

THE MIRACLE OF SIMPLE NOVEL BY AYU UTAMI AND ITS PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the contents of the novel Simple Miracles by Ayu Utami in the case of the study of sociological literature. In addition, this study also looks at its relevance to the study of literature at Indonesian technocrat universities majoring in English literature. The novel Simple Miracles tells the spiritual story of the main character and his family in daily life. In addition, it also tells about community relations related to religion, social, culture, and residence. This research uses descriptive qualitative method to describe the results of the research of literary sociology in the novel Simple Miracles. The results of this study indicate a social relationship between characters both in one family member and outside family members. That's what shows the relationship or social value in the novel. This novel also has Javanese cultural values related to birth and inner death. The value of the study of sociological literature on social, religious, and cultural activities can be used as reference material in the study of literature in high school in class XI.

Key words: Sociology of Literature, novels, Literature Learning, high school

INTRODUCTION

Literature is an imaginative work of the writer which is usually a reflection of public life [1], [2]. Literature is also an imaginative work that was born from the creative thinking of a writer [3], [4], [5]. Creative thinking is not only born just because a writer also has to be smart in choosing elements to be included in his work [6], [7], [8]. Literary works are actually a form of creativity in telling writings about the symptoms of people's lives [9], [10]. A literary work generally tells about problems that exist in human life [11], [12]. Literary works are formed by human encouragement as members of society to show their expressions [13], [14]. Literary works such as prose can be a tool for writers to tell others about the life of the writer himself and the lives of others [15], [16].

A literary work will not tell the story far from the author [17], starting from the background of the author himself [18], [19], [20]. The background might be cultural, educational, and religious beliefs [21], [22]. Symptoms incorporated into literary works by writers are social images shared into literary works [23], [24]. Symptoms usually occur and are experienced by the community or may occur in the life of the author himself [25], [26]. Literary works can also reflect any image in the world that is changed by the writer into a

literary work [27], [28], [29]. Meanwhile, the writer himself is a member of the community who is bound to a certain social status [30], [31], [32] and cannot escape from the influence he receives from the enlarged environment when he forms it [33], [34].

A writer or reader, able to understand or understand the place described by the author. With the style and characteristics of each writer [35], [36], [37], the writer is able to bring the reader's imagination to what is explained by the writer about the life of an area with social life [38], [39]. According to [40] the novel as fiction offers a world, an idealized world model of life, an imaginative world, built through its intrinsic elements such as events, plots, characters (and characterizations), backgrounds, perspectives, others are all also imaginative [41], [42], [43].

Novel Ayu Utami Simple Miracles is a novel that tells about family life [44]. The main focus of the story in the novel tells about the life and death of several characters in it [45], [46]. This novel also touches culture and religion. The culture in it focuses on Javanese culture while the dominant religion is Catholic. At a glance, it is not specifically explained about the background of the place but the sociological study in this research is more focused on the social activities of each character in the story [47]. The social and cultural values in the novel can be used as interpretation material for secondary school students in the process of literary learning in schools.

In essence, Indonesian language learning and literature appreciation play a very important role in learning Indonesian [48]. The purpose of teaching literature actually has two objectives, namely for students to gain literary knowledge and experience [49], [50]. First, literary knowledge is obtained by reading theories, history, and literary criticism. Second, literature is experienced by reading, viewing literature, and writing literature. That is, to teach literature teachers must be able to give it based on literary works [51]. For example, to obtain theories about the elements in a story, novel or other literary work, a teacher must introduce short stories and novels by reviewing and appreciating them. It must be honestly acknowledged that learning Indonesian language and literature in several schools has not happened as expected [52], [53]. [54] stated that the appreciation of literature in Indonesian society is still very low. Teachers tend to use learning techniques that contain theory and memorization so that learning activities become rigid, monotonous, and boring.

In the basic competencies of Indonesian language subjects in class XI high school contains about interpreting the meaning of the text of the second novel verbally and in writing. Interpreting the meaning is students are able to give an impression, opinion, or view of the novel being taught [55]. In the learning material explained about the material that must be taught to students, students look for values in novels (religious, social, cultural, moral, etc.) [56], [57]. In this study, researchers conducted a research with the study of sociological literature on the novel *Simple Miracles* by Ayu Utami.

