# A STUDY OF SULA'S REBELLION AGAINTS PATRIARCHY IN TONI MORRISON



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Submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Sciences Hasanuddin University in Partial Fulfilment for The Requirement to Obtain Sarjana Degree in English

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#### THESIS

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#### ABSTRACT

**Tenri Uleng Dheapaty**, F041181516, 2022. A Study of Sula's Rebellion Againts Patriarchy in Toni Morrison's Sula. (Supervised by M. Amir P dan A. ST. Aldilah K)

This study aims to identify and describe the type of patriarchy that occurs in novel *Sula* by Toni Morrison's. This study also aims to find out why Sula reacts to patriarchy in this novel.

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. The data source in this study is the novel *Sula* by Toni Morrison. To support the data in the analysis, the writer uses a sociology of literature approach to analyze the attitudes & actions that occur in this novel.

The results of this study show that the type of patriarchy found in Toni Morrison's novel Sula is that they are treated unfairly not only because they are black and belong to minority groups, but also because they are women. The novel depicts not only the general treatment of white people towards black people but also the harsh situation faced by black women in particular, and the black man thinks that the man is the head of the family, that he guards and dominates his partner. They also felt that black women should play traditional black women's roles, such as being housewives and marrying men. Then the reason of Sula reacts to patriarchy is that Sula struggles and takes action to rebel against social norms. Society, family, and friendship were the strongest influences on Sula's disobedience. By rejecting marriage and having a casual sex partner, he breaks the patriarchal culture and racial difficulties in his community. She will not accept the traditional fate of a woman, which includes child rearing, childbirth, and suffering. Sula is despised by the women of Lower because she represents a living critique of their own miserable life of resignation.

Keywords: Sula, Toni Morrison, Patriarchy.

# **ABSTRAK**

**Tenri Uleng Dheapaty**, F041181516, 2022. *Kajian Pemberontakan Sula Terhadap Patriarki dalam Sula karya Toni Morrison*. (Dibimbing oleh **M. Amir P dan A. ST. Aldilah K**)

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dan mendeskripsikan jenis patriarki apa yang terjadi di dalam novel *Sula* karya Toni Morrison. Penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengetahui apa alasan Sula bereaksi terhadap patriarki di dalam novel ini.

Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif kualitatif. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini adalah novel *Sula* karya Toni Morrison. Untuk mendukung data dalam analisis, penulis menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi sastra untuk menganalisis sikap & tindakan yang terjadi di dalam novel ini.

Hasil dari penelitian ini menujukkan bahwa jenis patriarki yang didapatkan dalam novel Sula karya Toni Morrison yaitu mereka diperlakukan tidak adil bukan hanya karena mereka berkulit hitam dan menjadi anggota kelompok minoritas, tetapi juga karena mereka perempuan. Novel menggambarkan tidak hanya perlakuan umum orang kulit putih terhadap orang kulit hitam tetapi juga situasi keras yang dihadapi oleh wanita kulit hitam pada khususnya, dan orang kulit hitam berpikir bahwa pria itu adalah kepala keluarga, bahwa dia menjaga dan mendominasi pasangannya. Mereka juga merasa bahwa perempuan kulit hitam harus memainkan peran tradisional perempuan kulit hitam, seperti menjadi ibu rumah tangga dan menikahi laki-laki. Kemudian alasan Sula bereaksi terhadap patriarki yaitu Sula berjuang dan melakukan tindakan memberontak terhadap norma-norma sosial. Masyarakat, keluarga, dan persahabatan adalah pengaruh paling kuat pada ketidaktaatan Sula. Dengan menolak pernikahan dan memiliki pasangan seks bebas, ia mendobrak budaya patriarki dan kesulitan rasial di dalam komunitasnya. Dia tidak akan menerima nasib tradisional seorang wanita, yang mencakup pengasuhan anak, persalinan, dan penderitaan. Sula dihina oleh para wanita bawah karena dia mewakili kritik hidup dari kehidupan mereka sendiri yang menyedihkan dari pengunduran diri.

Kata Kunci: Sula, Toni Morrison, Patriarki.

