

Sociology of Literature in a Collection of *Kang Maksum's* Short Stories by A. Mustofa Bisri

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the sociology of literature in the collection of short stories *Kang Maksum*, in terms of content, theme, and purpose. The subject of this research is a collection of short stories *Kang Maksum* by A. Mustofa Bisri. This study uses descriptive and qualitative research method. This study collects data qualitatively, such as by interpretation, analysis, and evaluation. The results of the study shows that the content of the short story *Kang Maksum* by A. Mustofa Bisri in terms of the sociology of literature describes the social life that is actually experienced by the writer himself, namely A. Mustofa Bisri. Through the short stories, A. Mustofa Bisri wants to convey messages that readers should uphold the simplicity in life as their principle. Therefore, the social themes raised by Mustofa Bisri in his short stories become valuable lesson for readers as well as a depiction of the social life in certain community.

Keywords: *Sociology of Literature, Short Stories, Kang Maksum Short Stories Collection*

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a type of writing that has certain meaning or beauty. According to Priyatni (2012: 12), literature is imaginary or fictional disclosure about reality. This opinion explains that literature is a reality that is mixed in fiction. Even in fiction, the value of fact is able to give the impression of life for the reader or audience. Literature or literary work is a small form of human life in its social life that can contain and convey explicit and implied meanings through the language of the author. As explained by Surastina (2015: 3) that literature is writing that has a certain meaning or beauty or a branch of art that uses language as a medium and a means of expressing the ideas and feelings of the artist. In line with Surastina, Sukada (2013: 15) considers that a literary work is a verbal embodiment of the author's unique variety of consciousness. To understand the meaning of a literary work, the reader must be able to appreciate it or analyze it well. Therefore, various values conveyed by authors

through their writings can be understood, internalized, and practiced in reader's life. It strengthens the argument that readers have their own purposes. They read literary work not only to entertain them but also to get values from it.

Literature that is full of values can also be seen as a portrayal of community life as a social phenomenon. Literary works born in the midst of society are the result of revealing the author's soul about life, events, and life experiences (Wicaksono, 2016). Hence, a literary work never departs from a social vacuum. It means that literary works are written based on the social life of a particular community and narrate the background cultures. Sociology of literature is present as an approach or way to understand literary phenomena in relation to social aspects. Sociology of literature in general is an approach to human orientation to the universe so that the orientation produced by authors and readers can face the realities that occur in society.

Etymologically, Andhari (2013: 2) states that the sociology of literature comes from the words sociology and literature. Sociology comes from the word *sos* (Greek) which means together, united, friends, friends, and *logi* (logos) means words, sayings, parables. Meanwhile, literature is from the prefix *sas* (Sanskrit) which means directing, teaching, giving instructions and instructions. The suffix *tra* means tool, means. Referring to this definition, both terms 'sociology and literature' have the same object, namely humans and society. By definition, according to Wiyatmi (2013: 45) the sociology of literature is a sociological study of literature that examines literary works in relation to social problems that exist in society. The sociology of literature focuses on the content of the literary work, its purpose, as well as other things that are implied in the literary work itself and are related to social problems. Sociology of literary works examines literature as a mirror of society. What is implied in a literary work is considered to reflect or redefine the reality that exists in society (Wicaksono et al, 2018).

Sociology of literature is an approach that departs from an orientation to the universe. It can also depart from an orientation to the author and the reader. Based on the sociology of literature, literary works are seen in relation to reality, until to the extent to which literary works reflect reality (Mislamuddin et al., 2018). The term reality here contains a fairly broad meaning, namely everything that is outside the literary work and is referred to by the literary work. This argument grounded on the view that literature is a picture of social phenomena. By the author, the phenomenon is brought back into a form of literature with a creative process (observation, analysis, interpretation, reflection, imagination, evaluation, and others).

Sociology of literature as a way of seeing literature in relation to social aspects has been studied by several researchers, such as Yasnur Asri and Y.

Niken. Asri (2011) explains that the short story "Si Padang" by Harris Effendi Thahar is a short story that successfully reveals the social reality of Minangkabau society today. As a reflection of the socio-cultural reality of the Minangkabau society, this short story then becomes a justification for Hoggart's opinion in which literary works at all levels are illuminated by the values applied. Therefore, what Harris Effendi Thahar does is to show that his work is truly integrated with the lives of individuals and society in the structure of society. In this case, Thahar as an author who was born, raised, and lives in the Minangkabau community, has presented the objective reality that is part of the Minangkabau community's dilemma. Further research was conducted by Y. Niken. Based on a sociological study in the short story "Body at the Simpang Jalan" Niken (2015) argues that there are problems or social conflicts in the MDSJ short story. The social conflict occurred between the main character, his family and the villagers. The social problems arise because the main character and his family, who were once ordinary people, changed their names and took the title of nobility (Sari et al, 2018). Society then judges the family to exalt themselves and eventually excludes them from the community.

