



THE VALUE OF LIFE GAINED FROM SENO GUMIRA AJIDARMA'S "TRILOGI ALINA" THROUGH ROLAND BARTHES' SEMIOLOGICAL STUDY

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Received: (October)

Accepted: (November)

Published : (December)

Abstract

Every short story by Seno Gumira Ajidarma in the anthology "Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku" uses the same theme of twilight with its reddish light and seaside nuances, including the three short story collections to be discussed, the Alina Trilogy. Many readers manifest their lover's shadow into the character of Alina in the short story "Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku" which takes Sukab's point of view since Ajidarma released it in 1991. This research uses a subjective approach and descriptive subjective research method that is interpretive. The subject to be researched in this research is Seno Gumira Ajidarma's short story "Alina Trilogy" which is a series of three short stories completed by Seno Gumira Ajidarma over ten years. The first story is "Sepotong Senja Untuk Pacangu" which he completed in 1991, and 10 years later, in 2001, a connection was made to this short story with the title "Jawaban Alina" and "Tukang Pos dalam Amplop" in the same year. The research will use the constructivism paradigm and will be described with descriptive semiotics and/or a little hermeneutics. Meanwhile, the data collection technique will be done by document study and internet search. This research aims to find out what meanings are contained in the short story "Alina's Trilogy" and draw the value of life in it.

Keywords: Alina, Ajidarma, Barthes, *Trilogy Alina*

INTRODUCTION

Seno Gumira Ajidarma has an interesting writing style to analyze, with a broad imagination he has works that can be interesting objects to study. As in this collection of short stories, at the beginning there is the Alina trilogy, which is about a man who wants to send a piece of twilight to his girlfriend named Alina in a letter sent by a postman who later the character has his own perspective. If you imagine the concept, it is somewhat beyond reason.

All the short stories by Seno Gumira Ajidarma in the short story anthology *Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku* use the same theme, namely twilight with its reddish light and the nuances of the seaside, including the three short story collections to be discussed, the Alina Trilogy. Judging from this book, it seems that Seno Gumira Ajidarma himself likes to write about twilight, as in his other story 'Negeri Senja'. Adjidarma (2016) tries to keep its distance from all approaches and contexts, from visible natural phenomena to all structural and thematic constructions made possible by the subject named twilight.

However, it is interesting that the anthology book containing these short stories attracted the attention of a woman who eventually sent an email to Seno Gumira Ajidarma saying that she had been blind since a certain age and thanks to this book she was able to enjoy twilight again. From a sociological perspective, this short story collection has influenced and functioned for the people who read it. This also means that the parables and symbolic meanings in the short stories can indeed be imagined and conveyed to the readers. In addition, many readers manifest the image of their lover into the character of Alina in the short story "Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku" which takes Sukab's point of view since Ajidarma released it in 1991 (Adjidarma, 2016). Many issues can be raised in this short story that are related to the literary context and literary works because the literary work under study contains various short stories that can be traced. This research aims to understand more deeply the sociology of literature through the short stories to be studied, which is expected to be useful for both readers and writers. Because sociological elements also play an important role in research that discusses the value of life or social

values. It is due to the fact that in writing literary works, authors cannot ignore the intended reading public because although writers are not entirely dependent on the tastes of their owners, on the contrary, however, that writers can create and determine their public. So the writers themselves may have determined who their target readers are. (Nurholis, 2019; Wellek & Warren, 1995)

The Alina Trilogy is a series of three short stories completed by Seno Gumira Ajidarma over a period of ten years. The first story is "Sepotong Senja Untuk Pacarku" which he completed in 1991, and 10 years later, in 2001, a connection was made to this short story with the title "Jawaban Alina" and "Tukang Pos dalam Amplop" in the same year. It seems that the 10-year gap between "Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku" and the next two short stories has a crucial influence on the continuity of the story. Where a piece of twilight taken for Alina was only delivered through the postman 10 years later after "Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku".