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# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

# A. Background

Literary work is an artificial art that uses language as a medium. Literary works are also the result of the creativity of thoughts, ideas and emotions. Literary work is a fictional work created based on the author's imagination. A literary work is a media to express author's ideas, thoughts, and experience. Literature presents the inner experience of an experienced writer to literary works lovers (society). Literature is not just about social reflection, rather, it represents an idea of the world

Wellek and Warren (1990: 48-49) classify the types of literary works into oral and written literature. Written literary works are literary works that have become more popular by writing. The writer often see different types of writing literary works, such as prose, poetry, short stories, dramas, romance novels, and novels.

Novel is a long essay in the form of prose which contains a series of stories about the life of a person and others around him which focus on the character and nature of each actor. Novel is a form of literary work that contains social, cultural, educational and moral values. Novels are often contrasted with short stories. The difference is that short stories focus on strength, while novels tend to be "extended". Good novels tend to focus on the emergence of complexity. Complexity is the ability to fully convey a complex problem and create such a world, rather than a short story that implies telling the problem in short detail. (Sayuti 2000:10).

In comparison to other literary works, the novel has unique qualities as a literary work. The novel has a lot greater words and phrases per page than a poem, which makes it simpler to understand the message because figurative language is used more frequently in poetry. Novels are lengthier than short stories in length, allowing them to convey ideas more fully and to deal with a wider range of complicated issues, and ideal to discuss important events in human life.

When it comes to novel writing, there are a lot of literary figures who wrote great novels in the history of literature, and one of them was Toni Morrison. Toni Morrison was born by the name Chloe Anthony Wofford in Lorain, Ohio, USA on February 18, 1931, noted American writer for examination of his black experience (specifically the experience of black women) in the black community as one of the most prominent African-American writers.

Toni Morrison has written several novels about black people in American society. Some of her most notable works are including The Bluest Eye which follows Pecola, a little Black girl growing up in Morrison's hometown of Lorain, Ohio, in the years after the Great Depression. The young girl's personal life, however, takes a devastating turn as she begs for the magic of blue eyes. Morrison boldly declares the topics that will serve as the literary jet fuel for her extensive career, from racial strife to sexual abuse to her characters' inner demons. Another outstanding piece of work by Toni is Song of Solomon which is based on the African-American folktale about enslaved Africans who escape slavery by flying back to Africa. It won the

National Book Critics Circle Award in 1978 and was chosen for Oprah's Book Club in 1996.

In this research, the author utilized another masterpiece by Toni Morrison entitled Sula which was published in 1973. It tells the story of two black ladies who became friends and of the Medallion neighborhood in Ohio. The bigotry of the greater society has stunted the community and turned it inward. The townspeople's chaos and wrath are viewed as a response to their dashed expectations. Sula walks the reader through Nel and Sula's lives and how their paths diverged. While one chooses to stay in their hometown and have a family, the other chooses to depart for college and live in the city. They soon get back together as they accept their differences and the results of their own decisions. Morrison investigates larger historical arcs and how they have affected all of us.

Through the explanation above, it is quite clear what will be discussed in this research. The author is interested in exploring this topic because it helps readers to understand patriarchy and the reason Sula's rebellion against patriarchy. The sociological aspect is considered very ideal to be explored and analyzed in this literary work, because Sula raised the issue of racism and social segregation that was thick against black society at that time. Therefore, a sociological approach is used in this study to analyze the object of research in order to answer the objectives of this study. To support this analysis, Sociology of Literature is be used in this study. This topic can increase the knowledge of readers because they can get something from literary works.

# **B.** Identification of The Problems

Based on the background as described above, The writer encountered several identifiable problems:

- 1. Sula rebellion in Toni Morrison Sula
- Patriarchy, the racism and sex oppression toward Black American
   Women in Sula
- 3. Characterization and their significances

# C. Scope of the Problem

Based on the identified problems in Morrison's Sula, the author has narrowed it down by only discussing the reasons for Sula's rebellion against patriarchy through sociology of literature approach. The sociological aspect as one of the extrinsic elements in the literature that will be analyzed in this study as a basis by focusing on the resistance of Sula's character to the patriarchal surrounding conditions and various other social issues that tend to corner black people.

