

Structural and Thematic Characteristics of the Latest Popular Indonesian Novels

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ABSTRACT

This article contains a discussion of the structural and thematic characteristics in the latest popular Indonesian novels. The objectives of this study are to: 1) describe the structural characteristics of the latest Indonesian popular novels; 2) describe the thematic of the latest Indonesian popular novel. This research will be carried out in several stages. The first stage of this research is the literature study by collecting references that have relevance to the research problem from various sources. The second stage of this research is data collection with the following steps: 1) reading the novel that has been used as an object of material intensively; 2) identify aspects related to the research problem; and 3) record the results of identification. The third stage is data analysis, and the last stage is to reveal the results of the analysis and discussion. Based on the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that 1) the structure of the latest popular Indonesian novel has its own characteristics. Aspects of teenagers figures as the main characters, set in metropolitan big cities, using unconventional and conventional plots, and using a unique language style; 2) the latest Indonesian popular thematic novels related to teenager love and friendship, teenager social conflicts, teenager lifestyles, and the search for identity.

Keywords: *characteristics, structural, thematic, popular novels*

1. INTRODUCTION

As a literary work, popular novels are able to express and reflect various social phenomena that occur in society. The life of the people featured in popular novels is a reflection of the social reality of the community. Thus, popular novels depict a reality, a culture because literature is a product of culture. Swingewood [1] argues that literary works are social reflections, so that the birth of a literary work is inseparable from the socio-cultural aspects of society. Lotman in Faruk [2] revealed that literature is a discourse that models an unlimited universe in a limited imaginary universe.

Literature as an inseparable part of the cultural dynamics of a nation that is born, grows, and develops following the dynamics that occur in its society. Literature was born expressing various social, cultural, political and ideological phenomena and intellectual dissatisfaction Mahayana [3]. Like wise, the presence of popular novels through their appearance.

The presence and movement of popular culture, including popular novels, is very significant. He also influenced the lifestyle and cultural attitudes of some people. For the people who are interested, it not only functions as a distributor of obsessions, aspirations, and ideologies, but is also seen as one of the means of legitimating the ideal world image Mahayana [3]. This is in line with Levin's opinion (in Elizabeth and Tom Burns [4]). According to Levin literary works have a reciprocal relationship with the community. How the

community will be reflected in literary works and literary works is a reflection of the reality of society. Furthermore, Mahayana [3] explained that literature (novel) is popular as a product of mass culture, obviously it naturally has the right to life. Its birth and growth have become part of the journey of human culture, because it is presented and brought to life by its supporters. Popular literature is part of social reality, social documents that describe the lives of some people.

According to Mukerji (in Adi [5]), popular culture refers to beliefs, practices and objects that are united in the unity of life in society. This includes beliefs, customs, practices and objects produced from commercial and political centers. Meanwhile, Mintz explained that "studying popular culture is a serious, respectable, necessary, and imported field of inquiry". This means that the study of popular culture, including popular novels is a very important and necessary activity. In-depth studies of popular novels and will reveal many things, reveal a variety of portraits and social dynamics that occurred in his day. It is in this context that cultural studies are important as an effort to understand anxiety, obsessions, hopes, dreams, and at the same time social development and change. Mahayana, [3].

The phenomenon of popular literature has its own appeal for its readers. Popular novel tells the story of the dynamics of adolescent life and the lifestyles of big city communities, complete with dreams of the urbanites in metropolitan cities. The contents of a crisp, light story told by a typical teen's language style are

very binding on young readers. The story presented in the story seems to reduce the social dynamics of adolescent life [6] Dewojati.

In line with the development of ideology, thought, science, technology, and art has a very large influence on the various problems and dynamics of social life presented in literary works, especially in popular novels. The problems presented in popular novels are increasingly complex, diverse, and universal in line with human development and social environment.

Structurally and thematically, latest popular Indonesian novels have their own characteristics when compared to other genre novels. Based on these reasons, this paper contains a discussion of the structural and thematic characteristics of the latest popular Indonesian novels.

2. METHODS

This research is a qualitative research with descriptive method. This research was conducted in several stages. The first stage of this research is the literature study by collecting references that have relevance to the research problem from various sources. The second stage of this research is data collection with the following steps: 1) reading the novel that has been made as an object of material intensively; 2) identify aspects related to the research problem; and 3) record the results of identification. The third stage is data analysis, and the last stage is to reveal the results of the analysis and discussion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Structural Characteristics of Latest Indonesian Popular Novels

Structural analysis is an analysis that looks at the structural elements of a work that are closely related and mutually determine the meaning of a literary work. An element has no meaning if the element is separate from other elements, the meaning is determined by all the elements contained in the structure Hawkes [7] [8] Teeuw. The meaning of the elements of the work can only be understood and assessed fully on the basis of understanding the place and function of the elements in the whole literary work.

To examine the structural characteristics of the latest Indonesian popular novels, aspects of flow, characterization and setting will be examined.

