

# A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ANALYZING CHARACTERS IN BUYA HAMKA'S *TENGGELAMNYA KAPAL VAN DER WIJCK*

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## Abstract

In this study, we adopt a sociological lens to analyze characterizations in *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*. We explore the social and contextual factors influencing these characters, aiming to illuminate the complex network of relationships, power structures, and gender roles within the novel. This analysis seeks to enhance our comprehension of the societal and cultural context of the characters and their alignment with wider social realities.

The study's findings reveal a strong correlation between the novel's characterizations, the socio-cultural and historical context of the Minangkabau people during the period in question. Zainuddin, the novel's protagonist, grapples with the challenge of preserving his identity as a Minang individual of lower social standing. The characterizations of other figures, such as Hayati and Aziz, play a pivotal role in shaping Zainuddin's life trajectory.

This research enriches the field of literary studies by integrating sociological elements into the analysis of character development in a literary piece. The implications of this study include fostering a more profound comprehension of sociology's role in shaping characters in literature, and generating novel insights into the historical Minangkabau society.

**Keywords:** Characterization Analysis, *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*, Minangkabau Society, Sociology of Literature

## INTRODUCTION

Literature serves as a mirror reflecting societal and cultural complexities. Characterization in literary analysis is crucial for understanding the dynamics of human experience. *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*, a novel by Buya Hamka, explores into human emotions, societal structures, and individual-environment interactions.

In this article, we embark on a sociological perspective of literature to analyze the characterization of the characters in *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*. By examining the social dimensions and contextual influences that shape these characters, we aim to shed light on the intricate web of relationships, power dynamics, and gender roles depicted within the novel. Through this analysis, we



strive to deepen our understanding of the societal and cultural milieu in which the characters exist and the ways in which their experiences resonate with broader social realities.

Drawing upon various theoretical frameworks, including literary sociology, characterization theory in literature, symbolic interactionism, structuralism, literary feminism, and post colonialism, we embark on a comprehensive exploration of the characters in the novel. These theories provide valuable lenses through which we can examine how the characters are formed, how they interact with their surroundings, and how social, cultural, and historical factors shape their identities.

By employing a content analysis methodology, we meticulously examine the text of *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*, focusing on the traits, backgrounds, and interactions of the characters. Through this approach, we seek to uncover the nuanced portrayal of individuals from diverse social backgrounds, exploring their struggles, desires, and aspirations within the societal framework presented in the novel.

The objectives of this article are multifaceted. First, we aim to analyze the characteristics and backgrounds of the main character, Zainuddin, and explore his role in depicting the relationship between individuals and society. Additionally, we delve into the characterization of supporting characters, such as Hayati and Aziz, examining their influence on social relationships within the depicted society. We also investigate the impact of social factors, including religion and social status, on the characterization of the novel's characters. Furthermore, we explore how gender characteristics shape the portrayal of characters and analyze the ways in which gender roles influence relationships and plot development.

Through this in-depth characterization analysis, we aspire to contribute to the existing body of knowledge surrounding *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* by illuminating the sociological dimensions embedded within the narrative. By comprehending the complexities of the characters and their interactions, we gain valuable insights into the society and culture portrayed in the novel, thus enriching our understanding of the human condition and the multifaceted nature of interpersonal relationships. Ultimately, this article aims to stimulate further discussion and exploration of literature from a sociological perspective, highlighting

its profound potential to illuminate and elucidate the intricacies of the world we inhabit.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Characterization of the main character

The novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* by Hamka features a main character named Zainuddin, a young man from the Minangkabau ethnic group who falls in love with a girl from a different family, Hayati. The characterization of the main character is rich and complex, allowing for analysis from various aspects.

Firstly, in terms of personality, Zainuddin is portrayed as someone with strong principles and values. He possesses a high determination to achieve his aspirations, even if it means going against the tide and facing strong opposition from others. He is also depicted as a brave, steadfast, and resolute individual in making decisions, even if it entails facing significant consequences.

*"Lebih baik kita tekankan perasaan hati, mak Base. Karena tidak akan terdapat selama-lamanya di dunia ini orang yang tiada bersedih hati akan berpisah-pisah, kalau mereka telah dipertalikan dengan budi bahasa. Sedangkan berangkat ke Mekkah lagi ditangisi orang juga. Tetapi akan dapatkah lantaran kesedihan dan tangis itu perjalanan diundurkan?"*

The dialogue reflects the principles and values within the story. The statement "Let's emphasize our feelings" shows that Zainuddin prioritizes emotions and feelings when facing difficult situations such as separating from his loved ones. This reflects the strong sense of familial bonds and empathy values within Minangkabau society. Additionally, Zainuddin's statement also indicates that sadness and tears are not considered negative or avoided, but rather a natural process of dealing with separation and loss.