Various embodied messages can be taken from these three short stories. Judging from the writing style, these short stories have a surrealist writing style. The Surrealism movement itself, according to Sulastianto (2009), explores ideas about dreams, illusions, and fantasies driven by automatism and free association. In addition, the formulation of the problem to be studied in this short story is what life values can be taken in the meanings in the short story "Alina Trilogy". In this study, the author analyzes the values of life in the collection of short stories of Alina Trilogy by Seno Gumira Ajidarma to add insight to readers which is expected to be useful as a reference in the future. (Budi & Wahyuningsih, 2018).

Two previous studies can be found so far. Previous research entitled "Analisis Semiotika pada Trilogi Alina dalam Antologi Cerpen Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku Karya Seno Gumira Adji Darma" written by Fadel Muhamad and Rochmat Tri Sudrajat in 2020 has a type of Qualitative Descriptive research. There are several similarities and differences presented between this research and this research. In discussing the similarities: (1) both studies will examine semiotics in the short story of Alina Trilogy; (2) the type of approach and method used, namely using Qualitative Descriptive; and (3) the research object discussed by both studies is the short story "Alina Trilogy" by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. The differences between the previous research and this research are: (1) The theory used by the previous research is Pierce's Semiotics theory, while the theory used by this research is Roland Barthes' Semiotics theory; (2) Because this research uses an interpretive paradigm, the content and results of the discussion are likely to have differences with those in the previous research; and (3) Unlike the previous research, this research will add subjective interpretations of the meaning and value of life that can be taken from the short story of Alina's Trilogy. Meanwhile, other previous research was written by Choirunisa Dwi Astarini, Yulia Esti Katrini, and Mursia Ekawati titled "Kajian Semiotika Roland Barthes dalam Antologi Cerpen *Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku* Karya Seno Gumira Ajidarma dan Formulasi Bahan Ajar di SMA". The following are the similarities when compared to this research: (1) Both studies use Roland Barthes' semiological theory; (2) The objects studied by both studies come from the anthology *Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku* by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, part of the Alina Trilogy; and (3) Both studies are also of Descriptive Qualitative type. The difference is not much different from the comparison between the previous research discussed first and this research. However, while the former applies the object as a high school lesson, the latter has a more general purpose, which is to study Semiology to extract Life Values that can be applied to society in general.

METHOD

The research will use an interpretive paradigm with a subjective approach and descriptive qualitative research methods. Thus, this research has a descriptive-qualitative type of analysis. Qualitative subjective interpretive type research is very helpful in analyzing the meaning content in literary works. In addition, with the interpretive paradigm, subjective approach, and qualitative method, the author can more freely use his imagination to examine the meaning he can capture. This type of research is also open to the interpretation of readers and other researchers.

This research will be explained using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory approach. Roland Barthes, whose theory based on Ferdinand de Saussure's sign, focused on the intricacies of sentence construction and its influence on meaning. However, he acknowledged that the same sentence can convey different meanings to different individuals depending on the context. Barthes introduced the concept of signifiers as a means to explore the denotation-connotation meaning derived from Saussure's theory. An important aspect Barthes explores in his examination of signs is the reader's role. In his work *Mythologies*, Barthes extensively discusses what he refers to as the second level of meaning system, which expands upon the preexisting system. Barthes terms this second system as the connotative, explicitly distinguishing it from the first-level system of meaning known as the

denotative. (Astarini et al., 2018). Various theories of semiotics or semiology can be used to conduct this research, one example of another semiotician is Pierce. In this case, the concept of semiology between Barthes and Pierce lies in the aspect of reality. While Pierce thinks that reality is outside the internal structure that exists in human life which is not interconnected. On the other hand, Barthes, who developed his theory based on Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of 'signifier' and 'signified', thinks that reality is related to humans, both physically and mentally.

