

= Sitti Nurbaya =

Sitti Nurbaya : Kasih Tak Sampai (Sitti Nurbaya : Unrealized Love , often abbreviated Sitti Nurbaya or Siti Nurbaya ; original spelling Sitti Noerbaja) is an Indonesian novel by Marah Rusli . It was published by Balai Pustaka , the state @-@ owned publisher and literary bureau of the Dutch East Indies , in 1922 . The author was influenced by the cultures of the west Sumatran Minangkabau and the Dutch colonials , who had controlled Indonesia in various forms since the 17th century . Another influence may have been a negative experience within the author 's family ; after he had chosen a Sundanese woman to be his wife , Rusli 's family brought him back to Padang and forced him to marry a Minangkabau woman chosen for him .

Sitti Nurbaya tells the story of two teenage lovers , Samsulbahri and Sitti Nurbaya , who wish to be together but are separated after Samsulbahri is forced to go to Batavia . Not long afterwards , Nurbaya unhappily offers herself to marry the abusive and rich Datuk Meringgih as a way for her father to escape debt ; she is later killed by Meringgih . It ends with Samsulbahri , then a member of the Dutch colonial army , killing Datuk Meringgih during an uprising and then dying from his wounds .

Written in formal Malay and including traditional Minangkabau storytelling techniques such as pantuns , Sitti Nurbaya touches on the themes of colonialism , forced marriage , and modernity . Well @-@ received upon publication , Sitti Nurbaya continues to be taught in Indonesian high schools . It has been compared to Romeo and Juliet and the Butterfly Lovers .

= = Writing = =

Sitti Nurbaya was written by Marah Rusli , a Dutch @-@ educated Minangkabau from a noble background with a degree in veterinary science . His Dutch education led him to become Europeanized . He abandoned some Minangkabau traditions , but not his view of the subordinate role of women in society . According to Bakri Siregar , an Indonesian socialist literary critic , Rusli 's Europeanisation affected how he described Dutch culture in Sitti Nurbaya , as well a scene where the two protagonists kiss . A. Teeuw , a Dutch critic of Indonesian literature and lecturer at the University of Indonesia , notes that the use of pantuns (a Malay poetic form) shows that Rusli was heavily influenced by Minangkabau oral literary tradition , while the extended dialogues show influence from the tradition of musyawarah (in @-@ depth discussions by a community to reach an agreement) .

Indonesian critic Zuber Usman credits another , more personal , experience as influencing Rusli in writing Sitti Nurbaya and his positive view of European culture and modernity . After expressing interest in choosing a Sundanese woman to become his wife , which " caused an uproar among his family " , Rusli was told by his parents to return to his hometown and marry a Minangkabau woman chosen by them ; this caused conflict between Rusli and his family .

= = Plot = =

In Padang in the early 20th century Dutch East Indies , Samsulbahri and Sitti Nurbaya ? children of rich noblemen Sutan Mahmud Syah and Baginda Sulaiman ? are teenage neighbours , classmates , and childhood friends . They begin to fall in love , but they are only able to admit it after Samsu tells Nurbaya that he will be going to Batavia (Jakarta) to study . After spending the afternoon at a nearby hillside , Samsu and Nurbaya kiss on her front porch . When they are caught by Nurbaya 's father and the neighbours , Samsu is chased out of Padang and goes to Batavia .

Meanwhile , Datuk Meringgih , jealous of Sulaiman 's wealth and worried about the business competition , plans to bankrupt him . Meringgih 's men destroy Sulaiman 's holdings , driving him to bankruptcy and forcing him to borrow money from Meringgih . When Meringgih tries to collect , Nurbaya offers to become his wife if he will forgive her father 's debt ; Datuk Meringgih accepts .

Writing to Samsu , Nurbaya tells him that they can never be together . However , after surviving Meringgih 's increasingly violent outbursts , she runs away to Batavia to be with Samsu . They fall in

love again . Upon receiving a letter regarding her father 's death , Nurbaya hurries back to Padang , where she dies after unwittingly eating a cake poisoned by Meringgih 's men on his orders . Receiving news of her death by letter , Samsu seemingly commits suicide .

Ten years later , Meringgih leads an uprising against the Dutch colonial government to protest a recent tax increase . During the uprising , Samsu (now a soldier for the Dutch) meets Meringgih and kills him , but is mortally wounded himself . After meeting with his father and asking for forgiveness , he dies and is buried next to Nurbaya .

= = Characters = =

Sitti Nurbaya

Sitti Nurbaya (sometimes spelled Siti Nurbaya ; abbreviated Nurbaya) is the title character and one of the main protagonists . Indonesian short @-@ story writer and literary critic Muhammad Balfas describes her as a character who is capable of making her own decisions , indicated by her decision to marry Datuk Meringgih when he threatens her father , willingness to take control with Samsulbahri , and dismissal of Datuk Meringgih after the death of her father . She is also independent enough to move to Batavia to look for Samsulbahri on her own . Her actions are seen as being heavily against adat ? the strong Indonesian cultural norms ? and this eventually leads to her being poisoned . Her beauty , to the point that she is called " the flower of Padang " , is seen as a physical manifestation of her moral and kind nature .

Samsulbahri

Samsulbahri (sometimes spelled Sjamsulbahri ; abbreviated Samsu) is the primary male protagonist . He is described as having skin the colour of *langsar* , with eyes as black as ink ; however , from afar he can be confused with a Dutchman . These physical attributes have been described by Keith Foulcher , a lecturer of Indonesian language and literature at the University of Sydney , as indicating Samsu 's mimicry and collaborationist nature . His good looks are also seen as a physical manifestation of his moral and kind nature .