# D. Research Question

After narrowing down the scope of problem that is being discussed in this study, the writer has formulated it into the following research questions:

- 1. What kind of patriarchy in Toni Morrison's Sula?
- 2. Why do Sula react against patriarchy in Toni Morrison's Sula?

# E. Objectives of the Study

Following the problem formulation that has been attached previously, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- To describe the kind of patriarchy that identified in Toni Morrison's Sula.
- 2. To find out Sula's reasons for reacting against patriarchy.

# F. Significances of the Study

This study is expected to be useful as a material for academic discussion in the development of literary studies and humanism. The sociological aspect in this analysis is also expected to provide an overview of social issues in literary works and how these issues can be used as research material by utilizing approaches and theories of sociological literature. This study is also expected to make the reader understand that characterization is an important element in a literary work, especially in a novel. Characters in a literary work are created by the author to convey ideas and feelings about something that is happening in this world and the character has.

# G. Sequence of the Study

This study consists of five chapters as follows:

 Chapter I Introduction, consisting of the background, scope of the problem, research questions, purpose of writing and sequence of study.

- Chapter II Literature Review, which provides an overview of several previous studies as well as the theory that will be applied in this analysis.
- Chapter III Methodology, which consist of methodological design, method of collecting data, method of analyzing data, and procedure of research.
- 4. Chapter IV Analysis describes findings and discussion of the study in order to fulfill the objective of research.
- 5. Chapter V Conclusion, the summary of the entire thesis.

# CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

# A. Previous Study

In this section, there will be the review of related literature and theory. The author uses three previous studies by Nur Rahmi Nailah (2018), Zuliyanah (2015), and Arum Andarukmi Madinda (2010).

A study by Nur Rahmi Nailah (2018) entitled "The Struggle of Black Woman As Seen in Toni Morrison's Sula" aims to analyze the struggle of black women in Toni Morrison's Sula. This research uses literature study as a research method. The results of this study indicate that Morrison's description of the struggle of black women in the novel has many complexities. Based on this research, it can be concluded that there are several factors that cause black women in the novel to struggle, one of which is coming from the family, including the struggle of black women as victims of the men in the novel, and the struggle of black women as mothers, as well as the burden that comes from society, including the struggle of black women as victims of societal prejudices and beliefs.

The next study is conducted by Zuliyanah (2015) entitled "A Study of Sula's Rebellion in Toni Morrison's Sula". The author aims to find the characteristics of Sula and what made Sula rebel in the novel Sula by Toni Morrison. In order to obtain data in this novel, the writer uses descriptive research method. In this study, the author uses a new theory to find the characteristics of Sula in the novel. The author also uses the theory of rebellion to support the new theory. Through this approach, the writer

concludes that this novel describes the characteristics of Sula as the main character in Sula's novel. This study found the results of the analysis that Sula carried out a rebellion on the basis of resistance to the oppression experienced by Afro-American people, especially for herself and made an effect around Afro-American, especially on Afro-American people. Departing from the motivation and hard and independent nature of Sula, his resistance then caused turmoil in the midst of the black society.

Furthermore, another study conducted by Arum Andarukmi Madinda, entitled Sula's Concept of Ideal African-American Women Depicted in Toni Morrison' Sula (2010) examined how Toni Morrison's Sula, which immerses the reader in the experiences of African American women during the time of racial segregation, portrayed the status of women in society in relation to racial segregation and patriarchal society. Sula, a character in the novel who is seemingly depicted in opposition to other characters, has a unique perspective on how she sees herself existing in a society that practices racial segregation and patriarchal ideals. This point of view is created by the principles of black feminism and feminism, which then demonstrate her image of what an ideal African American woman should look like.

Meanwhile, in this research, the writer focuses on the depiction of Sula's character against patriarchy. Furthermore, the author intends to use the theory of sociology literature. The similarity between this research and the previous research is the same novel author and the same description of African American society in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this study, the author

aims to describe the background of society during Sula's lifetime which became an aspect that influenced Sula's personality. Then the character elements will also be analyzed and described some of the vital characters that are the central points in the novel.