The discussion in this research is focused on the sociology of literature in the collection of short stories *Kang Maksum* by A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus). However, this research is limited to the perspective of literary texts, the author's background, and the readership of short stories written based on the sociology of literature. The short story "Kang Maksum" is one of 15 short stories in *Konveksi*. However, the short stories other than "Kang Maksum" will be chosen so that a more in-depth review of the sociology of literature can be explored. Short stories are chosen as the object of study because short stories are type of literary work described in written form in the form of a short, clear, and concise story. Dalman (2015: 125) explains that short stories are fiction that the content is short and dense, and it forms a problem with a single plot. Short stories are usually no more than 10,000 words or less than 10 pages. Compared to novels, short stories tend to be less complex but sufficient to convey the story and contain life values, criticism, or advice. In addition, short stories are the type of short fiction that is most liked by all circles. As stated by Thahar (1999: 1) that short stories or what is more popular with the acronym *cerpen* is one of the most popular types of fiction written by the authors.

The short story "Kang Maksum" contained in *Konveksi* is chosen because it contains criticism and advice conveyed by Gus Mus in a relaxed and simple style. On the other hand, in *Konveksi*, Gus Mus often frames his story with an Islamic boarding school setting that is sometimes close to the "supernatural". Many terms or idioms are put forward, such as *bayati*, *sika*, *hijazi*, *berjanjenan*, *mauludan*, *khataman*, or Javanese terms, such as *aji lembu*

sekilan, welut putih, jaran goyang, halimunan, puasa ngebleng, puasa pati geni, and others.

Konveksi is written over a long span of time until 2018. It reflects the depth, sensitivity, and at the same times the simplicity of A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus) in capturing all the realities around him, the reality of this country. As kiai, cultural observers, and artists, his short stories are very well mixed, so that those who read them will be impressed with being "reminded, cared for" with great affection. This book is very valuable for reflection and as a treasure trove of Indonesian literature.

METHOD

This study uses descriptive and a qualitative research method. The qualitative descriptive method according to Sugiono (2010: 13-14) is also called the artistic method because the research process is more artistic (less patterned), and is referred to as the interpretive method because the research data is more related to the interpretation of the data found in the field. The use of this method is because the data comes from a collection of short stories by A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus) which will be analysed sentence by sentence that supports the sociology of the short story. The data sources analysed are based on existing theories and then described in accordance with the research objectives, namely knowing the sociology of the short story collection *Kang Maksum* by A. Mustofa Bisri. Data collection techniques use documentation techniques. This technique is used to collect data on the sociology of literature from the collection of short stories *Kang Maksum* by A. Mustofa Bisri covering the perspective of literary texts, the author's background, and reader acceptance. The steps taken in order to obtain these three things are as follows: 1) Read carefully the collection of short stories *Kang Maksum* by A. Mustofa Bisri; 2) Review the contents of short stories based on 3 perspectives, namely the perspective of literary texts, the author's background, and the acceptance of short story readers as a sociological study of literature; 3) Provide statements related to these 3 perspectives; 4) Classify the data obtained into the three categories; and 5) Evaluate the data that has been obtained.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings regarding the sociology of literature in the collection of short stories *Kang Maksum* by A. Mustofa Bisri are presented in three parts, namely the perspective of literary texts, the author's background, and reader acceptance.

Literary Text Perspective

Literary texts are usually cut up or classified and their sociological meaning is explained. Finding data related to the perspective of literary texts are presented in the following section.

Data (1):

The short story of Syabakhronni and his friends, judging by its contents, actually shows the selfishness of a child about his desire to marry a girl he just met. As in the following quote:

"Mom, I don't know," answered Syabakhronni, "as soon as I saw her, her face seemed to stick in my eyelids. Even though she wasn't a virgin and her face wasn't beautiful, she was a good person, Mom. A good person with bad luck. I want to improve her fate. by editing it (Source: Cerpen Syabakhronni dan Kawan-kawan)

The data describes the reflection of young people's life in the village that have a tendency to impose their will. The young man 'Syabakhronni' seemed to force his will without caring about his own mother's advice. In other words, the attitude shown by the young man deviates the social norm. That is the substance of its sociology seen from the perspective of its literary text. The meaning conveyed is related to the selfishness of the child against his will without considering the feelings of his biological mother. The condition created by A. Mustofa Bisri in the short story certainly has a noble goal, thus children can respect their parents than their selfishness.