Secondly, in terms of religion, Zainuddin is depicted as a devout individual who firmly adheres to Islamic teachings. He strives to fulfill his religious duties to the best of his ability and lives in accordance with the

values of Islam. During challenging times, he relies on the strength of his faith and seeks assistance from Allah (God).

Thirdly, in terms of social relationships, Zainuddin is portrayed as someone who values familial ties and friendships. He deeply loves his family and is willing to make sacrifices for their happiness. He also maintains close relationships with his friends.

Fourthly, in terms of social status, Zainuddin is depicted as someone who works hard to achieve success despite coming from a less privileged family. He strives to pursue his aspirations through hard work and obtaining a higher education. However, his lower social status often becomes a barrier in his relationship with Hayati, who comes from a wealthier and more respected family. (Rahayu, P. D & Wibowo, A.n..)

Fifthly, in terms of psychology, Zainuddin is portrayed as a man driven by the desire to attain happiness and true love, but he faces various inner conflicts. Zainuddin's motivation to seek happiness and true love is evident from the beginning when he meets Hayati. He is instantly captivated by Hayati's beauty and personality, which convinces him even more that she is his destined partner. However, the greatest conflict Zainuddin faces is when he has to confront the reality that Hayati cannot be his. This leads him to experience depression and lose hope in finding happiness in his life. Nevertheless, Zainuddin manages to overcome this inner conflict and decides to move forward with renewed spirit.

*“Kalau dia tertolak lantaran dia tidak berwang, maka ada tersedia wang Rp. 3000,- yang dapat dipergunakan untuk menghadapi gelombang kehidupan sebagai seorang makhluk yang tawakkal.”*

*“Disumpahnya dalam hatinya kepincangan adat, dikutuknya masyarakat yang terlalu rendah itu. Tetapi dari sedikit ke sedikit terbayanglah di mukanya wajah Hayati, tiadalah pantas di negeri Hayati dia menjatuhkan upat dan maki, nista dan cela. Hayati hanya korban dari pada kekejaman peraturan adat yang telah usang itu.”*

The type of dialogue provided is an action. In this dialogue excerpt, Zainuddin is contemplating his financial options to marry Hayati. He realizes that if he is rejected due to his lack of money, he still has some funds to face

his future. However, even though he feels devastated for failing to adhere to customs, he does not curse or insult his community and chooses not to lash out or belittle Hayati. Instead, he sees Hayati as a victim of the cruelty of outdated customary rules. This demonstrates Zainuddin's action of respecting Hayati's feelings and not wanting to hurt or demean others.

The characterization of the main character Zainuddin in this novel can inspire the audience in terms of determination and the spirit of striving to achieve goals, love for family and religion, as well as the values of friendship and kinship.

## 2. Supporting Characterization

In the novel "Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck" by Hamka, the character Hayati is portrayed as a beautiful and intelligent Minang woman. She was born into a noble family and grew up in an environment rich in customary and religious values. Hayati's character is also depicted as independent and courageous in making decisions, such as when she chooses to reject Zainuddin's proposal and marry Aziz.

Furthermore, Hayati's character exhibits strength and determination in facing the challenges of her life. She is not easily defeated and always strives to rise above the difficulties she encounters. This is evident when she faces marital troubles with Aziz but still fights to maintain her marriage and pursue her happiness.

The characterization of Hayati in the novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* portrays a Minang woman who possesses the strength within herself to decide what is best for her. It also reflects that Minang women held a relatively high position in Minangkabau society at that time, albeit still bound by existing customs and norms. (Putri, 2019)

Aziz is a Minang young man who is arranged to be married to Hayati by their parents. Aziz is portrayed as a handsome, well-dressed, and highly educated youth. He comes from a wealthy and well-known family in his hometown. However, on the other hand, Aziz also has a stubborn and selfish

nature. He prioritizes his personal interests over the interests of others, including Hayati.

3. The influence of social factors, religion, and social status on character characterization in the novel.

The influence of social factors, such as religion and social status, can affect the characterization of characters in the novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*. In this novel, characters who are Muslims, such as Zainuddin, Hayati, and Aziz, adhere to the customs and traditions of Islam in the Minangkabau society. This is reflected in the Islamic values firmly upheld by these characters, such as the portrayal of prayer, fasting, and even small things like mentioning bismillah before eating. (IMBRANSYAH, I, 2022)

On the other hand, social status also influences the characterization of characters in this novel. The character Zainuddin, who does not have a high social status, is portrayed as someone poor and lacking influence in society. Meanwhile, the character Aziz, who has a high social status, is depicted as wealthy and influential in the community.

However, the characterization of characters in the novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* is not solely influenced by social factors, but also by other factors such as educational background and social environment. For example, Zainuddin, who has a low educational background but a good social environment, is portrayed as someone with strong moral values and loyalty to his promises. On the other hand, Aziz, who has a good educational background but a less favorable social environment, is depicted as someone filled with sadness and inner conflicts.

