



Socialist Realism Vs Capitalism in The Digital Literature Phenomenon in Indonesia

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Abstract. The development of digital literature in Indonesia in this era of globalization has brought a wide range of impacts in all fields. From the product to the consumer aspect (readers or users of digital storytelling apps). In addition, the interaction between writer and reader, and the reader with reader as well as the account owner's relationship with the app owner, has raised new issues that need to be investigated in depth. The question discussed in this study is as follows: (1) why the concepts of socialist realism and capitalism can be found in the ecology of digital literature, and (2) What is the mechanism of these two concepts in the ecology of digital literature? The method used is qualitative descriptive. The material objects of this research are digital storytelling applications such as Wattpad and Noveltoon, while the formal objects are aspects of socialist realism and capitalism. The results of this discussion show that in the interaction of writer with reader, reader with reporter, and account owner with app owner Wattpad and Noveltoon, there is a conceptual dualism of socialist realism and capitalism. It is caused by social symptoms that increasingly clarify the social classes and the motivation of the app's owner hidden through the design on the homepage within the digital story application.

Keywords: Globalization, Digital Story Application, Marxism.

1 Introduction

The phenomenon of literature in Indonesia has always followed the development of technology in all its times. In this regard, I will focus more on publishing and distributing digital literary works through applications presented through internet media. This work of digital literature has varied terms based on the opinions of literary scientists, such as literary machine [1], cybertext [2], digital literary [3], digital media [4], and digital literature [5]. Additionally, several journal articles have discussed specifically related digital literature from the beginning of its emergence, quality, and excellence, and influence on literary industrialization.

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Based on data from the Ministry of Communications and Informatics RI (Kemenkominfo RI), internet users were less than 200 million people around 1998, then sharply increased in 2010 to 1.7 billion people who access the internet. Internet users in Indonesia reach 30 million people, or about 12.5 percent of the population of Indonesia. It is estimated that 196,7 million, or 73.7 percent of the Indonesian population, were already internet users in the second quarter of 2020. General Chairman of the Indonesian Internet Service Organizers Association (APJII) Jamalul Izza said the rise was driven by the increasingly uniform presence of fast internet infrastructure and massive digital transformation due to the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020 [6].

The data on internet users above indicates the rapid progress and development in the world of technology, especially concerning its use as a medium that can channel expression. It refers to a person's creativity in writing stories, such as literary works published online. The publishing and distribution of digital literature is one of the areas that is the goal of the owners of such capital to earn the most significant profits. The function of literary work has shifted into one of the media that can move in the world of creative industries so that the most prominent is the business perspective. Literary works no longer serve only as a cultural product but also as an industrial product. Since then, literary work (digital literature) has entered the area of industrial culture. Wilkie [7] and Rejo [8] affirmed that the industrial culture always serves a commodity, so the role of capitalist society will determine the meaning of cyber literature. Most likely, cyber-literature writers are still heavily leaving capitalism, so independent cyber literature is still in the shadow.

Previous research that has addressed literature as part of the creative industries has been revealed by several researchers [9]–[11]. The research described the relationship of literature (in this case, of course, that of popular literature) with the creative industry, the essence of which is that literary work in the era of globalization is no longer required to adapt to the type of canon literature that has become the reference quality and quality of a literature work to be read. However, the issue of literary work that is light and easily digestible and has popularity through the media that is innovated in such a way that it becomes commercial is a work that can improve the economy in Indonesia, not fully described in detail by previous researchers. In addition, quantity and quality are not the primary in this type of literary work. Therefore, the term literary industrialization emerged because literature is no longer bound as a text containing a book that can be purchased in a bookstore but can also be consumed through online media that is notoriously profitable by capital owners or capitalists.