The term 'Semiotics' itself, which is better known today, was popularized by Pierce, while Barthes uses the term 'Semiology' in the same way as Saussure. Conceptually, the main concept of Saussure's theory starts from the idea of dichotomy or duality where according to him a sign consists of two focal components, namely the signifier-sound pattern (marker-signifier) and signified-concept (result/interpretation/conception of the signifier). Signifier refers to something that is material (physical), explicitly exists and can be distinguished by human senses. On the other hand, signified refers to something that is literally and physically abstract (Mohd Yakin & Totu, 2014). Barthes' semiological method is more suitable for research that aims to find signs with semiotic studies that finally conclude the life value of the sign. The data collection technique itself is done by document study and internet search to facilitate the search for data that needs to be included in this research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Alina Trilogy is a series of three interconnected short stories. The first story is "*Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku*" which she completed in 1991, and 10 years later, in 2001, a connection was made to this short story with the title "*Jawaban Alina*" and "*Tukang Pos dalam Amplop*" in the same year. It seems that the 10-year gap between "*Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku*" and the next two short stories has a crucial influence on the continuity of the story. A piece of Twilight taken for Alina was only delivered through the postman 10 years later after "*A Piece of Twilight for My Boyfriend*". Thus, the division will be done to analyze the semiological studies in this short story.

Sepotong Senja untuk Pacarku (1991)

'Kukirimkan sepotong senja untukmu, Alina, bukan kata-kata cinta. Kukirimkan padamu ... betul-betul ada dalam keadaan yang sama seperti ketika aku mengambilnya saat matahari hampir tenggelam ke balik cakrawala'

Denotation: Sukab gives Alina a piece of twilight that still looks exactly as it did when Sukab took it.

Denotation Meaning: The piece of twilight that Sukab gave to Alina is proof of Sukab's love for the person he loves. The piece of Twilight is the embodiment of Sukab's love that cannot be defined in words. Sukab wanted to convey his love for Alina in the form of the most beautiful sunset Sukab had ever seen.

This quote illustrates the value of love that cannot be defined in life. Love and affection sometimes cannot be mentioned in words, but in how a person acts for someone he loves, just like Sukab who wants to take a piece of twilight despite the many obstacles he has to face, many things he has to fight for to keep the twilight so that he can send it to Alina.

The struggle can be seen from how Sukab had to face the police chasing him on pages 8-13, "However, this is better than I have to give up Alina's twilight.", the quote at the end of the first paragraph on page 13 shows a great sense of devotion to the person he loves. The form of devotion carried out by Sukab to Alina, namely by giving a piece of twilight as a form of affection for a lover (Prasetyo et al., 2023).

'Aduh. Baru hilang satu senja saja sudah paniknya seperti itu. Apa tidak bisa menunggu sampai besok? Bagaimana kalau setiap orang mengambil senja untuk pacarnya masing-masing? ... Sudah waktunya senja diproduksi besar-besaran supaya bisa dijual anak-anak pedagang asongan di perempatan jalan. ''Senja! Senja! Cuma seribu tiga!'' — (Page 8)

Denotation: Sukab's astonishment at people starting to panic over one missing twilight. Sukab then imagined what if everyone took the beautiful sunset for their respective girlfriends and thought that it was time for artificial twilights to be made and sold in the market and produced on a large scale so that the children of hawkers could sell them for a thousand for three twilights.

Connotation: The "real" twilight is a genuine feeling. The true feeling of love, really only for Alina. Even though his love was late and obstructed to be conveyed. Whereas fake twilight, the feeling or expression of love for another woman who could be the woman Sukab is married to, but Sukab's love is only for Alina (Muhamad & Sudrajat, 2020). For Sukab himself, presenting his love in the form of the most beautiful sunset he had ever seen was far more important than people's feelings towards a sunset that can reappear every time the sun sets. Sukab also thought that it would be better if the sunset could be imitated and produced on a large scale so that it could be sold anywhere. This could indicate that Sukab thinks that his love for Alina is the purest, the greatest, and the most valuable than anyone else's because the twilight that Sukab holds is a real twilight, whereas if everyone takes the twilight and gives it to their girlfriends, then the value of the twilight drops and it has no value anymore.