Data (2):

"Well, you already know him or he also knows you, how come suddenly want to propose?" "Anyway!" shouted the Syabakhronni immediately, leaving the echo of his voice in the silence of the night. (Source: Cerpen Syabakhronni dan Kawan-kawan)

The goal to be conveyed is that a child should not impose his will on his parents which may have fatal consequences. Ask your parents' opinion, the opinion of your mother and father, especially regarding a mate. Of course it would be wiser if the parents' decisions are put forward. The next data regarding the study of the sociology of literature based on the perspective of literary texts is in one of the following quotations from the short story 'Wabah'.

Data (3):

So when they have almost given up trying to find a solution to the problem, then they go back to read newspapers, watch TV, and listen to the radio as they have always done.. And they are shaken. From the TV broadcasts they watch, the newspapers they read, and the radio they listen to later, they become aware that the strange, unpleasant smell that is getting more and more pungent by the day is already endemic in their country. (Source: *Cerpen Wabah*)

The content in *Wabah* is related to the study of the sociology of literature, especially based on the perspective of literary texts, which is a reflection of the life of the story. The social attitudes of the characters in the short story are a reflection that every human being who lives in the environment must have a high concern as reflected in the data quote above. The author wants to convey that social meaning in the characters' life is something that must be imitated, thus humans in their lives care about their environment.

Author's Background

The background of the author is the factors that exist within the author himself that motivates or influences the author in writing a short story. The background of the writer of the short story, namely A. Mustofa Bisri, can be seen in one of the quotes in the following short story *Wabah*.

Data (4):

They also held a special meeting to discuss the problems that disturbed the peace of the big family. "We'd better find someone smart;" Grandpa suggested while covering his nose, "Who knows, we can solve this problem." (Source: *Cerpen Wabah*)

The background of A. Mustofa Bisri as the author of short story is a *kyai* who masters the field of Islam. The daily life depicted in short story is certainly close to cleanliness and beauty because that is also what is recommended in Islam, namely caring for the environment to keep it clean and comfortable in place. The short story shows some mechanism taken by society to prevent and handle the epidemic that occurs in the whole area. Deliberation in solving the problem becomes the theme of discussion for readers. In that effort, every family member looks for ways to get a solution, both from printed and electronic media. The next data is closely related to the background of the author, namely A. Mustofa Bisri.

Data (5):

So when they have almost given up trying to find a solution to the problem, then they go back to reading newspapers, watching TV, and listening to the radio as they have always done. And they are shaken. From the TV broadcasts they watched, the newspapers they read, and the radio they listened to later, they became aware that the strange, unpleasant smell that was getting more and more pungent by the day was already endemic in their country. (Source: *Cerpen Wabah*)

A. Mustofa Bisri has been taught to be a strong human being and not easily give up since he believes that God gives instructions to human being to remain patient in every calamity and test. This is what A. Mustofa Bisri wants

to convey in the short story *Wabah*. Bisri wants to provide a reflection for the reader that the problems experienced in a family and in a society must be resolved together and with certain effort.

Data (6):

As a result, a mutually agreed conclusion is obtained that the smell is caused by a lack of attention to cleanliness. It is therefore decided that all family members should improve hygiene care; both personal and environmental hygiene. In addition to the helpers, all family members are required to participate in maintaining the cleanliness of the house and yard. Every day, each has their own community service schedule. (Source: *Cerpen Wabah*)

In the following data, it is explained that A. Mustofa Bisri is a kyai, therefore, it cannot be denied that what is conveyed in the story also intersects with religion. He reviews the life of a character that is close to Allah SWT, an expert in worship, and loves life very much.

Data (7):

"Nawaitu I just want to continue the development of this area so that it becomes a prosperous and authoritative district," he said vehemently. "I am sad to see friends in rural areas, even though I have done a lot so far, many of them still live below the poverty line. My struggle for the people of this region in particular, is not over yet." (Source: *Cerpen Konvensi*)

Talking about politics, A. Mustofa Bisri is also in charge of the political conditions in his country. Although he does not have a political background, he is eager to learn it from the politics of his country. As explained in an excerpt from one of his short stories, it is depicted in a national spirit which can be realized through building his village or birthplace. This is of course described by the author as a reality in the political world where most people only make promises and a few keep their promises.