Based on the explanation above, digital literature, also known as cyber literature, eventually has its appeal for producers and consumers to exploit the market as an attempt to gain profits. The creation of cyber literary works had capitalist motives that ended in the achievement of financial gain and as an attempt to the existence of its author. Thus, the representation of literary works that have become part of the commodity as part of industrialization is the mark of online applications that provide children's literature works, even from overseas Indonesia, of various types of stories. The app is used to write and read novels for free, such as *Wattpad* and *NovelToon*. Both applications have different features to attract consumers so that they are interested in writing

and reading in the application. However, not all of these applications have the same results in attracting consumer interest.

Digital literature has become an effective medium to connect its users from different regions, even from other countries worldwide. In addition, the reader must not be self-selected but must interact with the writer or reader who is like what in the prescribing story in the application of the story in question. Similarly, Novi et al. [12], with cyber literature, beginner authors get a space for self-actualization that global readers will read. The cyber literature breaks the “separative door” between senior and beginner writer spaces. The absence of constraints between the users of digital literature and the frequency of the use of digital Literature raises some questions in the research to be carried out. The problem to be discussed is that based on the phenomenon of publishing, distribution, and use of this digital literature, there is a dualism of concepts found, namely socialist realism and capitalism, why the two concepts accompany each other and how the mechanisms of these concepts.

2 Methods

This research method uses qualitative descriptive methods. Start collecting data until the data analysis is described in detail. The research steps that will be taken are as follows: (1) Collect data from material objects derived from the Wattpad and Noveltoon applications, namely the number of stories published and readers received on each story based on the selected category, (2) Analysis of data based on the formal objects meant in terms of aspects of socialist realism and capitalism as the form of symptoms emerging from such data. (3) Compare the two aspects above by answering the research questions in the preliminary section, and (4) Describe in detail the discussion of the point c's connection with the developing phenomenon of digital literature in Indonesia.

A conclusion will be drawn based on the results of a thorough analysis. Thus, the reader can better understand and clearly understand the topics discussed in this study.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Socialist Realism and Capitalism in Literature

What is Socialist Realism? Pradopo [13] explained that socialist realism (as a son of socialist humanism) is not merely the designation of a method in the field of literature but rather a philosophical relationship, a method of making with its aesthetic appreciation, and a designation for a political aesthesia in the sphere of Literature, which at the same time includes the existence of struggle, of lineage, and of its opponents.

“Socialist realism” was born of Marxism, especially Marxism-Leninism. But Marxism, as a whole of thought that takes art seriously, has produced a variety of theses and discourses about art and reality. Under Stalin and Mao in particular, there was a time when the brave were denied and even destroyed. But Stalin died in 1953 and Mao in 1976, and since then, that diversity has reappeared, rediscovered in Indonesia.

Around the early 1960s (but probably before that), the notion of “socialist realism” began circulating first among the Lekra. It remains to be examined to what extent the doctrine has been discussed among the Lekra members and became the organization's official line. As we know, only from the hands of Pramoedyana Ananta Toer was a serious work on “socialist realism” first as a thick reference to a lecture at the University of Indonesia in 1963, then printed and distributed as a book.

Basically, the study of socialist realism itself is interpreted as the existence of an opposition between the proletarian class and the bourgeois class. In literature, it is associated with reality. Reality is reflected in literature, so literature presents a correct interpretation of societal relationships. On the other hand, literature also affects reality, so it has the duty to accompany the Communist Party in the struggle to build a better new society. Socialist realism in Indonesia was pioneered by Pramoedyana, who defined the flow as “a method that continues the philosophy of materialism in literary works as well as the continuation of socialist-scientific views.

Relationships within the story's text are undermined by the history of economic disparities created because capital owners dominate the social and economic space compared to the weak or people who have no control over the capital. But that happens outside of the story. It has even been explained in the preliminary section related to how a literary work itself can become a commodity. Furthermore, the concept of capitalism, which is also part of the Marxist theory, has become a term that has emerged as a result of the acquisition of profit in the form of money of all kinds modified either directly or indirectly. It is because capitalism comes from the concept of materialism. Materialism aligns with Marx's materialism, which puts material factors above ideas as the basis of everything. Therefore, materialism must have a mode of production (how people meet their needs). Thus, capitalism is associated with the power of wealth accumulation that is transformed into new investments.

