



THE CONCEPT OF NEW HISTORICISM IN INDONESIAN LITERATURE

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Abstract

This article discusses the concept of New Historicism and its application in Indonesian literature, which emphasizes the close relationship between literary works and the social, political, and cultural contexts that underlie them. New Historicism argues that history is not an absolute truth, but a discourse consisting of various versions and points of view. In this study, literary works are seen as cultural reflections and historical documentation, which represent the struggles and values of society in a certain period. Through this approach, literary and non-literary texts interact with each other, creating a deeper understanding of the historical and ideological contexts that influence literary works. This research also highlights the importance of further exploration of the contribution of literature in shaping Indonesia's cultural identity and its relevance to contemporary social issues.

Keyword: *New Historicism; Indonesian Literature; Intertextuality*

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas konsep *New Historicism* dan penerapannya dalam kesusastaan Indonesia, yang menekankan hubungan erat antara karya sastra dan konteks sosial, politik, serta budaya yang melatarbelakanginya. *New Historicism* berpendapat bahwa sejarah bukanlah suatu kebenaran absolut, melainkan sebuah diskursus yang terdiri dari berbagai versi dan sudut pandang. Dalam kajian ini, karya sastra dipandang sebagai cerminan budaya dan dokumentasi sejarah, yang merepresentasikan perjuangan dan nilai-nilai masyarakat pada periode tertentu. Melalui pendekatan ini, teks sastra dan teks non-sastra saling berinteraksi, menciptakan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang konteks historis dan ideologis yang mempengaruhi karya sastra. Penelitian ini juga menyoroti pentingnya eksplorasi lebih lanjut mengenai kontribusi sastra dalam membentuk identitas budaya Indonesia dan relevansinya terhadap isu-isu sosial kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: *New Historicism; Kesusastaan Indonesia; Intertekstualitas.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature represents various aspects of human life, such as history, social, political, and culture. Every literary work has an impression of the social, political, and cultural events that shaped it. As a product of life, literature contains philosophies, social values, and so on, both to be reexpressed and to encourage new ideas. Thus, literature cannot be separated from human values and social transformations (Sugiarti, 2009).

Literary works, in any form, are not just fiction, but become a reflection of culture as well as historical documentation. This idea is supported by the view of thinkers who state that history is made up of various texts. This perspective opens up the understanding that "historical reality" is not singular or absolute, but rather consists of different versions and points of view. Budianta (2006) in (Rahayu, 2017) explained that history includes various versions that are full of contradictions, discontinuity, plurality, and diversity. Therefore, the relationship between literary and historical works is an intertextual relationship that involves texts, both fictional and factual, that are produced in the same or different time spans. This approach is known as New Historicism. The New Historicism approach is one of the interesting studies in literary analysis, especially in Indonesia, because it provides a new perspective that connects the kary (Rahayu, 2017).

The New Historicism approach focuses more on the relationship between literary texts and non-literary texts. In other words, New Historicism includes a parallel analysis between literary texts and non-literary texts (Sahliyah, 2017). Barry (2017) defines New Historicism as a method of analysis that is based on the parallel reading between literary texts and non-literary texts, which generally originate from the same historical period. Based on Barry's (2017) view, New Historicism does not give special privileges to literary texts, but rather places literary and non-literary texts in an equal position. In addition, according to (Tohari, 2024), New Historicism is an approach in literary studies that aims to understand intellectual history through literary works, as well as understand literary works through the cultural context that surrounds them. This approach centers on a key concept known as cultural poetics. As a form of literary criticism, New Historicism has a very diverse character.

II. THEORETICAL STUDIES

New Historicism according to Veesser (1994) is based on five main assumptions that are the foundation for its proponents and critics. Three of them are: (1) every form of expression is closely connected to a network of cultural practices that are material, (2) literary texts and non-literary texts interact with each other and cannot be separated in their circulation, and (3) there is no discourse, either fictional or factual, that is able to provide

access to absolute truths that do not change or describe human nature without alternative views. In New Historicism, there is no firm separation between literary texts and non-literary texts, such as parallel documents, speeches, or political articles. All texts are seen as part of an interconnected cultural archive, illustrating the complexity of the relationship between literary works and ideological forces in a given period. For example, Indonesian literary works often represent struggles, nationalistic values.