Based on this background, this study discusses the study of sociological literature in the novel *Simple Miracles* by Ayu Utami. After the results obtained from the study of sociology, the results will be associated with learning in secondary school literature related to the study of literary textbooks. It is hoped that the results of this study can be used as reference material for learning literature in high school class XI.

Sociology of literature is research that focuses on the object of human studies with the environment. [58] said in the study of general literature with sociology is divided into three namely: sociology of writers, sociology of literary works, and sociology of readers [59], [60]. Sociology of literature can be categorized as a study of literature whose main target is the life of individuals in society related to social life. The sociology of literature is not much different from the study of extrinsic elements of literary works, because the sociology of literature wants to link the creation of literary works, the existence of literary works, and the role of literary works with social reality [61], [62]. While Wolf provides a definition that the sociology of literature is an undefined, undefined discipline, consisting of empirical studies, and experiments on rather more general theories, each of which only has similarities in matters that are relating to the relationship of literature with society [63].

[64] states that the sociology of literature is a reflective branch of literary research. Research in sociology of literature is much in demand by researchers who want to see the social and cultural reflection of a society through literary works. [65] stated that the sociological approach, especially for Indonesian literature, both old and modern promises research land that will never dry up. Every literary work that appears has a social aspect that can be learned through various models of social understanding. [66] said that literary works are mirrors that can reflect life and nature. According to [67] there are three perspectives relating to sociological literature namely; 1). A study that looks at literature as

a social document in which a reflection of the situation in the literary period is made, 2). Research that reveals literature as a mirror of the social situation of the author, 3). Research that captures literature as a manifestation of historical events and socio-cultural circumstances.

[68] stated that the appreciation of literature in Indonesian society is still very low. Teachers tend to use learning techniques that contain theory and memorization so that learning activities become rigid, monotonous, and boring. Indonesian language and literature subjects have not been able to hold on to students as rational, cognitive, emotional, and affective [69], [70]. As a result, Indonesian language and literature cannot be subjects that are liked and missed by students. A further impact of these learning conditions is the failure of students to develop their knowledge, language skills, and positive attitudes towards Indonesian language and literature.

Ayu Utami's novel titled *Simple Miracles* as a whole tells the story of the main character with the spiritual world. Specifically from the story, in it also tells the social activities between the main character with family and with neighbors. He also told about Javanese culture related to birth. Religious belief and tolerance among religious communities is also discussed in the novel. At a glance, it is not specifically explained about the background of the place, but the study of sociology in this research is more focused on the social activities of each character in the story.

METHOD

This research was a qualitative descriptive study which was a study that gives a careful picture of certain individuals or groups about the conditions and symptoms that occur. The novel in this study was the novel *Simple Miracles* by Ayu Utami. The primary data source in this study was the novel *Simple Miracles* by Ayu Utami. The data source basically acts as material for data acquisition to be analyzed. Whereas secondary data sources were relevant books, journals, papers, etc. that are needed in preparing the theoretical foundation. Data validation or data validity in this study is done by collecting data with a variety of appropriate techniques. Data obtained, collected, and recorded in research activities are chosen correctly in developing the validity of the data obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Study Sociology Literature In Novel Simple Miracles Works of Ayu Utami The cultural value seen in the novel Simple Miracles is a Javanese culture. Javanese culture is seen when it comes to death and birth. The dominant figure in believing Javanese culture is Mother. The mother of the main character is of Javanese of Jogjakarta who still believes in Javanese culture. It also affects the main character attributes some things to the beliefs of the Javanese. In the story in the novel the value of Javanese culture can be seen from the belief of the Javanese with birth, death, and sacred days.

