

## Cultural Reflections Through Readers' Responses to Muna Masyari's Short Stories

Nurul Nadifah<sup>a,1\*</sup> & Miftahur Roifah<sup>a,2</sup>

<sup>a)</sup> Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia

<sup>1)</sup>200511100001@student.trunojoyo.ac.id; <sup>2)</sup>miftahur.roifah@trunojoyo.ac.id

\* Corresponding Author: Nurul Nadifah

### ABSTRACT

This study examines how Muna Masyari's short stories portray Madurese culture and rituals and how readers from different backgrounds perceive them. It explores cultural representation, reader response variability, and the influence of cultural background. The research collects interview data, analyzes responses, provides cultural insights, and suggests future research to explore evolving perceptions in literature. This qualitative study analyzed readers' responses to Muna Masyari's short stories through interviews and observations, focusing on English Literature students from Trunojoyo University. Data analysis included reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Limitations included a small sample size and limited diversity. Future research suggests broader participant diversity, mixed methods, and a diachronic approach to evolving perceptions. The study found that Madurese readers connected deeply with cultural rituals in Muna Masyari's stories, while non-Madurese readers needed additional context. Responses varied by cultural background, showing pride from locals and fresh perspectives from outsiders. Both groups acknowledged the decline in traditional practices, reflecting changing societal values and the evolving nature of cultural heritage. The study concluded that Muna Masyari's stories reflect and preserve Madurese culture, showing literature's power to explore identity and challenge stereotypes. Reader response theory revealed how cultural backgrounds shape text interpretation. Future research is expected to involve broader participants and long-term studies to track evolving perceptions. The findings affirm literature's role in bridging cultural gaps and celebrating traditions.

**Keywords:** Madurese literature, Madurese culture, reader reception

#### Submitted:

1 December 2023

#### Accepted:

30 January 2025

#### Published:

30 January 2025

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Literary works result from the author's creative imagination that reflects human daily life. Literary works are not just fictional stories but also an accurate picture of human life. More than just entertainment, literary works can also relate to events in the real world and have positive moral messages for readers (Saputri et al., 2015). Pradopo (in Saputri et al., 2015) revealed that literary works are art forms that use language as a means of expression. In this case, language acts as the material used in the context of literature. Literary works can invite readers to imagine without being bound to a specific time and place.

Literary works often reflect the life and events around the author's environment. As time goes by, more and more literary works present a picture of local wisdom. These works highlight various events and phenomena of life especially those related to the traditions and customs of a region. One of them is a literary work that incorporates elements of Madurese local culture into the literary work. The culture and traditions in Madura are often considered backwards and conservative. In addition, stereotypes of Madurese people who are considered to have a firm and hard nature often create a negative stigma among people outside Madura. To overcome these negative views, a medium is needed that can represent Madurese culture appropriately. One effective medium is through literary

works. Through characters, settings, and storylines, literary works can reflect human life and society and convey values, norms, ideologies, worldviews, and cultural elements.

Madurese literature is one of the important forms of cultural expression for the Madurese community. Madurese literature plays a major role in maintaining their values, traditions and identity. Through literature, Madurese people can record history, convey moral messages, and enrich the cultural richness of the archipelago. For a long time, Madurese people have created poems and stories using their local language. These works often contain moral teachings and social criticism. Madurese literature takes various forms, including written and oral literature, and both are widely enjoyed by the community. These literary works become an important medium to express the feelings and thoughts of the Madurese people. Since ancient times, moral values and religious teachings have often been conveyed through oral poems and stories. Despite living amid rough and barren natural conditions, Madurese people are still able to deeply reflect on their life experiences, which are then poured into literary works. Therefore, many Madurese literary works are full of motivation, encouragement, and strong moral messages (Syamsuddin, 2019).