However, although this approach has been widely used, its application to Indonesian literature still requires further exploration. Especially how New Historicism can provide a deeper understanding of literary works as historical records as well as cultural products that influence and be influenced by their context. Therefore, this study is important to uncover the contribution of literature in reflecting and shaping Indonesian cultural identity, as well as expanding the discourse on literary research methodology.

New Historicism

The emergence of New Historicism is inseparable from the development of science, especially in literary studies. After World War II, literary studies evolved into a discipline that tended to be exclusive, focusing on aesthetic analysis, linguistic structure, and messages in texts. However, in the 1960s, among literature professors in Europe, there was a push to make literature more relevant in understanding and solving actual social problems. In response, literary works began to be seen not only in terms of aesthetics, but also as representations or cultural products that reflected their times (Ardhianti, 2016). New Historicism, or known in Indonesian as "New History" is an approach in the study of literature, especially during the Renaissance, that links literary works with history. This approach assumes that literature cannot be separated from the influence of various other fields because of its active nature, which is able to influence and shape circumstances and reality along with other aspects such as social, economic, and political. New Historicism views literature not as an autonomous entity that stands alone. In the 1960s in England, the term Cultural Materialism emerged, pioneered by Raymond Williams. Cultural Materialism, or what in Indonesian is called "Cultural Studies," emphasizes that literary works or literary texts are inseparable from their supporting contexts, such as politics, economics, and other aspects that surround them (Solihah, 2022).

New Historicism is one of the approaches in literary studies that developed in the last two decades of the 20th century. The term was first introduced by Stephen Greenblatt in the introduction to the 1982 edition of the journal *Genre*, in an attempt to offer a new perspective in Renaissance literary studies. Stephen Greenblatt was born in Boston in 1943. His father

was a lawyer, while his grandfather was an immigrant from Lithuania. Greenblatt's interest in Renaissance-era literature developed during two years of study at Cambridge University, London, under the tutelage of Raymond Williams. From 1969 to 1997, he taught at the University of California before moving to Harvard University, where he earned a professorship of humanities. In 1982, Greenblatt introduced a movement known as New Historicism. This movement rejects the approach of New Criticism, Formalism, and old historicism that had previously developed in America. New Historicism ala Greenblatt. The depiction of social and political conditions in literary works is not always literal; In fact, the reality in fiction is often the opposite of the reality in society. This kind of paradox arises because of the aspiration for a more ideal reality (Ardhianti, 2016).

New Historicism is also a literary theory that aims to understand intellectual history through literary works, taking into account cultural contexts that are in line with the field of historical ideas in the 1950s. This theory is often referred to as a form of "cultural poetry". This approach was first developed in the 1980s, thanks to the work of British critic and academic, Stephen Greenblatt, who teaches at the University of California, Berkeley. Its popularity then expanded in the 1990s. The term New Historicism was coined by Greenblatt when compiling his collection of essays. In the introduction he wrote, Greenblatt described the essays as representative of something he called New Historicism. New Historicism positions literary texts in the context of non-literary texts, regardless of the cultural status of the text, whether high-low, fair-fringe, or serious-popular. This approach aims to show how diverse texts are interconnected and intertwined. In the study of New Historicism, history is understood through the events of that time that are reflected in literary works, then compared with non-literary texts as references. History in literary works does not only function as a background, but forms a narrative about reality (Purnamasari, 2018). There are four main principles of New Historicism, including: 1) intertextuality which considers that literary texts do not stand alone but are connected to other texts, both literary and non-literary that reflect the historical context. 2) Power and ideology that highlights how the relationship between power and ideology influences the creation and interpretation of literary texts. 3) The concept of circularity, emphasizes that literary works are not only influenced by history but also affect the understanding of history. 4) Focus on marginalization that pays attention to narratives that are simulated in the dominant historical discourse.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research place is carried out in libraries around the research environment, both in the campus library, namely the library of Al Washliyah University Labuhanbatu, as well as local regional libraries in the environment around the research. The research implementation time was from February to March 2021, approximately for 2 months. Sugiono(2019:24) Qualitative research is a research method that is a human instrument, namely research itself. It can be said that this information and research are all written sources obtained from books and research documents such as theses and theses available in the library. Source of data for this study.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

