

An Analysis of Laskar Pelangi Novel by Using Biographical Criticism

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ABSTRACT

This research showed that the biography of the author directly attached and gave an overview of the actual content of the novel. It was found in the relationship between Andrea Hirata as an author with his work entitled *Laskar Pelangi*. The objectives of this research were to find out the theme of the novel and the relationship between *Laskar Pelangi* novel and the life of Andrea Hirata. Descriptive qualitative method was carried out to analyze the data. The source of the data was taken from the novel *Laskar Pelangi* by Andrea Hirata. In collecting the data, some references related to Biographical criticism were applied. The data were analyzed by reading, analyzing and describing the content of the novel. It was concluded that the theme was the complexity of the life of Ikal who was the representative of the author himself; they comprised 6 data dealing with the theme of the novel (social and cultural theme, religious theme, economical theme and educational theme) and 38 data related to his biography. It was proved that there was the relationship between the author with the content of *Laskar Pelangi* novel.

Keywords: literary criticism, biographical criticism, *laskar pelangi*, descriptive qualitative method, theme

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ABSTRACT

Riset ini menunjukkan bahwa biografi penulis secara langsung melekat dan memberi sebuah gambaran tentang isi sebenarnya dari novel tersebut. Hal itu ditemukan dalam hubungan antara Andrea Hirata selaku penulis dengan karyanya yang berjudul *Laskar Pelangi*. Adapun tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan tema dari novel dan hubungan antara novel *Laskar Pelangi* dengan kehidupan Andrea Hirata. Metode deskriptif kualitatif digunakan untuk menganalisa data. Sumber data diperoleh dari novel *Laskar Pelangi* karya Andrea Hirata. Dalam pengumpulan data, beberapa rujukan yang berhubungan dengan kritik sastra biografi digunakan. Data kemudian dianalisa dengan cara dibaca, dianalisa dan digambarkan. Kesimpulan yang diperoleh adalah bahwa tema dari novel merupakan kompleksitas dari kehidupan Ikal yang adalah kehadiran diri penulis sendiri; meliputi 6 data yang berhubungan dengan tema dari novel (sosial budaya, agama, ekonomi dan pendidikan), dan 38 data berhubungan dengan biografi penulis. Hal ini membuktikan adanya hubungan antara penulis dengan isi novel *Laskar Pelangi*.

Kata Kunci: kritik sastra, kritik sastra biografi, *laskar pelangi*, metode deskriptif kualitatif, tema

Introduction

1. Background of The Study

Literature is writing that is valued as work of art, fiction, drama and poetry. In other words, literature is a personal expression of feeling including experience, idea and motivation in a concrete description in written stories. Kinds of literary works are novel, short story, play, poetry, etc. but in this research, it was focused on novel since novel.. There are two main concerns in analyzing literary works; by using Extrinsic element and Intrinsic element. Extrinsic element is the way of analyzing literary work by using the suitable theory, and relates to the content of the works in order to get better understanding between the theory and the material used. Extrinsic element as in this research would reveal some points with suitable theory; it was by using Biographical theory/Criticism developed by Samuel Johnson, he states that researched poets and utilized truthful accounts of their lives is useful to understand nuances in their writings. Some students or readers did not care about the author when they were reading a novel. Even they did not know the author of the novel they read. In fact, when they discovered the author of a novel whose the novel they were going to read, at least they could get the theme of the novel from the author's biography because biography of the author in his or her literary work would sometimes be reflected in the story. One of the way too solve this problem was by using Biographical criticism.

A Biographical criticism to literature presents only the relevant facts of an author's life and by using a sensitive interpretation of them to show clear connections between the author's experience or personality and the work (Roland Barthes 2007:1799). Warren and Wellek propose that biography is an account of person's life which is usually published in the form of a book or essay, or in some other forms, such as film. A work is biographical if it covers all of a person's life in a certain duration of time. The author may appear to work or give influences through the characters as Andrea Hirata in his novel *Laskar Pelangi*. Biographical criticism criticised the situation of the author's era through his work (*Laskar Pelangi*) as found in this research.

2. Biographical Criticism

Biographical criticism is the practice of analysing a piece of literary work through the lens of the author's experience. It considers the ways, age, race, gender, family, education, and economic status in the form of a writer's work. In biographical criticism, a critic might also examine how a literary work reflects personal characteristics, life experiences and psychological dynamics of the author. The thrust of biographical criticism is that to understand some literary works, readers need knowledge of the author's biographical facts or experiences. Biographical criticism provides a practical assistance of understanding subtle but important meaning in a work. It focuses on explicating a literary text by using the insight provided by knowledge of the author's life that, could affect the meaning of a work and the themes or choice of subject matter.