The social life in the Simple Miracles novel is more focused on the life of a family of the main characters. The stories in a family start from when the main character is still small then his mother is sick and the main character is afraid that his mother died. As a grown-up the main character begins to doubt religion and God. The next story comes from the father of the main character who is sick then died. In addition the main character also tells about his nephew who can see the spirit and can find the missing objects. The main story actually focused on the mother's death from the main character. At first Mother sick then treated in hospital, in the end Mother died at home because of Mother's request.

Literature can be described as a reflection of society although not one hundred percent actually can be interpreted as a picture of society in general. Actually the reflected is a picture or fluctuation of the problems experienced by the community which then wrapped with the form of literary works. Furthermore, the picture was actually taken from the background of community life such as rural, urban, and inland. Purwaningtiyastuti (2013) states that the approach of literary sociology generally focuses on the authors, literary works, and society. The mirror is a transparent object. Mirrors can light the light. The literature is also a mirror. Reading literature, as well as reflecting oneself from the beginning, the presence of literary critics, the literary sociology critic has paid attention to literature and mirrors. Beautiful literature, because it is able to reflect the social world aesthetically (Endaswara, 2011:169).

“Perlahan-lahan agama mengajari aku tentang surga dan neraka. Roh baik masuk surga, roh jahat masuk neraka. Sederhana itu. Cerita-cerita masyarakat mengajari aku bahwa sebelum betul-betul pergi ke surga atau neraka,

arwah bisa saja tetap terikat di dunia. (Ayu Utami, 2016:8)”

The quotation explains human attachment to other human beings. Society is one of the factors that influence every individual in acting or thinking. The main character feels influenced by the story of the people who say that the spirit before entering heaven or hell so the soul can be tied in the world first.

“Yang perlu diperhatikan dari kegiatan ini adalah penghiburan yang diterima bagi keluarga yang kehilangan. Tahlil berjamaah, tujuh hari berturut-turut, akan sangat membantu mengusir rasa sepi yang mencekam bagi yang ditinggal mati. (Ayu Utami, 2016:75).”

Events after death such as Tahlilan in congregation until seven days of death committed by Muslims not just pray for the dead. The event is also helpful entertaining for abandoned families and helping to ward off the loneliness of being abandoned. This proves a culture or belief also related to social interaction.

“Dalam banyak adat, kematian orangtua justru membuat anak- anaknya jatuh miskin. Yang mati menjadi beban wajib bagi yang hidup. Maka tak heran, pembaruan agama atau adat biasanya bersamaan dengan penghapusan ritual rumit yang telah lebih banyak menjelma menjadi beban. (Ayu Utami, 2016:81-82)”

The quotation explains the change or renewal of cultural customs. Sometimes a death is even burdensome and makes it difficult for families who are abandoned because they have to hold some rituals. For that reason it makes a renewal of cultural customs.

Novels or other literary works will not be far from the community because in the literary or novel works are recounted and the community background. According to Waluyo (2011: 3) that the novel can be regarded as a chronicle of life that seeks to reflect and describe life in a certain form with all the influence, bondage, and the achievement of human desires. The author uses the story of human life in the community to be used as a basis in making the

story. Therefore, the story in the novel is not separated from the existence of reality and can be seen in real life even though it cannot be proved entirely. Endraswara (2008: 93) mentions that a complete literary sociology study should be related to the sociocultural background of society. Critical research of literary sociology should be able to explore the past that is still relevant to the present and future.

The novel *Simple Miracles* tells the spiritual story of the main character and his family in everyday life. In addition, in it also told about the relations of society related to religious, social, culture, and residence. The storyline presented in the novel tells the story of the mother's death from the main character. It also tells the spiritual story of some characters. The plot of the novel's story flows forward. The background of the venue is varied because the character tells his story from the main character is still small until the mother of the main character dies, but the place background is focused in Jakarta.

Literary works can be regarded as a reflection or picture of the pattern of community life. Since literary works contain notes, recordings, inventions, and predictions of human life, in turn, literary works, in some cases, often contain social facts (Mahayana, 2007: 226). The expert's opinion explains that the picture of life in the literary work can be proved because in literature it contains social facts. Literary works are born of social circumstances and phenomena that occur in the scope of social society even though it contains concealed elements. According to Rohman (2012: 29) Literary works are born in the midst of society, then the literary work is part of social media. Rohman's opinion explains that literaryworks born in certain communities certainly will not be much social background in the area where the literary works were created.