Materialism is the basis of the concept of capitalism, and its study extends not only through the socio-economic issues found in various fields. In his literary studies, Higgins [14] explained the relationship between Marxism and literature from the point of view of Raymond Williams, who mentions the existence of “cultural materialism” because between Marxism and the study of literature, there is a similar focus on the attention to cultural politics, and the priority of culture in politics. This case can be seen in the global media culture; one example is the use of the internet freely that can access the storytelling app. This section also becomes the capitalists' control, leading to the Marxist framework.

Not only on the elements within the text of the literary work itself the elements outside the text can be the material for the analysis of its relationship with capitalism, which is part of the concept of Marxism. Marxist cultural sociology is then recognizable, in its most straightforward outlines, in studies of different types of institutions and formation in cultural production and distribution and the circling of these within the whole social material processes. Talking about ‘cultural materialism,’ Mawardi [15] explained that literature, part of the culture, is also a commodity because literature has entered the world of industries produced and produced in mass and intended for market consumption. Since the cultural industry has become a mass lifestyle, liter-

ary commodities have been swallowed by commodity fetishism dominated by the media called money.

The above assessments are more focused on using or consuming digital literary works as a work of art. Nevertheless, literary scientists have various opinions (for and against) against the emergence of digital literature in both free and paid storytelling applications. The stories presented influence readers to continue to follow the story's contents to create their euphoria by enjoying the various conflicts that develop from the characters depicted in the story. The capitalists exploited the reader's euphoria through the presence of storytelling apps. This reinforces Mawardi's [15] view of capitalism producing images and consumer sites to build atmospheric pleasure excessively. The images and sites gradually blur the boundaries between art and everyday life.

Based on the above explanations of socialist realism and capitalism, it shows that in the presence of economic disparities in the social layers of society, there have been social classes. There is a bourgeois class, and there is a proletarian class. Society as a consumer is simultaneously determining how the economic cycle takes place within the social structure of society. In addition, entrepreneurs who run certain are also part of society. The relationship between these two terms (socialist realism and capitalism) is equally part of the mode of production that arises from the interaction between entrepreneurs and certain social classes who consume a good or service online or offline.

3.2 *Wattpad and Noveltoon* Recipes for Readers: Social Disorders

Digital storytelling applications, such as *Wattpad* and *Noveltoon*, are two of the most popular digital storyline applications growing in the middle of society. Most are millennials or young people, but some are also adults. Every story in the app can be accessed (read) for free and paid. In addition, the reports are presented in various categories in terms of the theme type and the level of popularity.

In this study, I will analyze readers' responses to the stories in the app. More focused on the interaction space in each level comment column in the app or other words in [16] "how the audience may change the state of the work, and how the work may respond." Of course, to solve it in detail, it is necessary to use the reception theory of Wolfgang Iser's relationship with the influence of the literary work on the reader.

Iser [17] revealed that the most important part of a text is the reader as the recipient. As long as the focus is on the weight of an interest such as the authorship, psychological, social, or historical purpose of a text or how it is constructed, it is clear that the text can only have meaning when read. Therefore, reading is a prerequisite for all literary interpretation processes. Here are a few comments columns that reflect the reader's reaction to a work.