Moreover, the difference is that previous studies used cultural theory to analyze and the theory of the concept of hegemony and this research does not describe culture but uses a new theory of criticism and characterization. Then the similarity between this research and the second previous research is the same society with racial differences and the difference between the two is if this study uses characterizations about Sula such as rebellion but in the second previous study it describes oppression and culture within her.

# **B.** Sociology of Literature

Sociology is a social science that study about society. Sociology is derived from the Latin words namely *Socius* means society and logos, which means science. This term was first disclosed by August Comte (1798-1857). Sociology can be interpreted as a social science that studies the society. According to Pospelov (1967: 534), sociology is a science whose goal is to identify the objective laws governing social life in all of its manifestations, including creative art. On the other hand, literature is a form of art that develops in human civilization over time totally independently of sociology. More than any other form of art, literature ostensibly lends itself to sociological investigation because, through the broad conclusions it draws, it enables us to connect with the problems that surround art and to

comprehend the fundamental components of its growth and the principles controlling it. Literature not only teaches us about the various social and historical facets of human existence, but also about every component of nature that is in close proximity to human existence. Literature also discusses socioeconomic situations in society because it was created in a particular period, culture, and convention. Hall in Endraswara (Endraswara, 2013: 78) says that the concept of literature as social referent is, however, perfectly viable since it takes into account the writer's active concern to understand hid society.

One of the areas of literary sociology is the examination of issues in literature as they relate to aspects of economy, politics, traditions, morals, ethics, love, relationships, etc. It can be shown that sociology and literature genuinely have a common basis since different sorts of life that are intimately tied to one human being are described in literature. The existence of authors, books, and readers—or, more generally, of creators, works, and the broader public—is implied by all literary facts.

Ritzer and Goodman, (2004: 112) defines the study of sociology as the study of evolution in its most complex form. To put it another way, sociology is the natural history of societies or more specifically, an order among those structural and functional changes which societies pass through. However, Spencer does not restrict sociology to historical societies but also accepts the study of the ways in which contemporary organizations and

nstitution are severally related to other phenomena of their respective times — the political institution, class distinction, the family arrangements, the modes of distribution and degrees of intercourse, between localities, the amounts of knowledge, the religious beliefs, the morals, the sentiments, the custom, and the ideas. It is clear that Spencer's sociology concentrates largely on macro-level social phenomena (social aggregates) — societies, social structures, social institutions, as well as the functions of each (Ritzer and Goodman, 2004: 112-113).

The idea that literature engages with the human world or the metaphorical world that alludes to human life is inseparable from the phenomenon of the creation of the sociological approach to literature. Literary works are the byproducts of authors who interact with others on a daily basis. Thus, literature is the creative universe of an author that is constantly entwined with social life. Author is a member of society who was born, grown, and educated in a social environment. Consequently, whether we are aware of it or not, the author has fulfilled his obligations as a member of society.

In this case, author need to discuss the relationship between sociology and literature. It is found that sociology and literature have similarities in their discussion. They both take society as the topic in their fields. Sociology is the study of the relationship between various characteristics of society and the social stability of society and its environment. Sociology is always interested in its involvement with the human environment. The sociology of learning is not only human behavior,

but also sociological elements such as social structure, social stability, and social change.

Sociology is fundamentally the scientific, objective study of human in society, the analysis of social institutions, and the study of social process. Sociology is a science that studies social interactions and gathers information from a variety of sources, including literature. Sociology and literature both reflect how people interact with one another and with their surroundings. There is a technique to engage with the environment that is comparable to real-world interaction. Literature facts and the effects on the social environment are two ways that sociology can be studied.

In contrast to other social sciences, sociology is an institution and is related with literature, according to sociologists like Alan Swingewood, Karl Marks, Max Weber, as well as the socio-literature theory by Wellek and Warren. Nearly all facets of social life are of interest to sociology. Young scientists in grade six have found novel sociological research concepts and techniques. Sociology is a social science that focuses on the significance that individuals place on their interpersonal relationships and behavior within a particular social setting.