3. Laskar Pelangi Novel

Laskar Pelangi or The Rainbow Troops, written in Indonesian and first published in 2005, is very much the view from inside: it is an autobiographical novel in which Andrea Hirata recalls his childhood on the island of Belitung, where he attended the village school. The troops in question are the 10 children "Belitong-Malays from the poorest community on the island" who attend Muhammadiyah Elementary School in Belitung. They are taught by the dedicated but ageing Pak Harfan and his offsider, Bu Mus. While it is about a very specific time and place, told from the point of view of Ikal, the young narrator, the novel's cast of characters has great appeal and its general themes will appeal to a broad spectrum of readers.

METHOD

This research would be conducted by using descriptive qualitative method with qualitative analysis to analyze Laskar Pelangi novel by using biographical criticism. The source of the data was taken from 34 chapters of Laskar Pelangi novel by Andrea Hirata, and also other related references. By using documentary technique the data were collected and analyzed to find out the themes and the relation between the author's biography and Laskar Pelangi novel.

DISCUSSION

There were 44 data found in Laskar Pelangi novel; 6 data dealing with themes of the novel and 38 data relating to the author's biography .

1 . Theme

A. Social and Cultural theme :

Data 1 : Based on Laskar Pelangi : 36, In Belitung, there was a very significant difference in social and cultural side of school environment in which only the children of PN Timah staff who were allowed to study at PN school.

B. Religious theme :

Data 2 : Based on Laskar Pelangi : 22, Andrea Hirata strongly remembered the message from Mr. Arfan that arrogance blinded their eyes and deafened their ears, as the story of Nuh and his animals who survived from flash floods.

C. Economical theme:

Data 3 : Based on LP : 49 , the wealth was owned by Belitung as the richest village with its tin mine but was not enjoyed by the Belitung people including Andrea Hirata. He lived in slums and had a poor economy condition. The tin mine was enjoyed by foreigners and PN staff.

Data 4 : Based on LP : 55 , the economy in Belitung was led by PN staff and private cukongs who worked on tin exploitation concessions. The prosperity was enjoyed not by the local people of Belitung but by the outsiders including the PN staff and the private cukongs.

Data 5 : Based on Laskar Pelangi : 41 , when corporations systematically exploited tin, the humble culture began to live in certain sociological characteristics whose attributes reflected a striking difference as if based on class status strata. The compound caste was neatly arranged from the tops of PN Timah called "staff people" or "urang setap" in local dialect to the pipe drainers in the mining installation and the Sawang tribe who became youth tin sack sewers. One of the attributes of discrimination was the PN schools.

D .Education Theme :

Data 6 : Based on Laskar Pelangi : 24, Mr. Harfan always delivered the first lesson of steadfastness, of perseverance, of a strong desire to achieve goals. Then he conveyed a principle, that it was life to give as much as possible, not to receive as much as possible. The principle which pushed Andrea Hirata to rise to change his life to be better.

2.Relating To Andrea Hirata's Biography

Data 1 : Based on Laskar Pelangi : 1, Andrea Hirata was student of an unworthy school. The door frame was crooked. In the doorway stood two teachers, like hosts welcoming guests to a party. There was an old man with a patient face, Bapak K.A. Harfan Efendy Noor, or Pak Harfan the school principal and a young woman wearing a headscarf, N.A. Muslimah .

Data 2 : Based on Laskar Pelangi: 2 , due to limited costs, Andrea Hirata 's father could only afford to send Andrea Hirata in a free school without proper facilities at the Muhammadiyah Blitong School. His father could not afford to pay the cost if his son had to go to a PN school, it was not an easy matter for their family.

Data 3 : Based on Laskar Pelangi: 3, when Andrea Hirata was a child, he always looked at his father's face which was full of burdens and responsibilities to fulfill their family's needs. A bad economy condition made his father struggle to make him to attend the school .

Data 4 : Based on Laskar Pelangi : 4, Muhammadiyah Elementary School also was the poorest village school in Belitong. There were only three reasons why parents enrolled their children here. The first, Muhammadiyah Elementary did not require any fees, and parents could contribute whatever they could afford whenever they could do so. The second, the parents feared that their children had weak character and could easily be led astray by the devil, so they wanted them to have strong Islamic guidance from a young age. The third, their child was not accepted at any other school.

Data 5 : Based on Laskar Pelangi : 4, Muhammadiyah schools had very few students, less than ten students, so that they got warning from Depdikbud that the school would be closed .

Data 6 : Based on LP : 7, Harun was Andrea Hirata's friend who saved the Muhammadiyah school and saved another dream of his friends.

Data 7 : Based on LP: 17, the building of the Muhammadiyah School was very rundown and unfit to be a school but there was no other option for an incapable child like Andrea Hirata.

Data 8 : Based on LP : 30, despite its limitations, Muhammadiyah School always taught moral education to its students especially religious morals in order to be a strong and good person.