Madurese literature has a long and rich history. Although no authentic evidence shows when Madurese's literature began to develop, Madurese was already familiar with writing during the glory days of Singosari. The development of Madurese's literature can be divided into several periods (Anton, 2012). The Old Madura Literature Period lasted until 1920. Many foreign researchers and writers wrote about old Madurese literature and language lessons during this period. As in the book *Een Madoereesch Minnedicht* by linguist A.A Fokker. Furthermore, the New Madurese Literature Period lasted between 1920-1945. In this period, Madurese authors began to be recognized. One was M Wirjo Wijoto with his work entitled *Maesak Apa Marosak* (1927). In addition, translated works began to enter such as *Lanjteng Glempeng*, a Dutch translation by C.J Kieviet (1923). Then, the Modern Madurese Literature Period began from 1945 to 1977. During this period researchers and authors are dominated by Madurese or Indonesians who have an interest in the Madurese language. In modern Madurese literature, there are fictional stories and poetry (Kalidin, 2024).

According to Jasin (in Azhar, 2013) Madurese literature can generally be classified into two main categories, namely Madurese populist literature and Madurese particularist literature. Populist Madurese literature is literature that is widely recognized by various layers of Madurese society. One example is *dungngeng* or fairy tales, which are folktales full of moral messages and hopes. *Dungngeng* is often delivered in gatherings or the family environment. This story reflects the life of Madurese people in the past. Some famous Madurese *dungngeng* include the story of the heroism of Pangeran Trunojoyo, Potre Koneng, Asal-usul Kerapan Sapi, Sakera, Ke' Lesap, and Angling Darma Ambya Madura. Another example of populist literature is the *syi'ir*. *Syi'ir* is a series of beautiful words arranged in coherent sentences and is usually recited in Islamic boarding schools, Islamic forums, or wedding parties. *Syi'ir* has various types, such as those that tell the story of the prophet, the punishment of the grave, education, religion, or morals.

Particularist Madurese literature is a type of literature that is only known by a small part of the community, generally the older generation. Because it is rarely found and used, it is often referred to as archaic literature. Particularist literature has certain varieties, types, and patterns or rules that must be memorized well. The ability to remember and understand these patterns is considered very difficult for the younger generation, so many of them are reluctant to preserve and practice them. As a result, only a few Madurese understand this literature, despite its vital role in enriching the treasures of Madurese literature. Some forms of particularist literature include: (a) Bangsalan, (b) Madurese rhyme Poetry, (c) Paparegan, (d) Saloka, and (e) Tembhang Macapat.

#### a) Bangsalan

*Bangsalan* is a form of Madurese literary expression that is organized using indirect patterns. A *bangsalan* sentence consists of three main elements: *bangsalan* as a concrete expression, *teggessa* as the referred meaning, and *oca' panebbus* as the meaning of *bangsalan*. The relationship between *teggessa* and *panebbus* must fulfill compatibility in written form (*guru sastra*) or sound similarity (*guru swara*). The ability to use *bangsalan* used to be a marker of one's authenticity as a descendant of Madura; those who were proficient were considered true Madurese, while those who were not were considered to have only a superficial understanding of the language. With its unique patterns and the need for strong memory, *bangsalan* reflects the distinctive identity of Madurese culture, as only genuine Madurese truly understand its meaning.

b) Madurese rhyme Poetry

Madurese rhyme Poetry, also known as *sendhilan*, is a form of communication unique to the Madurese community. The unique feature of this communication is the use of rhyme or *paparegan* in conversation. Usually, *sendhilan* is done by exchanging rhymes between men and women. In the Madurese literary and cultural tradition, there are four main types of rhymes: (1) religious rhyme, which conveys religious teachings and messages; (2) *baburugan* rhyme, which contains advice on morals, education, and manners; (3) *sekaseyan* rhyme, which is used by youth as an expression of love; and (4) *palenggiran* rhyme, which aims to entertain with humour.

c) Paparegan

*Paparegan* is a form of Madurese literature used to give advice. There are two forms of *paparegan*, namely: (1) *Paparegan* formed from two *padda/biri* (lines) in one *andheggan* (stanza). The first *padda/biri* is *samperan/bibidan*. The second *padda/biri* is *teggessa* (contents) (2) *Paparegan* consisting of 4 *padda/biri* in one *andheggan*. *Padda/biri* 1 and 2 are *samperan/bibidan*. While *padda/biri* 3 and 4 are the *teggessa* of *Paparegan*. *Paparegan*, which consists of 4 *padda/biri*, has almost the same form as rhymes. Both contain *guru sastra* and *guru swara*. The difference is that if rhymes are determined by the number of *keccap* (taps/syllables), then in *paparegan* the number of *keccap* is not determined.