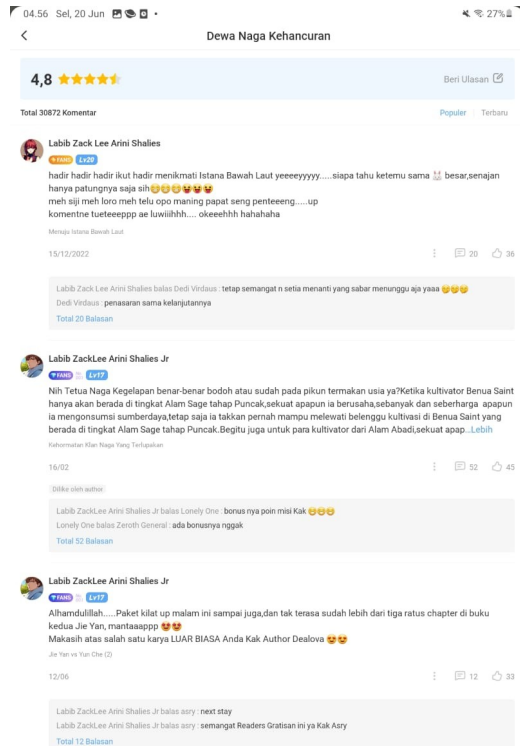


Fig. 1. Comments columns that reflect the reader’s reaction to a work.

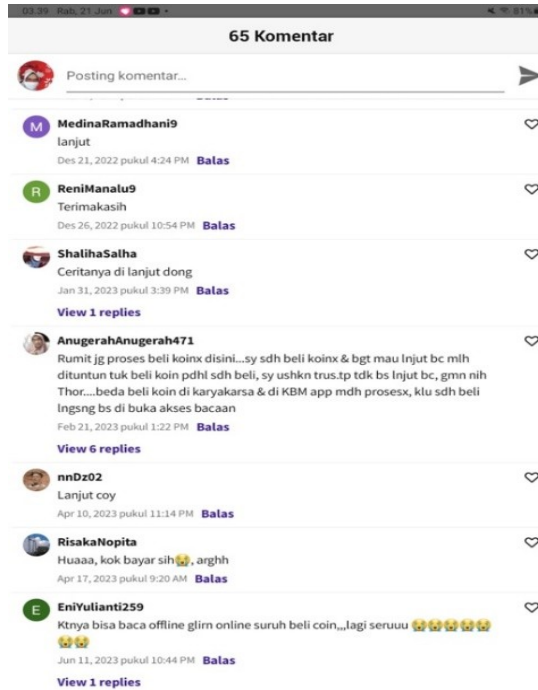


Fig. 2. Comments columns that reflect the reader's reaction to a work.

The screen capture results show the reader's power and freedom to rewrite the story assigned by the application. Some are paid stories and some are free. Although it is free on paid stories, it is only on early chapters that can be accessed freely even on-line. The rest to open the next chapters until the end, the system has arranged to buy the coins first.

When prescribing the story, readers comment on every event that occurs, including the characters in it. As for the character of a very beloved figure, it will be admired until it is idolized as an artist and then becomes a discussion material between one reader and the other. Likewise, in the course of the story, which is not all responded well by readers even some have advised the writer about the story in the next chapter. Readers should have an account first, especially downloading the desired story app to interact and browse each comment column in each story they read. Unique and impressive comments, even some negative ones, become common in every one of the stories presented. Some stories have thousands of comments, and stars indicate that the story attracts attention with its story. Based on the reader's reactions, sometimes other readers can capture the story's content directly without reading it.

One of the most important things is that these readers are not blocked by status or social class differences, especially in commenting on free stories. Other things are paid, it seems clear the difference between readers who have little capital and those who have a lot to access the next chapter that is still closed because they have to buy coins first. It is where the concept of "socialist realism" can be traced. At a time when

readers could only read stories in accessible chapters without having to buy coins, his social class appeared. This appearance is even more in the comment column: when the readers, at the same time the owner of the app account, protest against the condition that not all chapters can be opened for free while the category of stories has been distinguished, which can be read for free and which is not free. Hence, the social symptoms seen in this problem indirectly conclude the differences in social classes between the reader and the other.

