

An Analysis of Social Criticism in the Novel Padang Bulan by Andrea Hirata: A Study of Literary Sociology

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ABSTRACT

Literary works depict human life with various problems based on the author's ideas, thoughts, feelings or daily experiences. Literary works not only function as entertainment, but can also provide readers or viewers with knowledge and beauty. Sociology of literary works is a sociological study of literature that examines literary works in relation to social problems that exist in society. Sociology tries to find out how society behaves, how it exists, and how it persists. Based on the object of this study, a theory of the study of the sociology of literature was born which focuses on the study of social criticism of society in literature. Researchers chose the novel Padang Bulan because it was able to combine literary works with social reality. This research aims to reveal the intrinsic elements and social criticism contained in the novel Padang Bulan by Andrea Hirata using a literary sociology approach. This research refers to qualitative research using analytical methods with the data collection technique used in this research is document analysis. Data obtained from reading, studying the entire contents of the novel and recording the facts contained in it in the form of the social problems depicted. The material in this analysis is the novel itself entitled Padang Bulan by Andrea Hirata

KEYWORDS

literary works
sociology of literature
social criticism

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1. Introduction

The word "Sastra" in Indonesian Language, actually takes the term from the Sanskrit language, namely "shastra". The word "sas" has the meaning of instruction or guidelines, and "tra" means tool or means. In its use, the word "literature" is often added with the prefix su so that it becomes literature. The prefix su has a good or beautiful meaning. So it can be concluded that the word "literature" means a good and beautiful work. According to Plato, literature is an imitation or an image of reality (mimesis). This work of literature must be an exemplary form of the universe as well as a model of the reality of daily human life. Damono in Suseno & Nugroho (2019) also mentions that literary works are social institutions that use the medium of language and are created as a means of communication with the reader community. Literature also displays a picture of human life and that life is a social reality. It states that literary works are the reality of life that contains cultural and social values regarding a phenomenon and is expressed through language (Caron & Markusen, 2016). In literature, the delivery uses language and has a positive effect on human life. Furthermore, according to Muhri (2017), the words literature and literature cannot be interpreted as just one meaning because literature is also developing beyond its etymological sense.

Literary works describe human life with various problems that are based on the author's daily ideas, thoughts, feelings, or experiences. Literary works not only serve as entertainment, but can also provide readers or connoisseurs with knowledge and beauty. Written literary works are expressions of human and humanitarian problems, about the meaning of life and livelihood, which describe suffering, struggle, affection, hatred, lust, and all other aspects of human life. The use of this form of expression is due to the author's ability to describe every aspect of human life through their expression. Authors usually use their thoughts, hearts, and feelings directly when writing literary works. Literary works usually come from the author's personal experiences or emotions. To

understand literary works related to society or the social elements contained in them, an approach or review known as literary sociology is needed.

Literary sociology, which understands literary phenomena in relation to social aspects, is an interdisciplinary approach or way of reading and understanding literature. Literary sociology is a theory that considers that literary works are related to reality and social aspects of society (Armiya, 2022). Sociology tries to figure out how society behaves, how it unfolds, and how it persists. The sociology of literary works is the study of literary sociology that examines literary works in relation to social problems that exist in society. This sociology of literature departs from Plato's theory of mimesis, which considers literature as an imitation of reality. The focus of sociological attention of literary works is on the content of literary works, goals, and other things implied in the literary works themselves and those related to social problems Wellek and Warren, 1994 in (Kurniasari, 2019). The definition of Mimesis itself is one of the oldest terms in literary and artistic theory, and it is also among the most basic. The term mimesis can be traced to the fifth century BC, but it was rarely used until Plato adopted it in the following century (Potolsky, 2006). Both sociology and literature have the same object of study, namely human beings in society, understanding the relationships between humans and the processes arising from these relationships in society. Sociology of literature as a sociological analysis of literary studies used in analyzing literary works related to society (Logita, 2019).