Data(8):

"But all of that did not dampen my determination to keep going for the sake of the people of this region who I love so much. I ask for Panjenengan's blessing and support. I promised myself that, if I am re-elected, I will clean up the ignorant trash from my environment." (Source: *Cerpen Konvensi*)

The attitude of love for the homeland can be realized through his love for his birthplace or homeland. As the meaning of the character 'I' in the following quote is a manifestation of his love for the region as part of his love for the Indonesian homeland. It is said that because of the homeland he loves, the area he loves will not be allowed to be exploited by irresponsible people or in following quotes is stated as 'garbage'.

Data (9):

Long story short, the convention went smoothly. According to the agreement, the candidate for regent was chosen by himself and the candidate for deputy regent was chosen by himself. Then those who were chosen as deputy regent were paired with those chosen as deputy regent. The result really surprised many people, especially the old regent and his secretary. It turned out that the elected and agreed to be party candidates were Drs Rozak as the district head and Ir Sarjono, the head of the Polan Party as the deputy regent. (Source: *Cerpen Konvensi*)

Konvensi questions about the regent election. Each candidate has the right to run as a candidate, including the current regent. As explained in the quote above, the convention goes smoothly with the agreement that the regent and deputy regent are handpicked. The short story actually wants to convey the social conditions in the political world, which sometimes do not know who is friend or foe. The convention is carried out in accordance with party rules and in the end the party members who would become candidates for regent and deputy regent as stated in the short story.

Data (10):

"That's politics," I said to my wife who looked confused after hearing my story. "Fortunately I wasn't tempted when someone offered me and you pushed me along to come forward as deputy regent!" (Source: *Cerpen Konvensi*)

Politics is what it seems. Anyone who enters the world of politics will certainly face many risks, including conflicts with relatives, friends, or opponents. That's what Mustofa Bisri wants to explain. Judging from the sociology of literature, *Konvensi* describes the current state of the political world. Only a small portion is truly trustworthy and most of them become traitors to the people because they enrich themselves and neglect their duties.

Readers Acceptance

The reader's problems and their social impact depend on the social setting, changes, social developments, and how far literary values are related to its social values. In this regard, the short stories written by A. Mustofa Bisri can always be accepted by readers in order to convey the social values in literature to the society. He writes as follows:

Data (11):

Finally, I gave up. Accept the reality and even though it is very bitter, try to be reasonable in responding to the shocking event. Who would have imagined? Kang Maksum died from being run over by a train! His body was divided into three parts! La hawla wala quwwata illa billah! (Source: *Cerpen Kang Maksum*)

In the quotation above, *Kang Maksum* teaches readers that no one will ever know about human death. A. Mustofa Bisri wants to convey message that someone's death will never be known; die in an accident or die in good health. The problem is that there is distrust that a person who is considered a pious in the field of religion but died in a pathetic condition. Some readers are led to have a personal perspective that the death of the character is due to suicide. However, some others don't think so. It means that different assumptions become something commonplace and ultimately lead to a truth that it is impossible for people who always teach about great sins of committing suicide but are ashamed of themselves. Readers can of course judge for themselves according to the social conditions that occur in the story being conveyed. As emphasized in the quote in the following data.

Data (12):

Then? Must have committed suicide. That's the conclusion that people who don't know *Kang Maksum* confirmed. However, for those who know him, like *Kang Sofwan* and I, suicide is the most impossible thing for *Kang Maksum* to do. *Maksum* people who love life. (Source: *Cerpen Kang Maksum*)

The social conditions as described in the short story convey that *Kang Maksum* is a religious figure, for this case he is as a representation of the ideal *santri*, Islamic education, and Islamic life. Even so, not everyone knows exactly what happened to *Kang Maksum* as the central character of the short story who dies being crushed by a train.

Data (13):

"I heard that before, *Kang Maksum* allowed himself to be hit by bicycles, motorbikes, carts, and trucks. And, so far, he's safe, nothing less." (Source: *Cerpen Kang Maksum*)

A. Mustofa Bisri as the author of *Kang Maksum* explains to readers that everyone in the story gives different views and feelings toward *Kang Maksum's* death. Some people think that the reason *Kang Maksum* is crushed by a train is his attempt of suicide. In other side, some people think that it is part of an immunity test even though in the end he fails and died. However, the views of some local people will certainly be contradictory and will never assume that *Kang Maksum* committed suicide.