In order to provide more specifics about the socio-literature theory, Wellek and Warren divided sociological literature into three basic categories, which are sociology of author, sociology of literary work and sociology of reader. Sociological authors talk about the social facets of the writer as the one who composes literary works and the mastermind of

everything that is poured into the work. Sociological literature explores the features of the literary work itself, which includes mostly about the intrinsic elements such as setting. The last type of reader is sociological reader, which talks about readers and how books affect them.

In the modern era, sociological literature has received a lot of attention as a tool for understanding human life. The reason for this is because literature, which serves as a miniature of human existence, often reflects events and occurrences that occur in actual society. Additionally, literature tends to employ people and society as the main characters in stories that tell the tale of life. Because both sociology and literature investigate humans as their subject of study, they can be combined to form a single scientific discipline. The author will make reference to the state of his or her social life when writing a literary work. It implies that an author's life experiences will shape the way they write and produce their creative works.

In accordance to the object of research in this study, which is the novel Sula by Toni Morrison, the theory of sociological literature is closely related to the setting of Sula. The setting of Sula takes place in the rich, fertile hills of Medallion, a small, valley town in Ohio. These hills, where the Blacks lived, are referred to by the locals as "the Bottom". Morrison introduces the town of Medallion and the background of the Bottom to the reader in the opening four pages of the book. Its name comes from an old tale in which a white farmer freed a slave by giving him some challenging tasks in exchange for a plot of land in the hills and his freedom.

# C. Intrinsic Elements in Literary Work

There are both intrinsic and external components to the literary work. To analyze to extrinsic elements, it vary from several points such as feminism, structuralism, sociological studies and so on. On the other hand, to analyze the intrinsic elements, there will be the plot, theme, setting, character, points of view, atmosphere, etc. In this research, the author will emphasize on the intrinsic elements especially character and setting.

#### 1. Character

When it comes to literary works, especially novel, character is one of the most important elements. The individuals or living beings that appear in a book are known as characters. Character in a novel takes on greater significance since actors are always involved in the plot. Characters used in novels are typically real people. The characters in the story can be found in reality.

M. H. Abrams (1985:21) stated that "the characters are presented in a work of dramatic or narrative, which is interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral qualities and dispositional presented in what they say dialogue and with that they're doing actions" (1985:21). Another thing to keep in mind is that the characters are part of a larger pattern; they are citizens of a society, and each character will be presented according to the author's unique perspective on how individuals interact with society. Not merely for their own purpose, but also in relation to the novel's broader structure, details are incorporated.

The majority of the book is focused on common people and the issues they face in the society with which they engage. Fiction typically focuses on one or a small number of important characters who experience a variation of attitude or personalities when they engage in dialogue with other characters about a particular circumstance with concepts. Winners, losers, and ties are all possible. Characters in fiction can be thought of as word representations of people. Although there are some characters you may laugh at, detest, or even despise, the authors do a good job at making you care about them through their actions, words, descriptions, and remarks.

# 2. Setting

Setting is one of the main components of a fictional narrative, along with plot and characterization. It makes up a story's world and influences both the setting and the mood. Setting, however, is more than just a backdrop. Because characters move around and engage with their environment, the setting is frequently dynamic and occasionally even takes on the role of a character.

The majority of the events in Sula, which is set in the Bottom, happened in the early part of the 20th century. African Americans who live in the Bottom frequently experience racism and discrimination. The moniker "The Bottom" comes from a nasty hoax a white farmer put on a black laborer, promising the black man his freedom and several fertile "bottom land" in exchange for performing certain tasks for him. Most of those characters have financial difficulties. For Black town residents, the building of a new tunnel offers the possibility of employment, but this opportunity never

comes to pass. The incomplete tunnel, though, hovers above them like a continual reminder of the bigotry they experience.

Work had already begun on the New River Road (the city had always meant to name it something else, something wonderful, but ten years later when the bridge idea was dropped for a tunnel it was still called the New River Road). (Morrison: 1973: 81)

The Bottom is located above a white middle-class valley. Even though they are neighbors, Afro-American and White characters in the book hardly ever interact with one another. When they do, racial tension is there in the interactions. Afro-American people in America have never received equal treatment. This Afro-American community or better known as the Negro has to go through a life struggle that is much more difficult than the white community. To survive they have to become laborers or workers who work for white people, all their life they can only live as subordinates to white people. It stood in the hills above the valley town of Medallion and spread all the way to the river. (Morrison: 1973: 3).