Social criticism often appears in literary works, especially novels, as a reflection of the problems that occur in society. The analysis of social criticism in novels can be done with a literary sociology approach, which examines the relationship between literary works and society. This social criticism can be said to arise because there is a problem or something wrong with the community environment (Safitry & Tjahjono, 2023). The study of social criticism is included in the branch of literary sociology. Literary sociology studies human beings in society as contained in a literary work that is influenced by the culture in which the literary work was created (Hastuti, 2018). Sociological theories in general are also used in this study, such as social interaction, social criticism, and social conflict. This criticism is synonymous with negative meaning, but in this study the social criticism that will be discussed is negative criticism and positive criticism. This positive criticism is usually carried out by the community as the controller of the social system that runs in society.

Social criticism in literary works is an effort made by an author by responding to the problems he sees in society. For the author himself, social criticism is a means to communicate the ideas or thoughts that the author has and then put them in his writing to provide responses to problems faced by society. There are many ways to criticize social issues, one of which is to convey social criticism through literature. Literary works can include social criticism that occurs in society. In literary works, criticism includes social actions that deviate from the norms or rules in society. Social criticism can arise when life is perceived as inappropriate, disorderly, or disharmonious. It can also occur when social problems cannot be solved and social changes cause unpleasant impacts on society. Students who skip school, cheat, and violate school rules are some examples of the consequences of social criticism in community life. Therefore, social criticism is a form of communication in society so that a social system runs.

Social criticism in literary works in the form of novels can be classified into several types, including criticism of political, economic, educational, and family issues, criticism of morals, gender, customs, religion, and technology, as well as criticism of poverty, crime, family disorganization, and moral decadence (Yulina, 2023). Before analyzing social criticism, it is necessary to analyze the structure of the novel, such as characters, plot, theme, and mandate. Social criticism is usually not explicitly depicted, but is stored in the structure of literature itself. Social criticism in the novel is closely related to the social conditions of the community at the time the novel was written. Literary sociological analysis needs to consider the social, cultural, and political contexts behind the creation of novels. By using a literary sociology approach, social criticism in novels can be expressed comprehensively by considering the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of

literary works. This analysis can provide a deeper understanding of social problems that occur in society.

The delivery of criticism in literary works is broader in scope than social criticism in other texts such as articles. Therefore, literary works such as novels are fictional worlds that can be expressed without limits. Every literary work, both novels and short stories, must have a core story and meaning that the author wants to convey to the reader. It is not uncommon for authors to also convey social criticism in their stories even with different intensities. The social life that is criticized has various forms, depending on the social life itself. Social observers are usually successful authors because they are able to combine social facts with fictional concepts (Ratna, 2004:334). This is because the author is also influenced by the feelings of his society, the feelings of his people, and the feelings of his time (Lubis, 1997:8).

The researcher chose the novel *Padang Bulan* because it is able to combine literary works with social reality. The storyline of Andrea Hirata's novel features aspects of social inequality, which makes it interesting to read. This research investigates the social issues raised in the novel. The novel, which is located in Belitung, discusses the struggle of a person who never gives up to overcome life's challenges, which results in various conflicts that are arranged in different ways. A female character named Enong still wants to study even though she is poor and has to work to help her family. The selection of female characters to earn a living and perform tasks that should be done by men is an interesting thing about this novel. This research aims to reveal the intrinsic elements and social criticism in the novel *Padang Bulan* by Andrea Hirata using a literary sociology approach. With this research, it is hoped that it can be useful in improving science, especially literature, and increasing the understanding of researchers and readers about social problems and social criticism displayed in literary works, especially novels that are the object of study. In addition, the results of this study are expected to be used as a reference for similar research. The difference with the previous study is that this study uses a descriptive method, while this study uses an analytical method.

2. Methods

This research was conducted in Purwokerto from the beginning to the end of December 2023. The purpose of this study is to describe and reveal what intrinsic elements and social criticism are contained in the novel *Padang Bulan* by Andrea Hirata using a literary sociology approach. The approach to literary sociology is in the form of objective and scientific studies of human beings in society, the study of institutions, and social processes. Literary sociology is an approach to literature that considers societal aspects. This approach begins with the analysis of the text to find out its structure, and then uses this method to understand social phenomena outside of literature (Damono, 2003:3).