New Historicism can be considered as a model of interpretation that emphasizes power relations as the main context in understanding different types of texts (Brannigan, 1998). This approach integrates three main elements that are different, namely transcendent (literary), contingent (historical), and mere strategic (political) (Taum, 2011). This approach seeks to question the ideological assumptions of literary criticism and relativize its term to universality. The New Historicism approach, like other post-structural approaches, highlights the political and ideological aspects of cultural products. As part of cultural studies, New Historicism shows the connection with theoretical principles in cultural studies. Therefore, to understand the context of New Historicism more deeply, it is important to study some of the main aspects of the cultural studies approach (Taum, 2011). In general, cultural studies have four characteristics:

1. Cross-Disciplinary

Cultural studies go beyond the boundaries of disciplines such as literary and historical criticism. This approach focuses on the analysis of cultural phenomena in the text, while also tracing the changes that occur to textual phenomena over time. Political Orientation The study of culture is political, in which cultural critics position themselves as opposition, not only in the disciplines they engage in but also in the power structures in society at large.

1. The Elimination of the Distinction between High and Low Cultures

Cultural studies reject the division between 'high' and 'low' cultures or between elite culture and popular culture. The focus is not on explaining the meaning of a righteous work, but on the process of cultural production, the relationship between productions, and the political and economic reasons behind the emergence of a cultural product at a certain time.

2. Analysis of Works and Means of Production In addition to analyzing cultural works, This study also looks at the way the work is produced. Cultural studies value subjectivity, which is the relationship of culture to individual life, as well as active involvement in dealing with social issues, such as class inequality.

In particular, the study of New Historicism seeks to reinterpret the construction of power and the networks formed around it through an in-depth analysis of literary texts. Therefore, this approach also serves to reveal how power operates and is reflected in literary works.

There are several basic assumptions of New Historicism put forward by Greenblatt, namely the existence of a reciprocal relationship between man and his civilization. Texts in this context reflect the pattern of reciprocal relationships between humans and the civilizations that shaped them. Texts in the perspective of New Historicism are always seen in two ways, both as literary texts and historical texts. Here are 5 basic assumptions of critics in New Historicism:

1. That every expressive action is closely related to the practical network of material cultures;
2. That any act of researching, criticizing, and challenging a force cannot but use the cultural means it criticizes, and therefore, is youthfully caught up in the same practice;
3. That literary texts and non-literary texts circulate are inseparable;

That there is no discourse of any kind, whether fictional or factual, that gives access to absolute truth and cannot change or express the essence of humanity without any other alternative; and That the methods of criticism and language are considered sufficient to describe the economic culture of capitalism

New Historicism in Indonesia

Every nation has always had a connection with its past history. Likewise, Indonesia, which keeps history, both documented in books and those that are not officially recorded. Based on this historical journey, a number of writers were inspired to elevate historical events into literary works. This shows that there is a close relationship between history and literature (Sahliyah, 2017). New Historicism has developed and been applied in literary studies in Indonesia with a focus on analyzing the relationship of literary texts with historical, cultural, and social contexts.

History and literature are closely linked through language. History is a series of events that happened in the past, are unique, and cannot be repeated. However, historical events can be reconstructed through written or oral stories. This reconstruction process is dynamic, as it

can change over time, change contexts from one place to another, or differ based on an individual's point of view. This shows that history as a true reality is difficult for historians to fully reach (Purwanto, 2001).

Not only history is closely related to literature, but there are also cultures and economies that are intertwined with literature. 1) In the study of New Historicism, historical representations are analyzed through literary works that reflect the history of the Indonesian nation, then compared with non-literary texts as references. Budianta (2006) in (Sahliyah, 2017) explained that the history referred to by literary works is not just a background, but also forms a narrative about reality. Thus, the relationship between literary and historical works is an intertextual relationship between fictional texts and non-fiction (factual) texts that were created at the same or different time. 2) Cultural representation in literary works reflects human works that are closely related to daily life. Cultural products, including literary works, serve as a medium for experimenting, innovating, and developing various cultural values. 3) Economic representation.

New Historicism on Literary Works

New Historicism In literary works is an approach of literary criticism that relates literary texts to the historical, cultural, and social context in which the text appears. This approach highlights the relationship of literary texts with the social, economic, and political forces behind them. In addition, the goal of New Historicism is to simultaneously understand literary works through historical context and understand cultural and intellectual history through literature, which documents a new discipline called the history of ideas (Taum, 2011). Literary works, whatever their form, serve not only as fiction, but also as a reflection of culture and historical documentation. This view is supported by thinkers who state that history itself consists of various types of texts. This approach provides the perspective that "historical reality" is not something singular and absolute, but consists of various versions and perspectives (Rahayu, 2017). Budianta (2006) emphasized that.