d) Saloka

*Saloka* are literary words that contain wise and meaningful advice. It is often delivered in many events and Madurese literary writings. The truth of the content of these wise sayings has been proven so much that people who hear or read it will always confirm it and believe it. Examples (1) *Juda nagara potos: hokum nagara ta' ekenneng tandhinge* (Yuda Negara Putus; The law of the state cannot be challenged) (2) *Namen cabbi molong cabbi: jube'na oreng gumantong dhari lakona dibi'* (Planting chili peppers reap chili peppers; the ugliness of people depends on their behaviour) (3) *Mon bagus kodu pabagas: mon oreng bagus robana kodhu pabagus reya Gulina* (People whose faces are good should also have good behavior)

e) Tembhang Macapat.

*Tembhang* is not much different from *syi'ir*. Usually, *tembhang* is read when someone has a wish such as marrying a child or something else. *Tembhang* is read by two or more people throughout the night. There are 3 types of *tembhang* known by the Madurese. They are *Tembhang Macapat*, *Tembhang Tengnga'an*, and *Tembhang Raja*.

However, until now, studies on Madurese literature are still very limited. Although Madura has produced many great writers, few have paid special attention to the richness of Madurese literature. In Madura, newspapers or magazines that provide special space for Madurese's writing are still

scarce. As a result, Madurese literature has not been widely recognized by the public. Many Madurese themselves are not familiar with the literary works of their region.

When discussing contemporary Indonesian literature, especially in Madura, some writers such as KH. D. Zawawi Imron, Abdul Hadi WM, Jamal D. Rahman, and others. However, young Madurese writers have recently emerged and received national attention for their works that are worth analyzing. Take Royyan Julian, Zainul Muttaqin, Muna Masyari, and Dwi Ratih Damayanti. Dwi Ratih Damayanti and Muna Masyari are two young Madurese writers who are productive in writing literary works (Hartanto & Roifah, 2020)

*Martabat Kematian* and *Rokat Tase'* are two books of short stories written by Muna Masyari. Munawaroh Masyari familiarly called Muna Masyari is one of the young Madurese writers who presents short stories with Madurese cultural nuances. The book *Martabat Kematian* was published in 2019 and contains 17 short stories, while *Rokat Tase'* contains 20 short stories and was published in 2020. *Martabat Kematian* and *Rokat Tase'* are collections of short stories themed on local Madurese traditions and culture with various conflicts and mythical powers. One of the strong themes discussed in each short story in these books is the representation of Madurese culture and traditional ceremonies that are rich in myths and the Madurese people's belief in existing traditions.

Several researchers use Muna Masyari's works, including Silvia Risma Elpariani, Sainul Hermawan and Dewi Alfianti using the collection of short stories *Rokat Tase'* and *Martabat Kematian* to be used as data sources in their research entitled *Representasi Perempuan Madura dalam Cerpen-cerpen Karya Muna Masyari*. In this study, they describe the extent to which Madurese women are represented in Muna Masyari's short stories and their relationship with social class and femininity. The results of this study found that the representation of Madurese women in domestic and public spaces shows that Madurese women experience injustice and gender inequality and shows Madurese women's resistance to the injustice and gender inequality they experience. The representation of Madurese women in domestic and public spaces shows that patriarchy occurs in the lower social class, middle social class, and upper social class. Femininity in the three classes is more or less the same because society's view of women does not only apply to one class but applies to every class.

Then secondly, Erika Citra Sari Hartanto and Miftahur Roifah used the short story collection *Martabat Kematian* as a data source in their research entitled *Madurese Women and Binding Culture in Muna Masyari's Martabat Kematian: Gynocriticism Analysis*. Researching the portrayal of Madurese women in four short stories, namely *Kembang Pengantin*, *Rumah Hantaran*, *Are' Lancor*, and *Topeng Gulur*. The results show that Masyari reveals many problems inherent in Madurese women through the body, language, soul, and culture of women. Madurese's arranged marriages and myths have placed Madurese women in oppressive and unfavourable conditions because of the culture that binds women. However, Muna Masyari places her female characters who dare to speak up to have their authority in seeking their fate in the future.