Data 9 : Based on (LP: 38), God blessed Belitong with tin to prevent boats sailing to the island from getting lost. Instead, God had intended for the tin to be a guide for the inhabitants of the island itself.

Data10

Based on LP: 4 , In Belitong island, there were two very opposite sides of the PN officials who had the opportunity to be able to attend school in PN and the poor who were only able to attend Muhammadiyah School

Data 11 : Based on LP : 50, Andrea Hirata attempted to describe the neighborhoods of several public schools, and one of them was Muhammadiyah village school. There were no rich people there, there were only poor store crowds in traditional markets and and staggering stage houses of all sizes.

Data 12 : Based on LP : 61, the village school was a Muhammadiyah school and some other poor private schools in Belitong. In addition to Muhammadiyah schools there were several public schools in our village. But the condition of public schools were certainly better because they were supported by the state.

Data 13 : Based on LP : 64, in Muhammadiyah School there was only one playground that was an old tree in front of the school. The witness to childhood drama for Andrea Hirata and his friends. In the branches they made houses. Behind the leaves they hide if they miss a citizenship lesson. In the tree trunk they wrote a promise of loyal friendship and carved their little names with a folding knife. At their prominent roots, they sat around hearing Bu Mus's story of Hang Jebat's adventures, and under the shady leaves they played frog jumps, practiced the plays of Romeo and Juliet, laughing, crying, singing, studying, and quarreling.

Data 14 : Based on LP : 85, in a school with only 10 students, Andrea Hirata became an inseparable part with 9 small friends who became the most beautiful memories of his life, inseparable in difficult and happy.

Data 15 : Based on LP : 110, Andrea Hirata had a very great teacher. She was Mrs. Muss, the only teacher in the Muhammadiyah School. She put aside her ego, no objection to college cut. Facilitating his student's brightness was most important to him. Not all teachers had this quality.

Data 16 : Based on LP : 160, the view that Andrea Hirata always looked forward to and the nine of his friends were the rainbow of the sky. If the rain fell down , they could not wait for the painting of the beautiful rainbow and because of their penchant to the rainbow then Mrs.Muss named their group The Rainbow Troop.

Data 17 : Based on LP 181-182, for the first time Andrea Hirata managed to create a poem entitled "I dreamt of heaven" which was the best poem for Mrs. Muss.

Data 18 : Based on LP: 163, only when watered the Canna Striped Beauties, Andrea Hirata felt a slight consolation. Though that such a beautiful flower originated from the damp wilderness of the Brazilian hills. It was still in the Apocynaceae

family, which was why it slightly resembled the allamanda, but the white stripes on its yellow flowers were a distinctive feature that no other Canna possessed. It was plump, green, creeping leaves bear a striking ontrast to the color gradation in its blossoms year-round, emanating a primeval beauty. The Persians called them heaven's flowers. When they bloomed, all the world smiled. They were emotional flowers, so one had to water them carefully. Not everyone could grow them. It was been said that only one with a green thumb and a gentle and pure heart could cultivate them, and that was Bu Muss.

Data 19 : Based on LP : 198, Andrea Hirata also complained about the unfair law. Laws that never took sides in small people. The law was like a saddle that was too high, the corruptors were free to roam like a chicken. , Shahdan whose weight was small, the world was never fair, and the bike dynamo bolts were loose so the gears were attached to the tires as a result of the heavier paddling and the lights of bicycles in broad daylight was exactly the vehicle of the corpse.

Data 20 : Based on LP : 199, there was the hustle and bustle of PN Timah's unemployed, unemployed, bromocorah, retired, iron scavengers, coworkers, porters, omprengan car drivers, night

watchmen, and civil servants. Their speeches were always exclamation, but always about a topic, which was cursing the government.

Data 21 : Based on LP : 219, for some Muhammadiyah residents, carnival was an unpleasant experience. The carnival consisted only of a group of young children marching in three lines, led by two students carried banners of Muhammadiyah emblem made of calico cloth that has been worn. The banner hung miserably between two yellow bamboo pots.

Data 22 : Based on LP : 225, at the Muhammadiyah carnival, enlivened by a poem made by Mahar. She was one of Andrea Hirata's best friends, and she shouted "All the strength of Muhammadiyah school will we unite for one thing !!!". Andrea Hirata just stunned, did not understand what it meant, but Mahar was very optimistic.

Data 23 : Based on LP : 240, not only Mahar, but There was also Mrs. Muss who appeared on the carnival. Mrs. Muss encouraged Andrea Hirata and her friends. A simple sentence that burned emotions. " Bring your heart out, take out all the power! "

Data 24 : Based on LP : 245, Mr. Harfan, Mrs. Mus and Andrea Hirata's other teachers were very proud and disbelieving to see their students have such abilities. They were unaware that Andrea Hirata and his friends were suffering from failure.