Wellek and Warren argue in (Taum, 2011) that literary works are a series of works that are part of history and arranged chronologically. Literature has a close relationship with history and people's lives, so it reflects the dynamics of both. Literature is an imaginative work in which the truth is in the hands of the author, which means that it is subjective. Literature can end with questions, while history must present complete information. The language of history tends to be simple and direct, similar to the modern literary language that is free of the "flowers of language". Literature, as an art, can reveal historical reality through certain types of works, such as fiction (short stories) that present historical facts in fictional

form. This is not to show that the history that has been understood so far is false, but to offer a variety of possibilities. In this way, fiction can collapse the certainty of historical facts that have been written in books (Wicaksono, 2018).

New Historicism argues that history is a discourse, that is, a way of looking at and thinking about the world. This view assumes that history, literature, economics, politics, religion, and other fields are part of discourse, where one discourse is interrelated with another (Fathoni, 2013). In his studies, both theoretically and practically, Greenblatt focuses more on the relationship between history and literature. The expansion of the discipline that includes the study of textuality, language, and representation is basically based on historical analysis; The effect of literary criticism on history is to read history as a text. New Historicism places literary texts in the context of non-literary texts. Historical documents are not considered as contexts, but rather are analyzed as stand-alone texts and referred to as co-texts, not contexts. The text and co-text used will be seen as an expression and interpretation of a historical moment and.

According to Barry (2017), there are three main work steps that can be done to understand historical phenomena through text. First, through ideological analysis, which is an academic stage that aims to uncover the ideology behind the text. Text doesn't just appear; As a construct that records historical events through a network of languages, texts reflect and store the ideology that underlies them. Second, by analyzing discursive practices at the time the text was created. This includes attempts to decipher, understand, and explain the discursive practices that took place in his time through the reading and dismantling of texts. Third, through discursive practices in the current context, that is, when texts have become part of the struggles and battles of discourse in the modern context. This discursive practice allows important aspects of human life to be connected to past historical events. The relationship between literary texts and historical reality is formed according to.

V. CONCLUSION

The concept of New Historicism offers a new way of understanding Indonesian literature by looking at the relationship between the historical context and the text. Literary works are seen in this framework as cultural products influenced by the ideology, power structure, and socio-political conditions of the time.

Indonesian literary readings have become richer thanks to New Historicism, which sees texts as an important part of a series of interdependent discourses. The emphasis on local history and small narratives, or microhistory, allows for a more inclusive and reflective literary analysis of the complexity of the archipelago's cultural context. This approach also

shows how literary figures and authors interact with social dynamics and power in a given era.

The New Historicism approach has great potential to be used as a learning method in schools, especially in language and literature subjects. This approach opens up opportunities for students to understand that literary works are not only the result of imagination, but also a reflection of the historical, social, and cultural context at the time of their creation. In the learning process, students can be invited to explore the relationship between literary texts and historical and social realities, so that they not only study texts as an aesthetic work, but also as a medium that reflects the dynamics of human life. One way to integrate the New Historicism approach is to introduce literary works as historical representations. Teachers can direct students to explore the historical background of a literary work, such as a poem, novel, or short story, and understand how historical events affect the story or theme in the work.

Additionally, this approach allows students to compare literary works with non-literary texts, such as historical documents, speeches, or newspaper articles from the same period. This comparison teaches students about the intertextual relationship between literary texts and factual texts, as well as helps them develop a broader understanding of historical events from different perspectives. This process also teaches that history does not always have a single version, but can be understood through various perspectives that complement each other or even contradict each other.

This approach also teaches the importance of understanding literature in relation to contemporary social issues. Through the analysis of discursive practices, students can identify the relevance of the values or messages in literary works to the current conditions of society. In this way, students can see that literature not only talks about the past, but also provides reflections and lessons that are relevant to their lives in the present. Therefore, New Historicism serves as an important tool to uncover the ideological and historical dimensions embedded in Indonesian literary works. It helps readers understand how literature functions as a tool to facilitate reflection and at the same time shape the collective consciousness of society.

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