This behavior of Sukab or the way Sukab acts can symbolize the feeling of love that each person has, although different, will be felt to be the greatest for the person who feels it. In the real world this generally leads to competition between several parties who both love the same person. Some parties tend to think that they are the most deserving of the person they are competing with because they feel that their love is considered greater than others. Although there are also people who, despite their great love, will give in because they think the other person is better than them, it is still the person himself who feels the feelings he feels so that other people do not necessarily know what he is feeling at that time.

‘Kuraba senja dalam kantongku, cahayanya yang merah keemas-emasan membuat aku bisa melihat dalam kegelapan. Aku melangkah dalam gorong-gorong yang rupanya cukup tinggi juga.’ - Page 12

Denotation: The twilight in Sukab's pocket serves as a lighting aid in the dark and high culvert.

Connotation: If a piece of twilight symbolizes a sign of love, then Sukab keeping his twilight in his pocket signifies the love he tends to hold back. However, because the light is so bright, it penetrates his pocket, which now helps him to see in the dark culvert. This shows that Sukab's love, although pent-up, is so great that it is difficult to contain. However, in this situation, that love can light his way in such a difficult situation. It guides Sukab to stay on the same resolution, motivation, and dedication, which is to convey his great love for Alina.

In life, this reflects someone who often suppresses their feelings. However, no matter how deep the feelings are buried, they are bound to surface at some point when they can no longer be contained. In the context of negative feelings like anger, it may not be a beautiful thing. However, in the context of love, it can be a positive thing. Feelings can be a source of motivation for someone to do something. It becomes a motive that can give someone the light to guide their way.

‘Terimalah sepotong senja itu, hanya untukmu, dari seseorang yang ingin membahagiakanmu. Awas, hati-hati dengan lautan dan matahari itu, salah-salah cahayanya membakar langit dan kalau tumpah airnya bisa membanjiri permukaan bumi.’

Denotative: A piece of twilight's sunset given by Sukab can be the doom of the earth if not opened carefully.

Connotative: Sukab's love in the form of a piece of twilight in an envelope can be destructive if not carefully guarded and opened. In this context, especially if Alina, who does not actually love Sukab and only serves him out of pity, will not be able to reciprocate Sukab's feelings and take him for granted, which makes the contents of the envelope end up being a destructive disaster. The meaning of the catastrophe can be interpreted as Sukab's world being destroyed.

Just like in life, pent-up love will not necessarily be accepted and reciprocated by the person you love. In this case, if the pent-up love is so strong that it is difficult to contain, it will make the person who harbors it heartbroken if the love is rejected by the idol, even worse if the bitter reality actually affects the life of the harborer.

Jawaban Alina (2001)

‘Aku pun tahu Sukab, senja yang paling keemas-emasan sekalipun hanya akan berakhir dalam keremangan menyedihkan, ketika segala makhluk dan benda menjadi siluet, lantas menyatu dalam kegelapan. Kita sama-sama tahu, keindahan senja itu, kepastiannya untuk selesai dan menjadi malam dengan kejam. Manusia memburu senja ke mana-mana, tapi dunia ini fana Sukab, seperti senja.’ — Page 18

Denotative: Alina thinks that no matter how beautiful and how much people look for it, twilight is temporary, just like the world.

Connotative: Alina's view of the sunset is realistic, in contrast to Sukab who is an idealist, who fantasizes a lot. For Alina, no matter how beautiful or how precious the sunset is, it will still end, it won't last forever. Just like the world that must have an end. The twilight that Alina sees after ten years looks much different from the one described by Sukab. The sad dimness of the twilight could signify Sukab's love, which may have reached a point of despair because it has been hanging unrequited for ten years, even though Alina is not at fault in this.

The meaning of life seems to be clearly stated in the quote. There is nothing eternal in this world. Even pleasure can be replaced by sorrow, even a dreamer will eventually be slapped by the reality of life too.

'... Senja yang engkau kirimkan telah menimbulkan bencana tak terbayangkan. Apakah engkau tahu suratmu itu baru sampai sepuluh tahun kemudian? Ah, engkau tidak akan tahu Sukab, seperti juga engkau tidak akan pernah tahu apa yang terjadi dengan senja yang kau kirimkan ini. Senja paling tidak berharga dalam hidupku Sukab, senja sialan yang paling tidak mungkin diharapkan manusia.' — Page 19

Denotative: Alina didn't like the beautiful sunset gift Sukab gave her that only arrived ten years later.