Data 25 : Based on LP : 250-251, Andrea Hirata often wrote her phrases with chalk and blackboards. It must have been instinctively for many years that the teacher instinctively sounded the bell in his head that it was a bit more related to the affairs of love. With a soul full of understanding and an irritated smile he agreed, shaking his head." You do not remove the lime, you need to know, the chalk was bought from the donation money of the Ummah !. Mrs. Muss intended to keep Andrea Hirata from throwing away the goods that were donated by local residents.

Data 26 : Based on LP : 278, the ideal of an Andrea Hirata since childhood became a writer or badminton player. Since he was child, he also liked to write letters given to his friends and teachers at school.

Data 27 : Based on LP : 299, Andrea Hirata felt in love with a girl named Aling. Aling was a woman loved by him since childhood and first love for him .They have had a relationship for five years. However, Aling just passed Andrea Hirata with a letter.

Data 28 : Based on LP : 383, for the first time, Andrea Hirata's friends like Mahar, the latter succeeded the name of the Muhammadiyah school. Andrea Hirata's teacher like Mrs. Muss. Mir. Arfan was very touched by the efforts of his proteges.

Data 29 : Based on LP : 424, Mahar and Flo went to meet Tuk Bayan Tula. They hoped to be given ease and passing the exam. However, Tuk Bayan Tula actually gave them a piece of paper that was read " A message from Tuk Bayan Tula for them, if you want to pass the exam: open your book, study! "

Data 30 : Based on LP : 429, one of Andrea Hirata's companions who has been his friend since at the elementary school and Muhammadiyah junior high school was Lintang who gave bad grief news that his father passed away. It made Mrs. Muss felt very sad.

Data 31

Based on LP : 431, Lintang was a very genius of Andrea Hirata's friend and one of Laskar Pelangi warriors who have gained the most special achievement as well as the hero who upgraded this poor school degree.

Data 32 : Based on LP : 432, while one of the rainbow warriors was unable to continue his school, Andrea Hirata was incapable of doing anything to help Lintang. On the other hand, the rich actually feasted without helping the poor around them.

Data 33 : Based on LP : 323, Andrea Hirata almost surrendered to his moment of failure after failure. Anyway, Mr. Harfan and Mrs. Mus taught Andrea him not to be afraid of any difficulty in order not to give up easily.

Data 34 : Based on LP : 441, Andrea Hirata always prayed for himself and beloved persons , he was not abstain , he managed to open the library in bangka Belitung and set up a school for children .

Data 35 : Based on LP : 460, Andrea Hirata struggled to get a scholarship to change his life. He felt indebted to A Ling, Mr. Harfan, Mrs. Muss, Laskar Pelangi and Muhammadiyah School. He was devoted to be able to boast of them all.

Data 36 : Based on LP : 462, the success achieved by Andrea Hirata at this time made him feel relieved that he managed to pay debts to the Muhammadiyah School, Bu Mus, Mr. Harfan, Lintang, Laskar Pelangi, A Ling, even Herriot and Edensor. Every point that he snaked in his life always gave him valuable lessons that The Muhammadiyah school and Laskar Pelangi friendship had shaped its character, A Ling, Herriot, and Edensor had taught him optimism and showed that the fabric of fate could be so amazing.

Data 37 : Based on LP : 487, Andrea Hirata could be successful because of his honest personality and persistent hard work. He never betrayed the trust and always be in the way of Allah. All that could not be separated from the role of all teachers in the Muhammadiyah school.

Data 38 : Based on LP : 488, Mr. Harfan and former teachers of Muhammadiyah school until now had never stopped sounding syiar Islam. They were proud of enduring destiny as a defender of religion. Mrs. Muss and Muhammadiyah youth teachers had the opportunity to take Teacher Education course (KPK) from Departemen Pendidikan and then became civil servants. Mr. Muss now teaches Mathematics at SD Negeri 6 Belitong Timur. She has been a teacher for 34 years and claimed he has never found such spectacular students as Lintang, Flo, and Mahar.

CONCLUSION

1. According to the analysis, the theme of Laskar Pelangi novel was the complexity of Ikal life (6 data), including social and cultural theme, religious theme, economical theme and education theme.
2. There was relationship between Laskar Pelangi novel to Andrea Hirata's biography (38 data); his view points in Laskar Pelangi novel was humanism universal views that consisted of education, religious views, art, social, culture, economic and moral values. His religious views showed that He believed Allah with them. His art, culture, and moral values indicated a call to keep the sublime values and ideals of art and culture. His social views of the novel is that there is a different status in Belitong. Society he lived was of poor people who only worked as porters of PN Timah whose condition was very contrast to the life of PN Timah staff. His economic views indicated a rejection of different base on caste of group, labeling the communist and capitalist economic activity.

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Theme Fonts: Times New Roman