In this regard, the novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* successfully portrays the influence of social factors such as religion and social status on character characterization. The novel also teaches strong moral values and emphasizes the importance of maintaining religious and cultural values in everyday life. On the other hand, social status also influences the characterization of characters in this novel. The character Zainuddin, who does not have a high social status, is portrayed as someone poor and lacking

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#### 4. Gender Characterization Underlying Character Portrayal

Gender characterization refers to the social roles, behaviors, and stereotypes associated with the male and female sexes. Here is a detailed explanation of how gender characteristics underlie the portrayal of characters in the novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*:

##### a) Portrayal of Men

In this novel, male characters are generally depicted as family leaders who hold dominant roles in society. They are often given greater authority and power in decision-making. Zainuddin, as the main male character, is portrayed as a resilient and courageous young man of Minang-Bugis descent, driven by a fighting spirit and ambitious for success. This portrayal reflects the dominant role often associated with men in society.

##### b) Portrayal of Women

Female characters in this novel are typically portrayed in traditional roles as mothers, wives, or obedient daughters adhering to social rules and family values. They are often given more passive roles and are

dependent on men. Hayati, as the main female character, is depicted as a beautiful, gentle woman who complies with existing social rules. She is also confronted with the conflict between gender limitations and her desire for happiness.

c) Family and Society Roles

The portrayal of gender characteristics in this novel also reflects the roles of family and society in shaping the behavior and expectations of the characters. The strong role of the family in Minangkabau society is reflected in the relationships between the characters and their influence on life choices and attitudes. Social and cultural norms also influence the characters in facing conflicts and making decisions.

d) Gender Conflict

In this novel, there are conflicts that arise due to differing views and expectations of gender roles faced by the characters. Tensions emerge between traditional expectations imposed on women and their ambitions and desires for personal freedom and happiness. This conflict reflects the tensions often present in societies where gender roles often come with limitations and different expectations.

## 5. Gender Roles Influence the Relationship Between Characters and Plot Development

In the novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* by Buya Hamka, gender roles play a significant role in influencing the relationships between characters and the development of the plot. Here are some ways in which gender roles affect the relationships between characters and plot development in this novel:

1) Romantic Relationships

Gender roles influence the romantic relationship between the main characters, Zainuddin and Hayati. The gender limitations imposed on women in Minangkabau culture place Hayati in a difficult position. She is expected to comply with social rules that require her to choose a partner according to her family's wishes. This conflict affects the relationship between Zainuddin and Hayati and leads to dramatic plot developments.



## 2) Family Conflict

Gender roles also affect the conflict between Zainuddin and Hayati's family. The mismatch between traditional family expectations and Zainuddin's ambition to seek success results in complex conflict. Differences in values and perspectives between Zainuddin, who questions the gender roles imposed on women, and Hayati's family, who desire compliance with social rules, create tensions that impact the plot development.

## 3) Differences in Opportunities and Social Roles

Gender roles also influence the opportunities and social roles given to the characters in this novel. Strong social backgrounds and differing gender expectations result in differences in opportunities and constraints experienced by the characters. Female characters tend to have more limited opportunities in pursuing their dreams, while male characters often receive more chances to achieve their goals.

## 4) Internal Conflicts

Gender characteristics also create internal conflicts within the thoughts and emotions of the characters. They feel trapped between traditional expectations imposed on them and their desires to follow their personal aspirations. These conflicts affect the plot development and provide complexity to the characters in the story.

Through conflicts, tensions, and differing expectations arising from gender roles, this novel presents a rich and complex portrayal of how gender influences interactions and character development within the social and cultural context of that time.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of character portrayal in the novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* by Buya Hamka, it can be concluded that each character has unique and distinct characteristics. This is influenced by factors such as religion, social status, and family background.

The main character in this novel, Zainuddin, is depicted as intelligent, kind-hearted, patient, and determined. He is also deeply religious and holds firmly to

Islamic values in his life. On the other hand, Hayati, the female character in the novel, is portrayed as beautiful and intelligent, but also fragile and unable to fight back. The factors of religion and family background greatly influence Hayati's characteristics as she experiences internal conflicts between her love for Zainuddin and her obligation to marry Aziz.

Additionally, supporting characters like Aziz also have unique characteristics that influence the course of the story. Aziz, despite being portrayed as an honorable and authoritative figure, is actually selfish and often acts harshly towards Hayati.

In this novel, Hamka provides a deep and complex portrayal of the characters. Through this characterization, Hamka is able to immerse readers in the atmosphere of the colonial era, full of social and religious conflicts. The social factors, religion, and social status greatly influence the characterization of the characters in this novel and result in intriguing conflicts and drama.

Overall, the character portrayal in the novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* by Buya Hamka is strong and detailed, presenting vibrant and complex characters within the story. By understanding the characteristics of each character, readers can better comprehend the conflicts and journey of the story in a more profound manner.

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