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The Representation of Social Values in Contemporary Indonesian Poetry and Its Relevance to 21st-Century Literary Learning

*Abdulrohim E-sor*¹⁾, *Ali Imron al-Ma'ruf*²⁾

¹Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

email: s200249009@student.ums.ac.id

phone: +62 857-2500-3371

²Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

email: aim268@ums.ac.id

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the representation of social values in contemporary Indonesian poetry and its relevance to 21st-century literature learning. Using a qualitative descriptive approach through content analysis, this study analyzes selected poems by contemporary Indonesian poets, such as Abdul Hadi W.M., Joko Pinurbo, and Sapardi Djoko Damono. The analysis was conducted with the support of Wellek and Warren's sociology of literature theory and Ali Imron Al-Ma'ruf's theoretical framework. The results of the study show that contemporary Indonesian poetry reflects various social values such as religious tolerance, empathy, environmental awareness, and nationalism. These findings strengthen Dipa Nugraha's research results on literary literacy as a means of character development in education. The relevance to literature learning lies in the potential of poetry as a contextual and reflective teaching material.

Keywords: Contemporary Poetry, Social Values, Literary Learning, Sociological Approach, Education

Corresponding Author:

Abdulrohim E-sor, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta

Email: s200249009@student.ums.ac.id

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji representasi nilai sosial dalam puisi kontemporer Indonesia dan relevansinya terhadap pembelajaran sastra abad ke-21. Dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif melalui analisis isi, penelitian ini menganalisis puisi-puisi pilihan karya penyair kontemporer Indonesia, seperti Abdul Hadi W.M., Joko Pinurbo, dan Sapardi Djoko Damono. Analisis dilakukan dengan dukungan teori sosiologi sastra dari Wellek dan Warren serta kerangka teoritis dari Ali Imron Al-Ma'ruf. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa puisi kontemporer Indonesia merefleksikan berbagai nilai sosial seperti toleransi beragama, empati, kesadaran lingkungan, dan nasionalisme. Temuan ini memperkuat hasil riset Dipa Nugraha mengenai literasi sastra sebagai sarana pengembangan karakter dalam pendidikan. Relevansi terhadap pembelajaran sastra terletak pada potensi puisi sebagai bahan ajar yang kontekstual dan reflektif.

Kata kunci: *Puisi Kontemporer, Nilai Sosial, Pembelajaran Sastra, Pendekatan Sosiologis, Pendidikan*

Introduction

Poetry, as a part of literary works, possesses the power to voice social realities and human values. Amidst dynamic social changes, literature particularly contemporary poetry serves as a medium for cultural reflection and character education. As stated by Al-Ma'ruf (2021), literature is inseparable from the social context and ideology that surround it. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of literature in shaping values (Nurgiyantoro, 2021; Nugraha, 2022). However, there has been a lack of specific studies focusing on the representation of social values in contemporary Indonesian poetry and its implementation in 21st-century learning. Therefore, this article aims to bridge that gap by focusing on the analysis of poetry through the lens of literary sociology and its relevance to literature learning in schools.

Contemporary poetry is not merely an aesthetic expression but also a space for articulating values, ideologies, and complex social realities. Its existence as a living literary text within society makes it a rich source for analysis through the sociological approach to literature. Through symbols, metaphors, and unique narrative structures, poetry can convey moral and social messages subtly yet profoundly. In the context of education especially 21st-century literature learning, which emphasizes the development of critical thinking, empathy, cultural literacy, and character values contemporary poetry offers relevant and contextual learning materials. The Merdeka Curriculum and the text-based authentic learning approach provide opportunities for teachers to utilize poetry as a medium that addresses not only cognitive aspects but also affective and social dimensions.

Through this study, the author aims to reveal the representation of social values reflected in contemporary Indonesian poems and relate them to their potential application in literature teaching at the secondary school level. By integrating Al-Ma'ruf (2020) theoretical framework on ideology in literature and Nugraha (2022) ideas on literary literacy in character education, this study is expected to contribute to the development of a more humanistic and contextual model of literature learning. This research supports and expands upon Ali Imron Al-Ma'ruf's study of ideology and social meaning in Indonesian poetry, while also incorporating Dipa Nugraha ideas on literary literacy in education.

Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a sociological approach to literature. The objects of the research consist of five contemporary poems written by Abdul Hadi W.M., Joko Pinurbo, and Sapardi Djoko Damono. Data collection techniques involve documentation and literature review. The data were analyzed using Krippendorff's (2018) content analysis model,

combined with the literary sociology theory by Wellek and Warren (1956) and the theoretical framework of Al-Ma'ruf (2020). The validity of the data was strengthened through theoretical and source triangulation.

Research Objects

The study focuses on five selected poems by contemporary Indonesian poets:

1. *Tuhan, Kita Begitu Dekat* by Abdul Hadi W.M.
2. *Celana* by Joko Pinurbo
3. *Hujan Bulan Juni* by Sapardi Djoko Damono
4. *Silsilah Bisu* by Joko Pinurbo
5. *Lelaki Tua dan Laut* by Abdul Hadi W.M.