Data (14):

Apart from having sufficient religious knowledge, *Kang Maksum* is a person who loves life. (Source: *Cerpen Kang Maksum*)

The quotation above clearly breaks the first opinion or assumption because it is impossible for *Kang Maksum* to commit suicide while *Kang*

Maksum himself is a figure who has unquestionable religious knowledge and as a character who loves life.

Data (15):

Regarding my discontinued lectures, I comforted myself by telling myself, "Ah, studying doesn't have to be in college. After all, people go to college to look for material. I'm not a lawyer and court star, that's okay; I'm not a superstar now. Enough material. (Source: *Cerpen Jimin*)

Based on reader acceptance of literary texts, *Cerpen Jimin* tells how a difficult economic condition forces a person to forget his dreams and hopes for the future. The economic situation experienced by the character as described in the short story is to convey that a person's social condition is not the same, especially with regard to education. Social and economic conditions greatly affect the achievement of everyone's hopes and dreams. The reader will be very aware of this situation because they also experience what is described in the short story.

Data (16):

Kiai Sobir did not distinguish who came to him. Whoever the guests, high officials or commoners; male or female; from among students or not; he accepted with joy and respect. His ears patiently accommodate all the complaints, outpourings of the heart, even the boasts of his various guests. In front of him, everyone felt truly independent. (Source: *Cerpen Sang Primadona*)

Sang Primadona tells about how everyone needs to convey and uphold the attitude of tolerance. In a social situation like today, this attitude is very much needed. As explained in the quotation above that the attitude of not discriminating against other people, both from their social and economic status, is an attitude of tolerance in social life. Kiai Sobir can be a role model because of his respect and tolerance to others. Through his attitude, everyone became even more amazed by Kia Sobir's character.

Data (17):

Even before I massaged, I had done various jobs. Except of course jobs that require a diploma. Because I never got any degree. Starting from farm labor, small trade, to brokerage I have ever done. None of that worked, yes, just massaging in Jakarta, this is what can be said to be really successful. (Source: *Gadis Kecil Tebal Bermata Cemerlang*)

Socio-economic difficulties sometimes force someone, including the characters in the short story, to work hard to make ends meet. In fact, that is what makes a person succeeds in reaching their dreams. In other words, the current socio-economic difficulties do not become an obstacle for anyone not to work hard and to be successful.

Data(18):

Indeed, as a woman who is not married, I am quite proud of my life which can be said to be self-sufficient. I have been able to buy my own house which is quite beautiful in an elite area. Everywhere there is a car ready to take me. In short, I am proud to be an independent woman. No longer dependent on parents. Even now I can help their economic life in the village more or less. While many of my friends have graduated from college, they are still looking for work. (Source: *Cerpen Jimin*)

The quotation above expresses the need for independence in life. The author wants to convey message that even if the surrounding situation does not support and exclude them, they have to be independent. Independence is defined as a lifestyle that does not want to depend on others or make other people bother. The independence shown by the character 'I' in the quotation above actually becomes a pride to be an independent woman. This is the character of life that should be a role model for young people and society in general.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the content of the short story *Kang Maksum* by A. Mustofa Bisri in terms of literary sociology describes the social life that is actually experienced by the author himself, namely A. Mustofa Bisri. Viewed from a literary perspective, the short story *Kang Maksum* wants to convey messages to the readers that simplicity in life needs to be upheld as a principle. Each short story has the theme of simplicity, social care, environmental care, luxury behind simplicity, being ambitious in social and political life for the sake of the nation's ideals, and the need for values of obedience to God in life. All of the things stated provide a reflection of the real life of society.

Based on the perspective of the author's background, it can be stated that A. Mustofa Bisri's short stories are generally related to A. Mustofa Bisri himself. The author as a kyai, cultural observer, and community observer, tries to convey what he sees and experiences in his life and in his environment in *Konvensi* short stories, thus there is not a single short story that is not related to the author himself. The social themes raised by A. Mustofa Bisri in short stories become valuable lessons for readers as well as a description of the social life of every community in an area.

Meanwhile, according to the perspective of reader acceptance, the short story of A. Mustofa Bisri, which is compiled in the short story *Konvensi* gives an illustration to the reader that public life and politics are as he stated. That is, people must learn to accept the changing times with various kinds of changes in life by humans in it. Readers are invited to observe actual people's lives and learn to adapt to existing conditions.

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