The data collection technique used in this study is document analysis starting from the stage of reading, recording, and analyzing the data in the novel *Padang Bulan* by Andrea Hirata. According to Sugiyono (2010: 335), data analysis is the process of collecting and compiling data collected from field records and documentation systematically. This process includes organizing data into categories, describing them into units, synthesizing, organizing them into patterns to determine which ones are important and what should be learned, and making conclusions that are easy for individuals and others to understand.

This study refers to qualitative research using descriptive analysis methods. In qualitative research, data analysis is inductive, meaning that the data is analyzed before being formed into a hypothesis or provisional conclusion. Based on this initial conclusion, data were collected again to determine whether the hypothesis was accepted or not. Qualitative data analysis is an attempt to handle data, organize it, and sort it into controllable parts. The implementation of data analysis in qualitative research is the process of systematically searching and compiling data obtained from reading, studying the entire content of the novel and recording the facts in it in the form of social

problems that are depicted, so that they can be easily understood, and the findings can be informed to others. The material in this analysis is a novel titled Padang Bulan by Andrea Hirata. The form of data used in this study is sentences, words, and paragraphs contained in literary works in the form of Andrea Hirata's novel.

3. Results and Discussion

Social criticism in novels can be conveyed directly or indirectly, such as: conveying criticism directly through dialogue or narrative, or conveying criticism indirectly through satire or symbols. This basis is the basis for researchers to conduct study analysis on the novels being studied to find social criticism that occurs. Explicit social criticism is conveyed directly by the author through dialogue, narrative, or clear description. In this case, the author does not hesitate to express his views on existing social, political, or economic issues. For example, in a novel, a character may directly criticize government policies or unfair social conditions. The delivery of this criticism is usually easy for the reader to understand and does not require in-depth interpretation. On the contrary, hidden social criticism is conveyed indirectly. In this case, the author uses symbols, metaphors, or seemingly unrelated events to convey a social message. Readers need to analyze the context and structure of the story to understand the criticism in question. For example, a description of daily life in a marginalized environment could imply a critique of poverty without stating it directly.

3.1 Analysis of Padang Bulan Novel Characters

The characters in the story are essentially very varied, according to Semi (1993: 47). Fictional characters are divided into central characters or main characters and peripheral characters or auxiliary characters, based on how they participate in the story as a whole. The central figure, or main figure, is a figure who has a greater role than other figures. The protagonist and antagonist are made up of story conflict builders. The antagonist is either evil or wrong, and the protagonist usually attracts the reader's sympathy.

3.1.1 Central or main figure

- Ikal

Based on the virtues of the character, Ikal is the main character who is the protagonist. Physically, Ikal is a figure who is not tall. This can be seen from the following quote:

Height is a latent issue for me. When I was still in elementary school and marching competitions, I was always installed in the backmost banjar. As a result, if you take a photo, you will never see it. (PB: 189).

If I remove the blackboard, I have to get on the bench and the whole class laughs. When it was time to get a haircut, M. Nur and I were too low on the bench so we had to be trimmed while standing. (PB: 190).

Based on the data above, overall Ikal is an outgoing adult teenager and as he is, Ikal is a S2 graduate who has a strong stance on himself. It was proven that when he loved A Ling, a girl of Chinese descent, he insisted on loving the girl until he had a feud with his father and left for months. However, in his firm stance, Ikal still uses his logic rationally and tends to think first before acting like the prejudices of events that often pop up in his mind to anticipate unexpected things in advance.

- Enong

Enong is the main character who is the protagonist. From the physique, Enong is a thin and innocent figure. This can be seen from the following quote:

He was also rejected for housework or factories because he looked very thin and weak. (PB: 32).

The hijab is shabby. He is no different. (PB: 33).

Based on the above quote, Enong is overall described as a jovial little teenager aged 14, with a strong passion and struggle to learn to be like his idol United Kingdom teacher at school. Fate said otherwise, Enong had to struggle hard to make a living after his father died. In working, Enong always takes advantage of his free time to learn United Kingdom, because working does not mean having to drop out of school, that is the motto of Enong that makes him always enthusiastic about working and learning. Enong's efforts to study so far have yielded results and he has been accepted to study at an United Kingdom language course.