The novel *Simple Miracles* has several different place backgrounds. In the beginning of the story, the main character lived in Bogor with all family members except his father. The daily life of the main character uses the Javanese language inside the house but when outside the home the people around use Sundanese. In addition, in the compound where he lives, the home of a family of neighbors with various tribes. The tribes around the family complex figures come from Java, Tionghwa, Sunda, Padang and Manado. According to Rahmanto (1993: 71) the background concerns about the geographic, historical, social, and even sometimes political environment or the background of the story where the story takes place. In addition to residing in the country, some figures also exist living in America.

Although not settled in one house, Jakarta is a city to gather for figures when there are important events such as the death of Father, Mother, and Aunt the main character.

Yogyakarta is a city that is also mentioned in the Novel Simple Miracles because the city brings Java's cultural impact on the mother of the main character. Because Yogyakarta is the city that became the first background of the mother of the main character of the customs of Java Yogyakarta also attached in the story. Belief in spirits and spirits not only comes from religion alone, the Javanese belief also influences the existence of spirits and direction. In the novel is also explained about the beliefs of the people of Java associated with the belief after giving birth. Javanese people usually bury the placenta that have been inserted in the clay compartment. Once buried usually above the cemetery of the placenta is given a sentence, the lanterns of kerosene. Furthermore, the mother of the baby usually keeps the rest of the umbilical cord is dry and then wrapped with cotton. In addition to Javanese culture related to birth, other Javanese beliefs are also told in the novel. The Javanese belief about not sleeping fast on Tuesday night Kliwon is also told in the novel.

Javanese culture that is in the story of the novel Simple Miracles is not only told as a culture but also there is some that is associated with religion. Like the concept that Muslims believe that people are born accompanied by four companions called the five pancer limo piston sedulur. Actually, the concept also exists and is believed for people with a background of Javanese culture. In addition, the term is going to go to the grave of a family that has been edited to become a culture in Indonesia before the month of fasting and when Lebaran. All literary works will be related and involve the dynamics of a community life that has certain customs and traditions (Kosasih, 2008: 64).

Javanese culture is also told in the novel because it is mother Ayu Utami still believes about Javanese culture of Yogyakarta. Ayu utami was raised by Javanese cultural background especially Javanese of Yogyakarta ethnic. Mother Ayu Utami who carries that influence because of her original mother came from Javanese tribe. The cultural background of Java then also influenced Ayu Utami's writings in the Simple Miracles novel. Ayu Utami and his family are Catholics. Regarding religion, Ayu Utami is also taught to religious from childhood. But the family of Ayu Utami strongly upholds religious tolerance as her sister is allowed to marry a different religion. Because he found some doubts and felt awkward in the divinity, Ayu Utami became a dubious figure of religion

and God. Near the end of his 20s he has begun to change and view religion as the main thing. It is also written by Ayu Utami in the novel *Simple Miracles*.

The study of sociology of literature also discusses the religions that exist in a literary work. In Ayu Utami's *Simple Miracles* novel is also told about the religions embraced by the characters in it. The main character in the novel embraced Catholicism, as well as members of his family. The Catholic burial ceremony is also told in the novel by Ayu Utami. In addition, several memorial days about Catholicism are also described as spirits. Islam is also slightly aligned in it which relates to Muslim beliefs about death like *sowing*, *tahlil* after 40. One hundred, and a thousand deaths of family members. Actually in the novel *Simple Miracles* emphasizes more about the critical understanding of the main character of religion. At first, the main character was in doubt with the existence of religion, but ultimately the main character began to return to believe in religion after the events that indicate that the greatness of God.