From the aspect of flow, there are several flow techniques used by the author in moving the story of the novel. Overall, the latest popular Indonesian novels use a backlight (unconventional). The story starts in the middle. The novel writers bring the characters to a particular part of the event, then the event is developed by recalling the character's past. To explain a part in a certain position, or the consequences of an event, the author takes the reader to the past that has been experienced by the characters. This can be seen in the novel *Things About Him* rich in Nara Lahmusi. The story in this novel begins by explaining the relationship of love and friendship between the characters of Love and Dion. Love figure who likes and admires a man (boy) named Dion.

The first part of the novel's story illustrates the problem of love between Love and Dion. However, in the next section, the author does not explain the continuation of their friendship and romance, but the next part of the novel describes their friendship life in the past which brought events to the present.

This can be seen in the following quote.

Namun keinginan itu sudah kuhapus jauh-jauh. Sekarang aku malah tidak mau melenyapkan rumah kosong tersebut. Tanpa taman tidak terurus di belakangnya. Aku dan cowok itu mungkin bisa akrab seperti sekarang. Begitulah, kami jadi sering bertemu di taman rahasia untuk bermain, bercerita, membagi keuntungan menjual nata, menyimpan harta karun, dan hari ini kami mencari cacing untus tugas biologiku. Sialnya saat kami mulai menggali tanah, tiba-tiba hujan turun, Lahmusi [9].

Based on the above quotation, using the first-person perspective, the author describes the friendship lives of the characters in their past. Plotting technique like this aims to reveal the events that have been experienced by the characters in their past as a result of events experienced at the present time.

In general, the latest popular Indonesian novels use the technique of unconventional plot or reverse beam. Pengaluran technique like this is one way for the author to move the story more interesting. In addition, through this flow technique, the author can exploit more stories, especially the past stories of characters who are part that is separated from the whole story of the novel.

In accordance with its characteristics, popular novels do have many differences from other novels that are considered as 'serious' novels. Pop genre novels tend to present light stories, about the world of teenagers and their social and cultural environment. One difference between popular novels and other types of novels lies in aspects of character and characterization. For example the age level of the character. Teenlit popular novels for example, as the name suggests a teenager, sitting in high school, urban teenagers.

From the aspect of the character's name, popular novels are novels whose main characters are teenagers who use the names of teenagers today. In the popular novels which are used as objects of this research, found several names of characters including, Love, Gita, Nathan, Gerby, Dion, Jason, Ramon, Letta, Radit, Glenta, Danil, Raga, Valda, Bimo, Radit, Chatrine, Chika, Nagita, and other names. The names are the names of today's teens. The use of these names aims to be close to teenage readers who are predicted to be the same or the same age as novel characters.

Teenagers are part of a cultural classification with an elastic age range that is in the range of children and adults. Psychologically, the character, character and characterization of adolescents is a person who is

looking for identity, unstable, and tend to be emotional. The personalities of adolescent figures are influenced by many social and friendship environments. The author's description of the character's character in the novel can be done in an analytical (direct) and dramatic way through the name of the character, the physical character, and dialogue between characters. A description of the character of adolescent characters can be seen in the following quote.

Di ujung celah sempit jalan ini aku melihat Dion. Dia berdiri gagah dalam terpaan cahaya, kaku membelakangiku. Ya tuhan sudah lama aku tidak bertemu dengan dia. Apakah dia masih sama seperti yang dulu? Cowok dengan mata paling indah, bulu lentik, dan senyum seperti malaikat? Atau malah dia sudah berubah. Memiliki pacar baru yang lebih segalanya dibandingkan aku? Pikiran absurd itu memenuhi benaku saat jengkal demi jengkal kakik mendekatinya
Lahmusi, [10].

In the quote illustrated that the author directly describes the physical picture of the character. Popular novels in general tell the life of people (teenagers) urban living and living in metropolitan cities. The story setting was chosen by the author, especially in big cities, such as Jakarta, Bandung and Surabaya. A description of the setting of events in a popular novel can be seen in the following quotation.

Padahal, di Bandung, Gita sudah menemukan dunia baru bersama sahabat-sahabatnya. Kini, dia harus rela meninggalkan semua itu dan kembali ke kota metropolitan. Kondisinya masih sama bahkan makin parah dibanding saat gadis itu meninggalkannya. Polusi yang makin gila-gilaan, macet yang menjadi rutinitas sehari-hari, dan makin sedikitnya paru-paru hijau di kota ini. Aneh memang, padahal Jakarta adalah nama kota yang tertera di akte kelahiran Gita, tetapi sekarang.... Entahlah kenapa Gita Muak kalau harus kembali ke sini. Dia sudah sangat nyaman dengan segala kondisi di Bandung [10]. Pricillia A.

The latest popular Indonesian novel shows the present time setting. Much can be used as concrete evidence of the latest world revealed in popular novels discussed. For example, the use of Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp and Twitter social media. Other evidence seen is the rise of online shopping, online

transportation as a manifestation of the latest popular culture.