Datuk Meringgih

Datuk Meringgih is the primary antagonist of the story . He is a trader who originated from a poor family , and became rich as a result of shady business dealings . Indonesian writer and literary critic M. Balfas described Meringgih 's main motivations as greed and jealousy , being unable to " tolerate that there should be anyone wealthier than he " . Balfas writes that Datuk Meringgih is a character that is " drawn in black and white , but strong enough to create serious conflicts around him . " He later becomes the " champion of anti @-@ colonist resistance " , fuelled only by his own greed ; Foulcher argues that it is unlikely that Datuk Meringgih 's actions were an attempt by Rusli to insert anti @-@ Dutch commentary .

= = Style = =

According to Bakri Siregar , the diction in *Sitti Nurbaya* does not reflect Marah Rusli 's personal style , but a " Balai Pustaka style " of formal Malay , as required by the state @-@ owned publisher . As a result , Rusli 's orally @-@ influenced story telling technique , often wandering from the plot to describe something " at the whim of the author " , comes across as " lacking " .

Sitti Nurbaya includes *pantuns* (Malay poetic forms) and " clichéd descriptions " , although not as many as contemporary Minangkabau works . The *pantuns* are used by Nurbaya and Samsul in expressing their feelings for each other , such as the *pantun*

Its main messages are presented through debates between characters with a moral dichotomy , to show alternatives to the author 's position and " thereby present a reasoned case for [its] validation " . However , the " correct " (author 's) point of view is indicated by the social and moral standing of the character presenting the argument .

= = Themes = =

Sitti Nurbaya is generally seen as having an anti @-@ forced marriage theme or illustrating the conflict between Eastern and Western values . It has also been described as " a monument to the struggle of forward @-@ thinking youth " against Minangkabau adat .

However , Balfas writes that it is unjust to consider Sitti Nurbaya as only another forced marriage story , as the marriage of Nurbaya and Samsu would have been accepted by society . He instead writes that Sitti Nurbaya contrasts Western and traditional views of marriage , criticising the traditionally accepted dowry and polygamy .

= = Reception = =

Rusli 's family was not pleased with the novel ; his father condemned him in a letter , as a result of which Rusli never returned to Padang . His later novel , *Anak dan Kemenakan* (1958) was even more critical of older generation 's inflexibility .

Until at least 1930 , Sitti Nurbaya was one of Balai Pustaka 's most popular works , often being borrowed from lending libraries . After Indonesia 's independence , Sitti Nurbaya was taught as a classic of Indonesian literature ; this has led to it being " read more often in brief synopsis than as an original text by generation after generation of Indonesian high school students " . As of 2008 , it has seen 44 printings .

Sitti Nurbaya is generally considered one of the most important works of Indonesian literature , with its love story being compared to William Shakespeare 's *Romeo and Juliet* and the Chinese legend of the *Butterfly Lovers* . Some Western critics , including Dutch critic A. Teeuw and writer A. H. Johns , consider it to be the first true Indonesian novel , as opposed to *Azab dan Sengsara* , which was less developed in its theme of forced marriage and the negative aspects of adat .

Teeuw wrote that the moral messages and sentimentality in Sitti Nurbaya are overdone , similar to *Azab dan Sengsara* . However , he considers the plot of Sitti Nurbaya more interesting for a reader from a Western background than the older novel .

Siregar wrote that Rusli " in many things acts as a dalang " , or puppet master , occasionally removing the characters in order to speak directly to the reader , making the message too one @-@ sided . He considered the plot to be forced in places , as if the author were preventing the story from flowing naturally . He considered Rusli a mouthpiece of the Dutch colonial government , who had controlled Indonesia since the early 17th century , for making Samsul , " the most sympathetic character " , a member of the Dutch forces and Datuk Meringgih , " the most antipathetic character " , the leader of Indonesian revolutionary forces , as well as for Rusli 's antipathy to Islam in the novel .

Sitti Nurbaya inspired numerous authors , including Nur Sutan Iskandar , who stated that he wrote *Apa Dayaku Karena Aku Perempuan* (*What Am I to Do Because I Am a Girl* , 1924) as a direct result of reading it ; Iskandar later wrote *Cinta yang Membawa Maut* (*Love that Brings Death* , 1926) , which deals with the same themes . The Sitti Nurbaya storyline has often been reused , to the point that Balfas has referred to similar plots as following " the ' Sitti Nurbaya ' formula " .

= = Adaptations = =

Sitti Nurbaya has been translated into numerous languages , including Malaysian in 1963 . It has been adapted into a sinetron (soap opera) twice . The first , in 1991 , was directed by Dedi Setiadi , and starred Novia Kolopaking in the leading role , Gusti Randa as Samsulbahri , and HIM Damsyik as Datuk Meringgih . The second , starting in December 2004 , was produced by MD Entertainment and broadcast on Trans TV . Directed by Encep Masduki and starring Nia Ramadhani as the title character , Ser Yozha Reza as Samsulbahri , and Anwar Fuady as Datuk Meringgih , the series introduced a new character as a competitor for Samsul 's affections .

In 2009 , Sitti Nurbaya was one of eight classics of Indonesian literature chosen by Taufik Ismail to be reprinted in a special Indonesian Cultural Heritage Series edition ; Sitti Nurbaya featured a West Sumatran @-@ style woven cloth cover . Actress Happy Salma was chosen as its celebrity icon .