Connotative: Alina's annoyance with Sukab as shown in the quote signifies anger and rejection. Alina rejects the love that Sukab gives her. Meanwhile, Alina's anger was because Sukab was late in conveying his love to Alina. Moreover, because from the beginning Alina did not love Sukab, Alina said that she did not love Sukab because Alina hated Sukab, a man who had nothing but dared to love Alina.

The quote can be a valuable example that the love given can be detrimental to others. In this quote, there is the phrase 'damn twilight' which can be Alina's raw rejection of Sukab's love because Sukab sent a letter containing twilight and the universe (too much love) to make Alina furious, because Sukab's love spilt over until it became a disaster for Alina.

'... apakah artinya hidup kita ini Sukab? Tidakkah nasib manusia memang seperti ikan, yang ditenakkan hanya untuk mengisi akuarium di ruang tamu seseorang, yang barangkali juga tidak terlalu peduli kepada makna kehidupan ikan-ikan itu?' — Page 22

Denotative: Alina ponders about the fate of human beings who might be like fish in an aquarium.

Connotative: Alina questions whether the world is ephemeral and deceitful. No matter how sophisticated the technology developed by humans, the world will eventually end, and humans will return to their origin, the afterlife.

It can be likened to fish in an aquarium whose behaviour is judged by the god who created life, weighing their good deeds and bad deeds. With the favours of the world that are temporary, humans will eventually return to the creator.

'Aku menulis surat ini dengan kertas dan pena terakhir di dunia, di atas puncak Himalaya. Di depanku ada sebuah sampan kecil dengan sepasang dayung dan sebungkus supermi.' — Page 25

Denotative: Alina writes a final letter to Sukab on top of a Himalayan peak with some bits and pieces that could make her survive.

Connotative: The last pen and paper in the world is a sign that Alina will no longer write to Sukab. In contrast to Sukab who writes his feelings out of love, Alina writes her feelings that have peaked because she harbors resentment, an anger that is piled up as high as the Himalayas, the highest mountain in the world whose peak is so cold, just as Alina has no feelings for Sukab. A small canoe alone signifies the simplicity of life that Alina used to paddle, before it became her means of survival in the midst of her crisis. A packet of supermi, her last meal, is the climax of her distress.

'Kupandang senja yang abadi sebelum melipat surat ini. Betapapun semua ini terjadi karena cinta, dan hanya karena cinta—betapa besar bencana telah ditimbulkannya ketika kata-kata tak cukup menampungnya. Kutatap senja itu, masih selalu begitu, seperti menjanjikan suatu perpisahan yang sendu.' — Page 27-28

Denotative: Alina stares at the sun that sets, which remains dim and unchanging. Alina blames the sunset that was given by Sukab.

Connotative: Alina blames love so much. Because of love, her life had fallen apart, and only a sad farewell was all she could see from that love. In short, Sukab's love is detrimental to her and others.

Tukang Pos dalam Amplop (2001)

'Bagiku menghayati senja sama pentingnya dengan berdoa di dalam kuil. Dalam perjalananku mengayuh sepeda 40 hari 40 malam, beberapa kali kujumpai kuil-kuil yang sudah menjadi reruntuhan maupun masih digunakan, tapi aku tidak pernah berhenti di kuil yang manapun. Hanya apabila senja menjadi sempurna dan cahayanya yang keemas-emasan membuat langit membara sebelum menjadi ungu, biru, dan kelam, aku akan berhenti, menghayatinya bagaikan suatu upacara, sebelum kembali melanjutkan perjalanan.' — Page 32

Denotative: The postman is deeply immersed in the sunset just like how he prays in the temple.

Connotative: For the postman, seeing the sunset is the same as praying in a temple. This is because the sunset is a creation of the Almighty God, so even looking at the sunset he can pray more than in a temple. The beauty of the sunset can make the postman remember God, the creator of all creatures.

