

# The Sociology Literature Study of The Main Character in Novel *Nun: Pada Sebuah Cermin Through The Philosophy of Tembang Macapat* and The Compatibility with The Marginal Community in Surakarta

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Abstract: This study aims to describe the main characters contained in the novel *Nun: Pada Sebuah Cermin* by Afifah Afra and its compatibility with the marginal life communities in Surakarta associated with the philosophy of the *tembang macapat* that became the storyline of this novel. This novel takes place in Surakarta and tells the marginal life people in the city who have different social and job backgrounds. This research is a qualitative descriptive research using content analysis method with literature sociology approach. The result of this study prove that the novel is able to tell a concrete picture of the marginal society and social condition in Surakarta, with the setting of places around the bus terminal, river banks, and dumps. Through the eleven of *tembang macapat* presented as the storyline, the novel is full of noble Javanese values, such as (1) ethical values, (2) aesthetics, (3) religion, and (4) social that can be a tool of life reflection for every human.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Novels as one type of fictional prose are many in adding messages in life because novel elements raise issues about social life, society, and culture. The novel works as the most dominant literary works in displaying social elements (Ratna, 2007). Besides that, the author's authorship is also the driving factor for expressing himself through literary works (Sarjidu, 2004). Novel is very appropriate if studied with the study of sociology of literature to discuss about social phenomenon shown in the novel (Cohen, 1984).

The previous research by Fatimah (2008) and Asri (2011) revealed the relevance of literature in society. Fatimah said, the extent of the literature can reflect the condition of society. Beside, Asri also give the explanation, if the level of socio-cultural relevance of the literature with the socio-cultural realities is high, then the quality literary works is high.

Along with the emergence of new novels that are very significant, there are several novels that lift the characteristics of the certain community. One of the novels is a novel *Nun: Pada Sebuah Cermin* (NPSC)

by Afifah Afra. This novel tells the story of Nun, a teenager who has to help his mother to make living through playing ketoprak, a traditional performing arts in Java Island that tells about the Babad Tanah Jawa stories (Ulya, 2017).

The novel NPSC is a novel contained of culture and describe the live of marginal community in Surakarta. It is characterized by the plot that using the philosophy of the *macapat* traditional song. As usual us known, the eleven of *tembang macapat* symbolizes the journey of the human life from birth to death, but in this novel become the novel's plot. Therefore, the authors examine this novel by the sociology literature approach to describe the main characters in the novel NPSC and its compatibility with the marginal life communities in Surakarta.

## 2 METHODS

This research is a descriptive qualitative research with the sociology of literature approach. Novel is one of the literary works that have the structural, the sociology of literature that can be evaluated through

the content analysis. The triangulation is used for the theories and the sources; this study is validated comprehensively until the results are credible. All of the processes are systematically with the flow analysis model (Miles and Hubberman, 1992).

This study begins with reading the whole story of the novel NPSC. Having read and understood the contents of the novel, the researchers choose the data purposively, that is by chosen the consideration of this literary sociology research focus: intrinsically, extrinsically, and compatibility with marginal community's live. Furthermore, the data source is also in the form of secondary data obtained from the informants who enrich the data in this study.

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sociology and literature are always related to society. The term sociology of literature applies to the writings of critics and literary historians whose primary concern is on the ways in which an author is influenced by his class status, societal ideology, economic circumstances related to his work and the type of intended reader (Abrams, 1981). The main works of literature and philosophy have a total cohesion and the elements that make up the text mean when it can provide a complete and coherent picture of meaning (Goldmann and Boelhower, 1980). This means showing that the study of sociology of literature into a study that has a broad field to study a literary work (Williams, 1971). Literary works in the form of poetry and prose of course have a relationship with the community so that the points in it can have implications to the community (Saddhono and Supeni, 2014).

The study of sociology of literature was introduced in the 1970s to the 1980s (Singer, 2011). In his writings, it is described that this study is chronologically shown by Griswold which states that the study of literary sociology such as amoeba, has no definite structure but can be attributed to anything (Griswold 1992). Meanwhile, the study of literary sociology is a branch of literary research that is reflective. This research is much in demand by researchers who want to see literature as a mirror of community life (Suwardi, 2008). This opinion reinforces the opinion of researchers related to the study of sociology of literature, the study of sociology of literature will basically learn about the study contained in society and the surrounding environment. The purpose of a study or study of sociology in literature is to get a complete picture of

the relationship between authors, literary works, and society.

#### 3.1 The Background of the Novel Authors

Afifah Afra is a novelist who was a literacy activist. She is a CEO of a publisher in Surakarta, Afifah Afra has produced many novels contained with educational value.

Afifah Afra has the original name Yeni Mulati Sucipto. She was born in Purbalingga, February 18, 1979. She already have a strong desire to dedicate herself to cultivate literation.

Afra's contribution to literacy is considerable. This is evidenced by the acquisition of awards from some parties on her writings. In addition, her literacy career has been honed when dabbling in the Circumference Pena Forum (FLP).

