nurbaya's

novel is based on the author's bad experience, *Marah Rusli*. *Marah Rusli*, at that time, had a conflict with his family, he chose a Sundanese woman to be his wife, but his family asked *Marah Rusli* to return to Padang and marry the chosen Minang woman.

Marah Rusli's full name is *Marah Rusli bin Abu Bakr*. He was born in Padang, West Sumatra, on August 7, 1889, and died in Bandung on January 17, 1968. This author completed elementary school in Padang in 1904 and completed the King's School (*Hoofdenschool*) in Bukit Tinggi in 1910. His father, Sultan Abu Bakar, is a Pagaruyung aristocrat with the title sultan prince, while his mother is Javanese, descended from Sentot Alibasyah, a Diponegoro warlord who was assigned by the Dutch to Minangkabau to face the Padri war, but later he defected by helping the Minangkabau people's struggle against the Dutch colonialists.

Marah Rusli married a Sundanese girl born in Bogor in 1911. They have three children, two boys and a girl. *Marah Rusli*'s marriage to a Sundanese girl was not the marriage that *Marah Rusli*'s parents wanted; his family asked Rusli to marry a Minang woman of their choice. But *Marah Rusli* was firm in his attitude, and he kept his marriage. Because of this problem, *Marah Rusli* expressed his feelings and wrote a novel *Siti Nurbaya* as a result of expressing his deep disappointment with his family. Thus, *Siti Nurbaya*'s novel has very close relevance to the social life of the author (*Marah Rusli*) at that time, namely about forced marriage.

Angry Rusli, even though he is more famous as a writer, is a veterinarian. Unlike Taufiq Ismail and Asrul Sani, who left their profession as veterinarians because they chose to become poets, *Marah Rusli* continued to pursue his profession as a veterinarian until retiring in 1952 with his last position as Chief Veterinarian. *Marah Rusli*'s passion for literature has grown since he was a child. He is very happy to hear stories from the Kaba artisans, fairy tales in West Sumatra, who go around the village selling stories and reading literary books.

2. The Image of Society Reflected in *Siti Nurbaya*'s novel.

The description of society in a literary work is to reveal the social symptoms of society where the work created in the literature will contain moral, political, educational, and religious values in a society. *Siti Nurbaya*'s novel reflects a lot of society's problems in *Siti Nurbaya*'s time, such as polygamy, boasting of nobility, customs in Padang, and the sacrifice of children for their parents. Here is a discussion of the reflection of society in *Siti Nurbaya*'s novel.

a. Reflecting the woman at the time was married at a very young age, seen in the quote:

"Oh, pity my son! Damn right, fortunately. His mother-in-law has ignored him; he can't even find his mate. The children of 12 or 13 years old, the oldest of whom was 14 years old, were married, but my almost grey-haired son was still a virgin as well. If his father was still alive, of course, he would not leave his son like this, even if he would pawn his head. "

b. Reflecting on the lives of people who easily leave their spouses for money, seen in the quote:

"If the slave's father-in-law does not speak or is no longer willing to spend on the slave, the slave divorces his child, and the slave marries another woman who can afford it; of course, the slave can get an invitation fee of two or three hundred rupiahs. And also fill my pockets. "

c. Reflecting on the life of a society that loves many wives, seen in the quote:

"Indeed, this has long been the fruit of the mind of servants and other people; while the other princes have four wives, he is only one. It doesn't look right like a big person like my master, replied the Lintau Champion."

d. Reflecting on the life of a society that attaches great importance to a high degree can be seen in the quote:

"Until now, I don't understand what your thoughts were when you married that woman. What are you looking at? How good is that? What's the use of having a good wife if there is no nation? Dutch soldiers are good too, but who likes to pick her up?"

e. Reflecting on the adat in Padang where women have to give money to men if they want to get married (money *panaik* in Bugis), it can be seen in the quote:

"Another thing that is not good," said Ahmad Maulana; while his smile was disappearing from his lips, the marriage was seen as a business. In other countries, women are sold to men, meaning the man has to give money to the woman, but here, men are bought by women because women

give money to men. Because of such customs, men and women are only connected by a rope of money or because of the desire for a good offspring, not at all connected by love and affection.”

3. Social Function in Siti Nurbaya's novel

The social function of literature reflects how far literary values are related to social values. In this connection, three things must be considered; *First*, the extreme point of view of the Romantics, who considered literature to be equal to the works of priests or prophets. Therefore, literature must function as a reformer and reformer; *Second*, literature is only for entertainment; *Third*, literature must entertainingly teach something. In the novel Siti Nurbaya by Marah Rusli, there is a social function of literature that includes.

a. Community or social reform function

There are several rebellions in this novel, viz. (1) Giving the public a picture of a girl who is married at a young age will hurt the child itself, and every parent should give freedom to their child to choose their life partner in the future, even if they want to arrange an arranged marriage for their child, the parent should first notify child whether they agree or not. (2) Giving the public an image that not only men have the right to higher education but also women. (3) Opening the minds of the people who think that school girls who are good at reading and writing will someday become evil people when in reality, this is not the case. (4) An overhaul of the custom in which it is the woman who has to hand over a certain amount of money to the man if she wants to get married, even though it is the man who should give the money to the woman. (5) Illustrate to the community that having a wife has more negative impacts than positive impacts.

b. The function of literary works as entertainment

The novel Siti Nurbaya by Marah Rusli tells about the life of the people in Padang, precisely in Minangkabau, making the reader know a lot about the customs and culture that exist there. The novel describes the life of Si ti Nurbaya who was forced to marry because she had to pay the debt of her father, Sultan Sulaiman. The story in the novel attracts the attention of readers because of the marriage that is very far apart in age, namely the marriage of Siti Nurbaya with Datuk Maringgi, and it is also difficult to predict the end of the story so that it makes readers always want to know how it ends. And I think it is a special attraction for readers.

c. The function of literature is to teach something entertainingly.

Siti Nurbaya's novel, apart from being entertainment, also teaches readers something by inviting readers to follow the twists and turns of the life of the Padang people at that time. The novel gives the impression to the reader that forced marriage is a negative thing. Many negative things arise as a result of the forced marriage process. With the novel, people's mindset tends to change, especially in terms of family life. At that time, people (especially mothers) thought that marriage was a parent's business. Parents have absolute power in determining their child's mate.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research results of the novel Siti Nurbaya by Marah Rusli, which was studied using the sociology of literature, it can be concluded as follows. *First*, Siti Nurbaya's novel is viewed from the perspective of the author's social context that in Siti Nurbaya's novel, it is based on the bad experience of the author, Marah Rusli. Marah Rusli, at that time, had a conflict with his family, he chose a Sundanese woman to be his wife, but his family asked Marah Rusli to return to Padang and marry the chosen Minang woman. *Second*, the picture of society in Siti Nurbaya's novel reflects the many problems of society in Siti Nurbaya's era, such as polygamy, pride in nobility, customs in Padang where women have to give money to men if they want to get married (money *panaik* in Bugis language), and sacrifice of children for their parents. *Third*, the social function in Marah Rusli's novel Siti Nurbaya contains the function of social or social reform, the function of literary works as entertainment, and the function of literary works to teach something entertainingly.

This research focuses on the problem of sociology of literature, namely researching through three contexts, first, the social context of the author; second, literature as a mirror of society; third, the social function of literature. The results of this study are expected to be useful for readers as a reference to understand more deeply the sociology of literature, especially in the novel Siti Nurbaya by Marah Rusli. Thus, the reader can understand more deeply the meaning of the sociology of literature in the novel.

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