'Kulihat Pengemis Termiskin di Dunia itu. Ia tidak punya tangan, tidak punya kaki, tidak punya hidung, dan tidak punya mata, tetapi ia ditandu empat perempuan pengemis yang jelita.' — Page 33

Denotative: Despite being poor and having nothing, the beggar is faithfully accompanied by four beautiful beggar women.

Connotative: Beggars are people who tend to beg in the hope that someone will save or help them, usually in the form of money, or necessary goods. Thus beggars tend to be because they are people in need. In the sentence, the beggar who is being carried by 4 beautiful female beggars has no hands, feet, eyes, etc. The meaning of poor here is that he has no hands, feet, or eyes. Poor here means that he does not have these limbs. The 4 women here indicate that they are dependent on the world's poorest beggar. Despite being poor and having no limbs, the poorest beggar is probably a good person. The only limb he has is his mouth, which implies that he is probably so good at speaking that the four beggar women want to help him.

'Aku tidak ingin masuk, tapi aku tersedot ke dalamnya. Seperti mimpi saja rasanya, tiba-tiba aku sudah berada di dalam amplop dan berenang seperti ikan... aku kawin dengan seekor ikan lumba-lumba dan melahirkan spesies baru. Anak-anakku menjadi makhluk air yang memiliki kecerdasan, sehingga dimungkinkan membangun kembali sebuah dunia yang beradab di dalam air.' — Page 34, Page 38

Denotative: The trapped postman married the dolphin and quickly reproduced.

Connotative: The postman's being sucked into an envelope filled with twilight turned the postman into a fish. Fish are aquatic creatures that have quite a lot of benefits, fish are famous for their omega 3 content for brain intelligence. Fish are also very intelligent aquatic creatures, for example dolphins. Dolphins are able to hear with sophisticated senses and a wider frequency than humans. Dolphins are also smart aquatic creatures. The purpose of the postman becoming a fish and marrying a dolphin is for humans to take good things from the fish, such as giving birth to intelligent and civilized offspring. Creating new offspring is very much different from humans who are sometimes not intelligent and civilized. Judging by the uncivilized nature and character of humans today, such as cases of murder, harassment, and others (Kurniasih, 2020).

'Nun di kejauhan, kulihat Ikan Paus Merah yang bersimbah darah itu merintih, seperti sesuatu yang pernah kukenal' — Page 36

Denotative: The postman found a whimpering Red Whale, covered in blood.

Connotative: The whale is red, but because it was bandaged by a wound, the whale found by the postman was covered in blood so it was red. The whale signifies a fish that has been hunted by a hunter who stuck his arrow on its back. The arrow has never been released until now so it emits a very sad moan. In this modern era, fish are hunted in various ways, using trawls and even bombs. The moaning may be a sign that even aquatic animals can

feel pain and hurt. The postman was likely familiar with the sound as he had often heard the moans of the wounded in the life before he was trapped. Wounded here does not mean just physical wounds, but also mental wounds that sometimes tend to hurt more.

CONCLUSION

Many meanings can be taken from Seno Gumira Ajidarma's Alina Trilogy short stories. Some of the values that can be taken include the bitterness and sweetness of love, as well as the joys and sorrows of life that are not always as beautiful as Sukab imagined. The characters Sukab and Alina have opposite motives and mindsets in many ways, while the postman who is in the middle of them can see a side of the world that they don't see. While Sukab thinks that love is everything and is opposite to what Alina has in mind, the Postman finds both while trapped in the envelope.

The life value that can be learned by the author in this short story are the value of loyalty, which can be seen from Sukab's struggle to convey the love he harbours for Alina. On the other hand, the value of grief that can occur after the love, as seen by Alina who thinks Sukab is too idealistic to the point that he cannot think of the consequences of his actions. As well as empathy, responsibility, and the groans of people in need that can be taken from the perspective of the postman. Responsibility itself can be captured from the characteristics of the Postman who is willing to pedal his bicycle around the world, facing various obstacles, to deliver letters to the owner of the address, which is his obligation as a postman.

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