3.2 Analysis of the Storyline of the Novel Padang Bulan

A plot is a series of events or events that are carefully interwoven and designed and move the storyline through the complexity of a conflict that leads to a climax and resolution. The plot used in the novel Padang Bulan is a regressive plot because the storyline is not in order in the form of story pieces whose arrangement changes the story. In this novel, there are five stages of the plot, namely the sitting stage, the conflict emergence stage, the conflict escalation stage, the climax stage, and the resolution stage.

3.3 Analysis of Social Criticism of the Novel Padang Bulan

The results of the study show that there are several forms of social criticism in the novel Padang Bulan by Andrea Hirata, including (1) moral criticism, (2) political criticism, (3) educational criticism, (4) economic criticism, and (5) cultural criticism.

3.3.1 Criticism Morality

Morality can be interpreted as morality, character, or behavior that is the value of perfection for humans (Syaparuddin & Elihami, 2020). Meanwhile, in principle, morality is a rule or teaching in behaving in social life.

Data 1

But it is not as easy as it seems. Juragan told him to go home and go back to school. Many drove him away harshly. When asked about his diploma, he could only answer that he was almost out of elementary school. He was also rejected for housework or factories because he looked very thin and weak. He experienced this rejection many times, for days.

Data 2

Enong became the subject of gossip that ended up being ridiculed, because he never got tin. However, despite being insulted, he did not want to stop because he was determined to return his younger siblings to school. He must not stop because if he stops, his family will not eat.

The slashed sentences in Data 1 and 2 are moral criticisms in the form of insults from people against Enong. In accordance with the theory put forward by (Retnasih, 2014, 36) morality is a generally accepted teaching about good and bad regarding change, attitudes, morals, and ethics. Morality is a value system about how we should live well as human beings. The value system is formed from advice, regulations, governments and the like that are inherited from generation to generation through certain religions and cultures about how humans should live (Salam, 1997, 10).

3.3.2 Kritik Politik

Social criticism that departs from political problems is a manifestation of the imbalance of the prevailing political systems so that it causes problems. Aji and Arifin (2022) stated that social problems related to politics have a relationship with groups or people who have power in a certain region or institution.

Data 3

Another statue, also large and tall, is a statue of the independence fighters of 45. Complete with rifles and pointed bamboo. They brandished their fists with movements, ready to brush the Netherlands. Also since childhood I have wondered, why do sculptors make the heads of those

statues anatomically so large? Only later did I know the answer, which is that in front of the statue is now installed a billboard and there politicians are foaming at their programs. So it seems that now the 45 warriors seem to want to punch them if they want to know the definition of an artist's vision, the statue gives a very fitting example.

Data 4

Our mission on that dark night was to kill 20 corruptors in this country. Automatic gun immersion in the muzzle of a semi-automatic colt gun. We spent that night by loosening the door of their house. The corruptors are in line. When we loosened the door of the target house of operation number 7, a leader of a state-owned enterprise who embezzled overtime money from the telephone operator"

The slashed sentence in data 3 and 4 is a criticism in the political field in the form of criticism of the authority and power of political elites who are not responsible to the people. As has been pointed out by Retnasih (2014, 28), the political system is an aspect of society that functions to maintain law and involvement in society and to know the external relationships between and among society.

3.3.3 Criticism of Education

Education, which is the spearhead of a culture, cannot be separated from the criticism in this novel. The criticism that is expressed is full of dissatisfaction with the existing education system is far from ideal and is considered skeptical by some parties.

Data 5

It is unimaginable to me the future of this republic. Young people are well-educated, working as coffee shop waiters..... Our democracy is threatened.

Data 6

I mean, if you look at your appearance that looks like that 16-year-old honorary teacher who hasn't been appointed, your height, and the smell of bicycle tires that always appears, I think your future in the field of romance is a bit heavy, Boi.