A writer, as a human being, undoubtedly lives in a certain space and time so that it is impossible to escape from the various problems that exist in society and in his day (Zaidan, 2002: 32). Author or writer living as a member of society, of course, can interact and communicate with other community members. This is what underlies an author has the provision to pour his mind into a literary work. According to Goldmann (in Rosyidi, 2010: 201) literary work is not only a static structure and is born by itself but is the result of the thought structure of the subject of the creator arising from the interaction between the subject and the particular social situation. The opinion explains that there is an influence of the social environment of the author which in later will affect the literary works created by the author. Ayu Utami is a writer born November 21, 1968 in Bogor. Ayu Utami since childhood with the background of Catholic religion and Javanese culture is thick. This is what makes the writing of Ayu Utami in the novel *Simple Miracles* tells about the understanding of critical spiritualism. Critical spirituality itself is an open attitude to the spiritual without betraying critical reason. Javanese culture is also told in the novel because it is mother Ayu Utami still believes about Javanese culture of Yogyakarta.

The novel *Simple Miracles* in it is also told about the relationship between family members and outside the family members of the main character. It shows the existence of social interactions of society in the novel. Interactions within family members occur between the

main character and his aunt when traveling buy shoes as well when the main character listens to the stories from both of his aunts. In addition, there is also an interaction between the main character with his brother both when he was a child and having both grown up. Social interaction also occurs between the main character and his father although both when met often differed opinions. The dominant social interaction is between the main character and his mother both when the main character is small until his mother dies. When Father and Mother of the main character are edited, all family members are gathered. Interactions with people outside of family members occur in several instances such as when the mother of the main character is sick and there are priests who come to pray.

Significance of the Simple Miracles in Literature Learning in High School

The study of literary sociology in the novel Simple Miracles can be used as teaching materials. The results of this study can be used as materials in one of the materials of Indonesian class XII high school. The material in question is the material on KD 4.1 that is interpreting the meaning of the text of the novel either orally or in writing. The purpose of interpreting the meaning of novels is that students are able to give the impression, opinion, or views on the novel being taught. In the learning material is explained about the material that should be taught to students, the students are looking for the values in the novel (religious, social, cultural, moral, etc.).

The culture in the novel Simple Miracles by Ayu Utami is filled with Javanese culture of Yogyakarta in the form of culture about birth, death, and some values of life. With the Javanese cultural values are expected students can be more familiar about the current Javanese culture. Social values are also expected to contribute positively to the students. Social interactions that exist in the novel in the form of interaction between family members and outside family members. Religion adopted in most of the figures is a Catholic religion but not only the religion is discussed but the religion of Islam is also alluded to it. The value of religious tolerance can also be taken and emulated in the story. There is an implicit meaning in the novel that is the attitude of religion and believing in the existence of God try to explain in it. Based on the social, religious, and cultural values in the novel, it is hoped that these values can be used as teaching materials in the literary learning in school.

CONCLUSION

The study of the sociology of literature in the novel *Simple Miracles* can be seen from the values of Java society in it. Yogyakarta is a city that is also mentioned in the *Simple Miracles* novel because the city brings Java's cultural impact on the mother of the main character. Javanese culture that is in the story of the novel *Simple Miracles* is not only told as a culture. The study of the sociology of literature also discusses the religions that exist in a literary work. In Ayu Utami's novel *Simple Miracles* is also told about the religions embraced by the characters in it. *Simple Miracles* novel is also about the relationship between family members and the family members of the main character. It shows the existence of social interactions of society in the novel. *Simple Miracles* novel is one of the works of Ayu Utami which is full of social, religious and cultural aspects. The social aspect is seen from the social awareness and social interaction of the characters both in one family member and outside of family members. The religious aspect is seen from several discussions relating to religion, both from the religion of the main characters of Catholicism and about other religions. Cultural aspects that exist in the novel is a Javanese culture that is still believed in the characters in the novel story. Javanese culture in the novel is also associated with religion, both Catholic and Islamic. The aspects of the sociology of literature in the novel make the social, cultural, and religious aspects can be used in literature learning materials that exist in Indonesian language subjects in school. The material is in accordance with KD 4.1 class XII High school is interpreting the meaning of the text of the novel both orally and in writing.

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