#### 3. Plot

Plot organizes the sequence of events and actions that make up the story and is one of the elements of fiction. The storyline an author uses determines the sequence of events. Because the main character is engaged in conflict, these events typically occur in stories. The conflict may be from an external factor, such as a dragon or a controlling mother, or it may be

caused by an internal problem, such as jealousy, identity loss, or overconfidence.

The story's action is shaped and the plot is created when the character takes decisions and attempts to address the issue. In certain stories, the author arranges the events as if they were beads on a string, with the first occurrence coming after the second, third, and so on. The "present" actions of many other stories, however, are interrupted by narrative developments from past times using flashback tactics. Plot has five fundamental components:

- a) Exposition which occurs at the start of the story and introduces the characters and situation The story's setting and characters are introduced in the exposition. The reader is drawn in by the exposition, which engages them and gives them enough information to want to keep reading.
- b) Rising Action This is when the story's events start to get convoluted and the conflict is revealed (events between the introduction and climax). The tension or issue in the story is introduced by the growing action. We learn what the protagonist, or main character, is up against, at this section of the story.
- c) Climax The story's climax arises when a significant event occurs in which the main character encounters a significant antagonist, fear, challenge, or other source of conflict. Here is where the most excitement, drama, change, and action happen. The climax, which is

debatably the most significant aspect of a story and the major plot point, places the characters in a scenario where a decision must be taken that will have an impact on the rest of the story. All of the escalating action has been leading up to this crucial moment, which is also the turning point in the main struggle.

- d) Falling action The series of happenings that take place after the climax are known as the "falling action," and it is during this period that the protagonist must react to the changes that have occurred. Events and problems begin to separate them. The reader knows what happened after that and whether or not the dispute was settled (events between climax and denouement).
- e) Denouement This represents the resolution of the story's events or its final result. the section of a story or drama that follows the climax and establishes a new standard, a new situation, or the way things will be moving forward. To bring the tale to a satisfying finish, the author frequently wraps up the story's unresolved issues.

#### 4. Theme

Theme is the concept of topic that the writer wants to conveys in the work. The story as a whole and the theme are linked. A narrative conveys an author's moral principles and understanding of the human condition. The entire narrative thus embodies his message. According to Jenkinson and Hawley (1974:16), a theme is a concept that frequently emerges from the text but is not fully developed enough to be stated in a single sentence. It

frequently recurs with slight modifications and evolves as the novel moves forward.

## D. Kinds of Patriarchy

As a medium that can provoke imagination and creative thinking in examining a message or meaning that is inserted, literature has played a major role in the development of human civilization to date. The literature has provided many perspectives and views on this element, through various kinds of existing literary works, and various different approaches in conveying the meaning in it. Through this idea, a literary work can be a medium to raise a particular issue, which in this case is the issue of patriarchy.

Patriarchy can be conceptualized as a system or systems producing and reproducing gendered and intersectional inequalities, and men's power and women's subordination. According to Strid & Hearn (2022, in Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace & Conflict), patriarchy is a system of social, political, and economic structure and practices. Nash (2009) defined patriarchy is an analytical concept referring to a system of political, social, and economic relations and institutions structured around the gender inequality of socially defined men and women. In this research, the researcher found two kinds of patriarchy that would be explained below.

### 1. White Patriarchy

White patriarchy refers to the feeling of superiority and supremacy of white people over Afro-American people. Afro-Americans were perceived by whites as being unable to use resources and power appropriately. For the minor duties, they solely hired the elderly Afro-American guys. They refused to hire young black males to build the road because they believed that white people could perform the better work. They decided to employ other white people or white immigrants to do the work.

# 2. Sexism Patriarchy

Women and girls are most frequently the targets of sexism in societies. Through the intellectual and tangible actions of people, groups, and institutions that oppress women and girls on the basis of sex or gender, it serves to sustain patriarchy, or male dominance. Simply put, this indicates that men frequently treat women unfairly. For instance, the fictional female character was often depicted as a strong woman who fought for equality and wouldn't submit to her husband.