The slashed sentence in data 5 and 6 is a criticism in the field of education that shows the failure of the existing education system. Education, which is expected to be able to lead us to happiness with a sufficient standard of living, in fact cannot guarantee a better life in terms of social and economic aspects. In fact, the authority of a teacher is unable to do much when faced with the reality of economic problems that blindly affect various aspects of life, including the romantic aspect.

3.3.4 Economic Criticism

Economy has a definition as an effort to meet human needs, which is related to production, distribution, and consumption (Aji & Arifin, 2022). In addition to being the government's duty in meeting the needs of the community, everyone has the right and obligation to meet the needs of themselves and their families.

Data 7

... There are no art galleries, biskop buildings, cafes, or shopping malls to visit. The only thing that caught a little attention was a large clock in the middle of the city and it had been broken for 46 years. The short needle suddenly snapped at five. The long needle exhaled its last breath in the arms of the number twelve. The second hand had left with another woman who didn't know where to go. Looking at that clock since I was a child, I had a hunch, that later if there were two apocalypses, the event would be exactly five o'clock.

Data 8

At the owner of the sandal factory, Cunghai said that he was willing to work anything, not on a salary, as long as he was fed. "You don't need to be paid, but you are fed, once a day, it's okay". However, his body does not look like a person who is able to work. It was rejected again.

The slashed sentence in data 7 and 8 is a criticism in the field of education about the job description of being educated but actually unemployed or working in the wrong field. Ahmadi (2001, 256) revealed that the educational problems that occur in the community are influenced by several factors, namely the educator factor, both educators in the family, school and community, economic ability, and the student itself.

3.3.5 Cultural Criticism

Criticism in the field of culture is in the form of people's habits in creating social groups, where there are differences in status among the community. Soekanto (2007, 135), as one of the reporters of functional theory, divided the main elements of culture into four components, including the norm system, economic organization, tools and institutions or educational officers, and the organization of power. The culture that develops in society is influenced by cultural elements as mentioned above, as well as the only element of norms.

The function of criticism in literary works is (1) to improve the development of literature and produce new works so that the development of literature can improve the quality and creativity of writers who will improve the development of literature itself and (2) to help the community in understanding the messages conveyed in literary works.

Data 9

Perhaps because Malays like us never celebrate birthdays, and don't care about birthdays, on the contrary, for the Tianghoa people it is very important

Data 10

Then, he seriously reminded that the cake was not suitable for the stomach of villagers like us. The handsome Trapani said that birthdays have nothing to do with ghosts, but rather with the rank of parents. Or, it can be celebrated by the children of tin employees outside the building, he continued seriously, a very rich child in the building has the right to celebrate his birthday 2 times a year. He also reminded that if the children of the poor dare to have a birthday, they will be arrested by the police.

The slashed sentence in data 9 and 10 is a criticism in the economic field in the form of poverty and development. Retnasih (2014, 30) revealed that the economy is the most influential determinant agency on society, although as a determinant, it is not dominant. The economy becomes very important in society if the economic level in society is not equal. However, when the economic situation in a society has been established, the factors that are a priority for the community are no longer economic factors, but other factors, such as cultural, moral, and so on. Economic problems are problems that concern how human beings meet their material needs from limited resources, even from scarce resources.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it was concluded that the plot used in the novel Padang Bulan is a regressive plot. The story is presented in turn the story of the story. The introduction of the character by the author is mentioned in each story. The characters raised by the author are mostly described in explicit terms both physical and psychological conditions. The main characters of the novel Padang Bulan are Enong and Ikal. Both are the center of the movement of other characters/additional figures such as Detective, Zamzami, Syalimah, Sirun, A Ling, etc. The characters created by the author all support each other. All of them are protagonists.

There are five out of nine social criticisms in the novel Padang Bulan by Andrea Hirata, with data found on 10 social criticisms consisting of (1) two moral criticism data, (2) two political criticism data, (3) two educational criticism words, (4) two economic criticism data, and (5) two cultural criticism data. Research on social criticism contained in literary works is expected to be carried out more frequently. Thus, the community as readers will further develop literary science.

For readers, especially Indonesian Language Education students, to maintain and preserve literary works so that they can be used to express social problems in society.

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