Rasanya aku ingin menarik semua ucapanku tadi. Gila saja, pengakuanku didengar langsung olehnya! ah sial. Tapi, tunggu bukannya akun Instagram Dion yang membuatku ke sini? Kenapa malah ada Jason? Lantas di mana Dion? “ Sekarang gue yang pegang akun Instagram dion, Ta” Jawab Jason terang (Lahmusi, 2018: 225)

“Ya, gue memang nggak menelepon, cume nge-Whatsapp, minta izin minta izin buat ngajak lu pergi, ucap Janson santai.

“Ramon teman dekat Dion. Gue tahu dari Instagram Dion. Dia tadi nge-posting foto Ramon waktu di mall. Gue yakin Ramon bakal antar gue ke Dion. Gue janji setelah gue selesaikan masalah gue sama Dion gue bakal nemui lo.

The quote illustrates the use of Instagram social media as an arena for teenage self-actualization. Now, teenagers who do not have an Instagram, WA, or Twitter account are considered not cool (*gaul*). Making status, posting, and publishing is an inseparable part of teenage life.

3.2. Thematic Latest Indonesian Popular Novels

Popular novels are products of popular culture trying to address various aspects of modern people's lives. In line with the development of ideology, thought, science, technology, and art has a very large influence on the various problems and dynamics of social life presented in literary works, especially in popular novels.

Apart from being something that has a lot of fans, the study of popular literature is starting to be seen as important because it is considered a phenomenon in the history of modern Indonesian literature. This is evident from the many concerns of universities that study popular literary literature today [11]. The results of the study are the birth of a thesis, thesis, or dissertation that makes popular novels the object of study.

Mahayana [3] explains that popular literature as a product of mass culture, obviously naturally has the right to life. Its birth and growth have become part of the journey of human culture, because it is presented and brought to life by its supporters. Popular literature is part of social reality, social documents that describe the lives of some people.

In the eyes of sociology, especially based on the concept of Gramscy hegemony, popular culture is a container of struggle between forces that survive from the subordinate group against the incorporation of the

dominant group. Meanwhile, according to structuralists, pop culture is an ideological engine that continuously reproduces dominant ideologies [3] In-depth studies of popular literature and popular culture will reveal many things, revealing a variety of portraits and social dynamics that occurred in his day. It is in this context that cultural studies are important as an effort to understand anxiety, obsessions, hopes, dreams, and at the same time social development and change.

There are a number of issues that are featured in the latest popular Indonesian novels, including the issue of adolescent love. The issue of love that is displayed in the latest popular Indonesian novel is the love of school-age youth with all its problems. The problem of love is presented in a simple style typical of teenagers. The love problem described in the latest Indonesian popular novel as a representation of teenage life, especially the life of urban teenagers as a form of popularity. This can be seen in the author's description and narration displayed through his characters.

Aku naksir cowok yang rumahnya tidak begitu jauh dari rumahku-hanya terpisah rumah kosong. Terkadang aku ingin bisa menggeser rumahku agar rumah kami berdekatan. Aku penasaran banget lihat cowok itu belajar, bermain *playstation*, *sit up*, *push up*, atau...ah, pokoknya aku ingin bisa memandangnya dari jendela kamarku. Seperti yang dilakukan Go Dokmi di dalam Drama *Flower Boys Next Door* (Lahmusi, 2018: 11)

In addition to the issue of love, the latest popular Indonesian novel also addresses the issue of friendship in social groups (gangs). This is a strategy in maintaining the group. Conflict will arise if one part of the group resigns or moves to another group. The pattern of teen friendship expressed in this novel is a representation of popularity.

Another issue presented in the latest popular Indonesian novel is social conflict in adolescents, which includes family (parents) conflict, social environment conflict (friends). Psychological problems often arise due to simple problems among adolescents. Problems with classmates, with girlfriends, with gangs, or other groups.

In the family, there are often conflicts with parents. Business of parents with their business, making teenagers as the main characters are neglected and have to move schools from one city to another. This has a psychological impact on the characters who have to adapt back to the new environment, new schools, new friends who can also cause new conflicts. Conflict in the family that also affects adolescents is the divorce of parents.

In addition, teenager lifestyles are also presented in the latest popular Indonesian novels. Set in a metropolitan city -Jakarta, Bandung, for example, the widespread use of social media, slang, online shopping, online transportation is evidence that can be expressed as part of the lives of teenager right now.

As in the following quote.

“oh ..yang terus terusan lo lihat di toko *online* waktu itu ya? Gampang, gue beliin. Gue juga mau beli. Tapi, gue milih bandul ikan.” “Ya, ya,ya pasti ikan, komentarku hafal dengan hewan kesayangan Dion. (Lahmusi, 2018: 16)

Rasa tegang menjalar di seluruh tubuhku. Lokasi yang Dion kirim membuat otakku berdenyar. Aku harus segera ke sana. Aku memesan ojol cepat-cepat, tentu saja tidak lupa pamit pada papa untuk latihan drama buat besok (Lahmusi, 2018: 221)

4. CONCLUSION

In general, the issues presented in the latest popular Indonesian novel are related to the lives of adolescents to adults. Love problems, career problems in the world of work, even to household problems.

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