#### 3.2 The Structure of the Novel

The structures of a literary work were divided into two parts, namely (1) the extrinsic structure and (2) the intrinsic structure. A literary work contains the intrinsic and extrinsic structures beside the structure of formal languages that subsequently it is known as structuralism genetic approach, that approach gives attention to the analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic (Ratna, 2015). The genetic structuralism in the literary work covered the intrinsic and extrinsic structure related to the social situation in the novel (Shaahmoraadiyan and Ebrahimi, 2014), such as *theme, plot, the setting of place, and the main characters*.

##### 3.2.1 Theme

The novel NPSC with the theme of social living was especially the image of marginal society. Marginal in this context was the place around the bus station that the society had to be more struggle to make a living.

Afra as the author of packed this novel well demonstrated by showing the persistence of a young girl going through toughness of life. Nun had to work as a *Ketoprak* player to help her mother to make a living.

##### 3.2.2 Plot

The plot of NPSC in the novel is a progressive plot. However, there was the uniqueness in the packaging of this plot. Afra using the eleven of *tembang macapat* philosophy in this novel plot. The eleven

songs were *Mijil*, *Sinom*, *Maskumambang*, *Asmaradhana*, *Dhandhanggula*, *Durma*, *Pangkur*, *Gambuh*, *Pocung*, *Megatruh*, *Kinanthi*.

### 3.2.2.1 *Mijil*

*Poma kaki padha dipun eling/ ing pitutur ingong/  
Sira uga satriya arane/ kudu anteng jatmika ing budi/  
ruruh sarta wasis/ samubarangipun//*

(NPSC, vii)

*Mijil* was the beginning of the novel. *Mijil* was the start or newborn in Javanese. *Mijil* in this novel is analogous to the introduction of the characters and the early conflicts that will be displayed in the novel.

### 3.2.2.2 *Sinom*

*Amenangi jaman edan, ewuh aya ing pambudi/ Milu  
edan nora tahan, yen tan milu anglakoni/ boya  
kaduman melik, kaliren wekasanipun/ Ndilalah karsa  
Allahh, begja-begjane kang lali/ luwih begja kang  
eling lan waspada//*

(NPSC, 1)

*Sinom* means youth living, which is defined as the the beginning of the story. Nun is a teenage girl who experiences a living problems. A teenage girl who usually full of living in a pleasure should be working, earning money to help her mother in living her little family. Nun become ketoprak players who actually less paid but for some reasons she wants to preserve the culture.

### 3.2.2.3 *Maskumambang*

*Nadyan silih bapa biyung kaki nini/ sadulur myang  
sanak/ kalamun muruk tan becik/ nora pantes yen den  
nuta//*

(NPSC, 63)

*Maskumambang* in the novel told about the story of Nun's stepfather named Mr. Jiwo. Mr. Jiwo has a strong character, often doing violence to the mother and Nun. He was well known because he often disturb the neighbour around.

### 3.2.2.4 *Asmaradhana*

*Gegaraning wong akrami/ dudu bandha dudu ruoa/  
Amung ati pawitane/ Luput pisan kena pisan/ Lamun  
gampang luwih gampang/ Lamun angel, angel  
kalangkung/ Tan kena tinumbas arta//*

(NPSC, 93)

*Asmaradhana* told about Nun begin experiencing complications in her romance, between *Mas Wir* and *Naya*. Nun was very likely to close with *Naya* to make

a relationship is not concerned with possessions or appearance, it is need a belief.

### 3.2.2.5 *Dhandanggula*

*Sasmitaning ngaurip puniki, yekti ewuh yen nora  
weruha/ Tan jumeneng ing uripe, pangrasane wis  
utami/ Tur durung wruh ing rasa, rasa kang satuhu/  
Rasaning rasa punika/ Upayanen darapon  
sampurneng dhiri, ing kauripanira//*

(NPSC, 133)

*Dhandhanggula* showed the sweet time in the Nun's life, she felt comfortable of her. Nun when it get a chance to take High School Equivalency Program, right away he took that golden opportunity. Accompanied by *Gatra*, Nun immediately carry out the mandate of his mother to take that High School Equivalency Program.

### 3.2.2.6 *Durma*

*Bener luput ala becik lawan beja/ Cilaka mapan  
saking ing badan priyangga/ Dudu saking wong liya/  
Mulane den ngati-ati/ Sakeh dirgama, singgahana  
den eling//*

(NPSC, 169)

*Durma* described about Nun process began to explore the life. Nun as a female teenagers get attention from two men, *Mas Wir* and *Naya*. They both always give attention to Nun, whether it was the counsel or motivation for her. However, Nun need to know that everything should be thought carefully and everything, right or wrong have to be returned again to The Lord.

### 3.2.2.7 *Pangkur*

*Mingkar mingkuring angkara/ Akarana karenan  
mardi siwi/ Sinawung resmining kidung/ Sinuba  
sinukarta/ Mrih kretarta pakartining ngelmu luhung/  
Kang tumrap ning tanah Jawa/ Agama ageming aji//*

(NPSC, 197)

*Pangkur* was be a sad plot in this novel. Nun was told that her mother had died buried by garbage in *TPS Putri Cempo*. Nun was very sad and angry. She burst a blood vessel that want to avenge the death of her mother to *Jiwo*, her stepfather. However, her anger can be prevented by *Mas Wir*. Nun can accept it, although forcefully.