3.3 Representation of Capitalism through the Digital Literature App Menu

In this section, I would like to analyze in detail the representation of the presence and involvement of capitalism in the *Wattpad* and *Noveltoon* applications. It should be noted that the illustrator who works to design the cover image of the title of each novel or story presented is also the subject or perpetrator of the capital owner. In addition, through the presentation of applications ranging from images to the appearance of words that briefly describe the story's content, it will be possible to see indications that the capitalist plays his marketing strategy to attract consumers and get as much profit as possible.

Users on both apps consist of the author and reader. Stories contained in it are called digital literature or commonly distilled as cyber literature. This term is said by [15] as something familiar in postmodern society because it meets all aspects characteristic of postmodern societies. The digital literature available in the application is in the form of poetry and prose (novel and short story). Therefore, before describing further, it is necessary to pay attention to the screen capture of the following two applications.

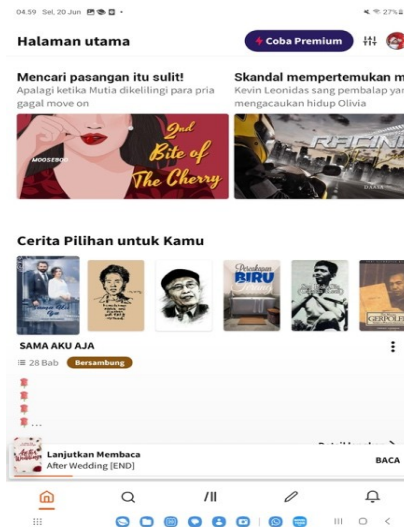


Fig. 3. Screenshots from the Wattpad app.

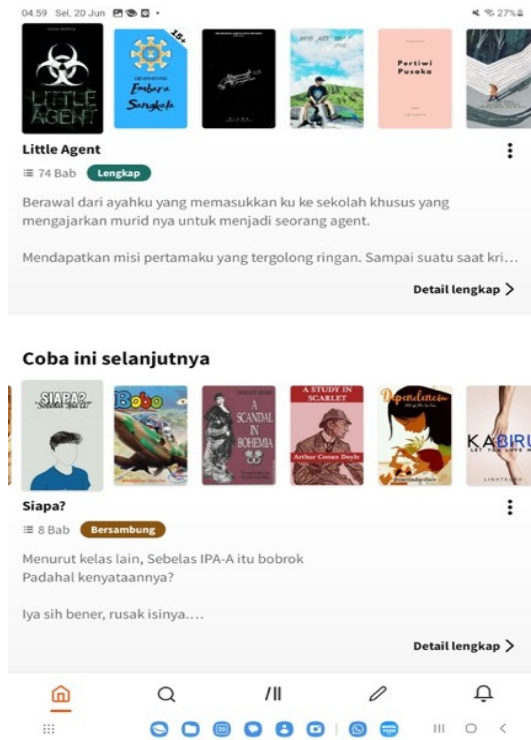


Fig. 4. Screenshots from the Wattpad app.

On the homepage or main page, especially in the top section, presented images of the title cover of the story, which is of a nature attracting curiosity and affecting the user's attraction. Figure 3 shows the cover image of the title of a novel with the appearance of a woman's upper body with striking colors and a character that invites the reader's attention. Next, in the "Choice Stories for You" section, mark as if the app is very aware of readers' interest in reading of any kind. It can be indicated by applying these types of stories or menus that users frequently open. Figure 4 offers other stories modified based on the user's favorite stories and the most popular stories in the app.

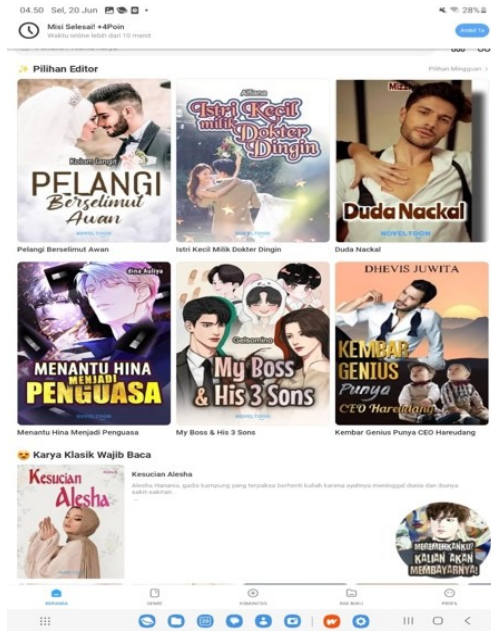


Fig. 5. Screenshots of Noveltoon.