These five poems were purposively selected for their representativeness in voicing contemporary social, cultural, religious, and ecological issues.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through documentation and literature review of the poem texts and supporting academic references, including journals, books, and articles relevant to social values and literary education.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis is grounded in the sociological approach to literature as proposed by Wellek and Warren (1956), and reinforced by Ali Imron Al-Ma'ruf (2020) theory of literary ideology, which views literature as a site of dialectical interaction between the text, author, and society. For the educational dimension, Dipa Nugraha (2022) concept of literary literacy is employed to bridge the relevance of poetry with 21st-century learning contexts.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Each poem was analyzed based on the following aspects:

1. Identification of main themes and social values.
2. Interpretation of symbols, metaphors, and linguistic styles supporting those values.
3. Connection of the identified values with principles of character education and literary literacy.

The validity of the data was reinforced through theoretical triangulation and cross-source verification, utilizing both the literary texts and academic references.

Result and Discussion

The analysis reveals that contemporary Indonesian poetry is rich in social values. For instance, Abdul Hadi W.M.'s poem *Tuhan, Kita Begitu Dekat* reflects values of spirituality and religious tolerance. Joko Pinurbo's *Celana* conveys social critique through irony, while Sapardi Djoko Damono *Hujan Bulan Juni* offers ecological awareness and patience in social relationships. These findings align with Al-Ma'ruf (2020) assertion that poetry is an ideological space where social values are negotiated. Furthermore, Nugraha (2022) emphasizes the importance of literature in reinforcing character education through contextual learning.

The relevance to literature education lies in how teachers can utilize poetry as a reflective and contextual medium to develop students' literacy competence and empathy, in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum's objectives. This study demonstrates that contemporary Indonesian poetry represents a diverse and profound range of social values. Each poem was analyzed to uncover social content that is relevant to societal life and 21st-century character education. The analysis was categorized based on the following social values: empathy, religiosity, environmental

awareness, and nationalism.

1. Values of Empathy and Humanity

The poem *Celana* by Joko Pinurbo presents a social critique of modern lifestyles and class inequality. The symbol of "pants" functions as a metaphor for falseness, hypocrisy, and the absurdity of urban life. This poem reflects the value of empathy by highlighting social suffering through irony, while simultaneously inviting readers to be more sensitive to the realities around them (Faruk, 2022; Arifin, 2020).

2. Religious Values and Tolerance

In *Tuhan, Kita Begitu Dekat* by Abdul Hadi W.M., a profound spiritual message is conveyed regarding the relationship between humans and God. The poetic narrative, expressed in a gentle and reflective tone, embodies an inclusive sense of religiosity. According to Al-Ma'ruf (2020), such poems do not merely express personal belief but also carry social messages that stress the importance of interfaith tolerance.

3. Environmental Awareness and Ecological Reflection

The poem *Hujan Bulan Juni* by Sapardi Djoko Damono employs the symbol of rain to represent patience, sincerity, and natural continuity. Awareness of seasonal changes and natural events becomes a starting point for reflecting on the relationship between humans and the environment. Suryadi (2022) argues that this poem is highly relevant for fostering ecocritical awareness in contemporary literature education.

4. Nationalism and Cultural Values

Several contemporary poems also highlight the spirit of nationalism and the preservation of local culture. For example, *Lelaki Tua dan Laut* by Abdul Hadi W.M. portrays the values of struggle and bravery through the character of a fisherman. These values are essential in shaping national identity. As noted by Nugraha (2022), poetry can serve as a medium for character education rooted in national culture.

These findings reinforce Al-Ma'ruf (2021) view that poetry is a mirror of the value systems within society. For example, the empathy and solidarity found in *Celana* and *Tuhan, Kita Begitu Dekat* align with the findings of Putra & Lestari (2022) in *Jurnal Poetika* (Sinta 2), which reported that post-pandemic contemporary poetry frequently emphasizes humanitarian values as a response to social trauma.

Moreover, a study by Heryanto (2023) in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Literature* shows that Southeast Asian poetry tends to voice values of social justice and multiculturalism. This supports the findings regarding the poems' emphasis on tolerance and diversity. Research by Nasution et al. (2023) in *Cakrawala Pendidikan* also confirms that integrating poetry into classroom learning can foster student character development based on the Profil Pelajar Pancasila, including cooperation, empathy, and independence.

Thus, the findings of this research are relevant not only in terms of aesthetics and literary criticism but also from pedagogical and curricular perspectives, especially within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes authentic texts and social values.

Conclusion

Contemporary Indonesian poetry has proven to embody strong and diverse representations of social values such as empathy, religiosity, environmental awareness, and nationalism. Through symbolic and reflective language, the poems of Abdul Hadi W.M., Joko Pinurbo, and Sapardi Djoko Damono successfully articulate social realities that resonate with readers' everyday lives.

This study confirms that poetry functions not only as a work of art but also as an effective medium for character education, particularly within 21st-century literature learning. Poetry can

stimulate critical thinking, enhance empathy, and introduce cultural values to students. With the right pedagogical approach, teachers can integrate contemporary poetry into literature instruction that is humanistic, contextual, and responsive to current challenges. Therefore, it is crucial for educators and curriculum developers to pay greater attention to the inclusion of contemporary poetry in literature teaching practices in schools, as a form of innovation in literary literacy and character education.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study is limited in terms of the number of poems and the sociocultural scope analyzed.

Accordingly, future research is recommended to:

1. Analyze poems by poets from outside Java Island to explore local values from ethnoregional perspectives;
2. Apply a reader-response or classroom ethnography approach to examine the direct impact of poetry on students' character development;
3. Develop instructional materials based on social values in poetry that can be implemented in junior and senior high schools.

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