### 3.2.2.8 *Gambuh*

*Rasaning yyas kayungyun/ Ngayomi likitaning kalbu/ Gambir wana kalawan hening ing ati/ Kabekta kudu pitutur/ Suminingkiring reh tyas mirong//*  
(NPSC, 231)

*Gambuh* be a continuation of *Pangkur* indicated by Nun roll back her memory of his mother figure who continues to support her. Nun was reminded of the clarity of the mother's heart that always gives the spirit and affection, even though the mother's life is full of heavy burden.

### 3.2.2.9 *Pocung*

*Tutur bener puniku/ Sayektine apantes tiniru/ Nadyan metu saking wong sudra papeki/ Lamun becik nggone muruk/ Iku pantes sira anggo//*  
(NPSC, 281)

### 3.2.2.10 *Pocung*

*Sigra milir/ kang gethek sinangga bajul/ Kawan dasa kang njageni/ Ing ngarsa miwah ing pungkur/ Tanapi ing kanan kering/ Kang gethek lampahnya alon//*  
(NPSC, 315)

*Pocung* and *Megatruh* depicts the life story of Nun in the story that began with moments of despair, where Nun felt she had lost her spirit in life because she was left by the ones she loved, including her mother who had died. She also felt that was no meaning in life.

### 3.2.2.11 *Kinanthi*

*Padha gulangen ing kalbu/ Ing sasmita amrih lantip Aja pijer mangan nendra/ Kaprawiran den kaesthi Pesunen sariranira/ Cegahen dhahar lan guling//*  
(NPSC, 363)

However, in *Kinanthi*, Nun finally rediscover her path as she can introspect and take lessons from the problems of life happened in her life. Nun began to rediscover the rhythm of her life after being engaged by Mas Wir. Beside, all the twists and turns of Nun's life that has been passed turns into happy ending, she got a lot of happiness of life with Mas Wir and also ketoprak Candra Poernama becoming world-famous to Europe. That is all because of Nun's patience and fortitude to face her life.

Overall *macapat* in the plot of this novel illustrated that the phase of a man's life does not end when it became *pocong*, but after that there is a process of the separated between the spirit with a

human body and waiting for the reply of our good works in living in the world (Supajar, in Afra, 2015).

### 3.2.3 *Setting*

The novel NPSC has the setting of place and dominant situation. The setting of place was located on Surakarta, including the building of *Ketoprak* show, which is intended Ketoprak Building Balekambang Solo, settlement around Terminal Tirtanadi, and the cultural park building of Central Java (TBJT). While the setting of the atmosphere is often raised is an atmosphere of anxiety and affection experienced by Nun.

### 3.2.4 *The main characters*

The novel NPSC has a main character named Nun Walqolami. Nun has a persistent character in dealing with problems of life as an adolescent girl. Nun was a *Ketoprak* player should play every night to help earn a living. Moreover, Nun also faced with the problem of her romance with Mas Wir and Naya. However, in the end Nun was married to Mas Wir, a male figure that older than her.

Another character in the novel were Mas Wir and Naya. Mas Wir and Naya had a role to make the conflict in the story. Mas Wir always been a mature figure and often helps Nun solving problems. While, Naya present as a competitor of the story of Mas Wir's romance with Nun, but Naya have different social class with her, so he did not marry him, as his father had suggested.

### 3.3 *The Suitability of Marginal Community Overview of Surakarta in The Novel*

Marginal communities are identical to the conditions of the layers of society in a city where they live in poverty. Marginal residence is common in riverbanks, around bus stations, as well as public places. They live by making buildings attached to the walls of public facilities. As for some of the marginal people are also not separated by the nomadic system, or move from one place to another (Swift, 1978).

The marginal societies who were living in poverty are urging them to struggle against the rigors of life (Park, 1928). The environment around bus station is very hard. It is full of criminal practices, such as prostitution and even murder. Nun who lives around Tirtanadi bus station, has a prostitute's neighbour, an ustaz who opens the practice of contract marriage,

and his own mother becomes a murder victim by her stepfather.

Nun in her young age should be make a living by working as an artist, a *ketoprak* player. *Ketoprak* player was paid less that adds the marginal people life more exhausting. However, there is a mission the author discloses through this novel about the marginal image. Although, they are not as fortunate as the elite, but they still have a mission of preserving their culture, in this case *ketoprak* art.

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

The NPSC has a main character named Nun. Nun told be the embodiment of the marginal community in the city of Surakarta. Through this novel, the author succeeded in bringing a picture of the reality of marginal society in Surakarta City, those who live around the Tirtanadi Bus Terminal and the landfill of Putri Cempo. The NPSC novel plot is also unique, by using the philosophy of eleven *tembang macapat*. For example, *Mijil* which is defined as birth, can be associated as the stage of recognition of characters and problems in the story.

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