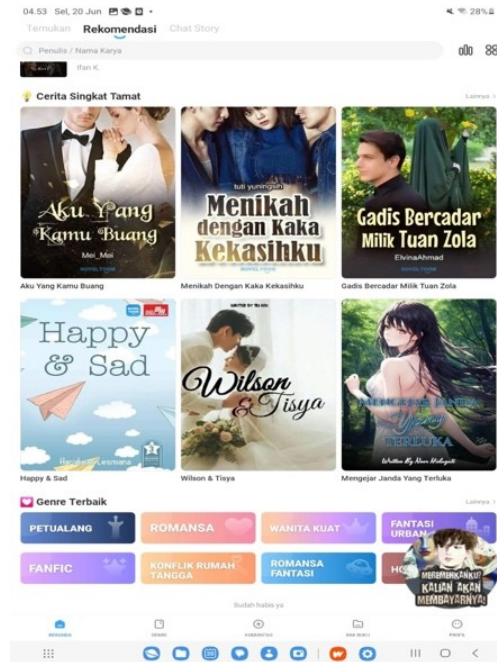


Fig. 6. Screenshots of Noveltoon.

There is a clear difference between *Wattpad* and *Noveltoon*. *Noveltoon* preferred or highlighted images that are masculine and feminine. In addition, it comes with sometimes controversial titles and if they can 'emote' the user. Figure 5 shows an interaction between a couple of brides who are having fun, and there is a picture of a man who looks like a woman's hand is holding her chest. It is one of the attempts of the marketing strategy to make the user open and read more deeply so that it can be profitable for the capitalist. Almost all of the homepage displayed images that somewhat flattered sexuality on *Noveltoon*. Likewise, Figure 6 shows the images of the novel's cover containing the theme of love and is accompanied by the categories of stories presented in *Noveltoon*.

The detailed reviews of the appearance of the *Wattpad* and *Noveltoon* apps above indicate the presence of a representation of capitalism that dominates the virtual world concerning digital literature. The capitalist makes all aspects and media commodities. It's no exception to digital literature because it just thinks about how to raise capital or invest as much without thinking about the negative effects. One thing that is inaccessible and controlled by the capitalist is how to define its users into the adolescent and adult age categories to access the stories that have been presented. It's worrisome because a lot of adult stories are also offered. Anyone can disguise user accounts at any time.

4 Conclusion

Based on the explanations and results of the previous analysis, several things related to the topics raised in this study can be concluded. It is related to the concepts of socialist realism and capitalism, which are opposed but, at the same time, are part of Marxist theory. This condition can be seen directly in digital literature related to the application of stories in the virtual world. The story app is intended for *Wattpad* and *Noveltoon*.

The concept of socialist realism is shown in every comment column on the stories, especially those paid for. The condition of readers who have little capital and many indirectly offer their respective social classes. At the same time, there has been evidence of which stories are paid and which are free, furthermore, on the concept of capitalism that is, of course, contrary to the concepts of socialist realism demonstrated by the role of the capitalist in designing a story application homepage that contains a load attracting the attention of the reader with a variety of intriguing offers. This image has been identifiable starting with its appearance from the headline cover images that spark the sensation to the related categories of stories created according to the reader's or user's taste. Thus, between socialist realism and capitalism in digital literature, there is a fundamental difference that can be studied further through the stories presented, as there is also canon literary work to be one of the many categories of stories offered by the application.

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