Two previous studies have examined Muna Masyari's works, such as those conducted by Elpariani et al., (2022) which focuses on the representation of Madurese women. As well as research conducted by Hartanto & Roifah (2020) which focuses on the representation of Madurese women in her short story collection and uses a gynocritical approach, there is a gap in the theoretical approach used. This research provides novelty by using the reader response theory approach to explore readers' opinions on culture and myths in short stories by Muna Masyari. In addition, this study also examines the differences in responses between readers from Madura and readers from outside Madura, to provide a broader perspective regarding the representation of Madurese culture and traditions in the short stories *Topeng Gulur*, *Rokat Salera*, and *Tambang Sapi Karapan*. This approach is expected to provide a new perspective on how local culture and myths in Muna Masyari's short stories are understood

and accepted by readers from various cultural backgrounds, thus contributing to literary studies that focus on local wisdom and cultural interaction.

This research aims to find out the readers' responses and responses to the implementation of rainmaking rituals in a short story entitled *Topeng Gulur*, readers' responses to the implementation of the *rokat salera* traditional ceremony in a short story entitled *Rokat Salera*, and readers' responses to the depiction of the character of Suraksah in the short story *Tambang Sapi Karapan* with the character of Madurese society.

*Topeng Gulur* tells the story of a community leader named Muraksah who performs the *topeng gulur* dance ceremony as a rainmaking ritual. To the old beliefs of the people in his village, the ritual must be performed if it does not rain. However, a few days after the ritual, the rain did not come. Meanwhile, rumours began to grow in the community that a girl was unwed pregnant, although they did not know who the pregnant girl was this time, causing the rain not to come.

*Rokat Salera* tells the story of a worried mother whose son suddenly developed a fever one morning. Moments after learning that her son had a fever, she felt compelled to meet her ex-husband to perform the *rokat salera* ritual, a ceremony performed by the child with one of the parents who bears a facial resemblance to him. The ritual is accomplished by providing a pile of coins and pancakes thrust up to the height of the child's body. The surrounding community believes that if this ritual is not performed, it can cause one of them to have bad luck, such as death. Unfortunately, the ex-husband did not want to serve the ritual because he thought that the child was not his biological son. Suddenly, one day, she was shocked by the sound of ambulance sirens coming in the morning carrying her lifeless husband.

*Tambang Sapi Karapan* tells the story of a karapan sapi jokey named Suraksah who matches his daughter with one of the karapan sapi jockeys, Mukassar. However, Marsiyah, Suraksah's daughter, did not want to be matched with Mukassar because she did not want the same fate as her mother, who married a karapan sapi jockey like her father. Even until the end of her mother's life, she felt that her mother was not appreciated by her father because her father was more concerned with participating in the karapan sapi race. However, his father still forced him to marry his choice because he could not refuse anymore, so the marriage took place. Unexpectedly, during the wedding party, she was found hanging herself from the nyiur(coconut) tree behind her house using the rope that her father used during the karapan sapi race. Feeling the loss of his daughter and wife, at the end of the story, Suraksah follows his daughter by hanging himself in the same place and with the same rope that Marsiyah had used to commit suicide.

Nikolajeva (in Backman, 2023) explains that reader-response theory considers the reader as an abstract part of the text, not just as a recipient. Reader response theorists may choose to interpret the reader as an abstract part of the text in several ways: Wolfgang Iser considers the reader as an individual entity. This means that the reader combines the new information conveyed by the text with the reader's background and experience, resulting in a unique interpretation of the text. This process is then repeated when the reader accesses new information, using previously read "old" information to create further interpretations and meanings from the text. Pradopo (in Intan, 2019) revealed that readers' responses to literary works could be the object of study of literary science called reception aesthetics. Reception aesthetics is a science based on readers' responses or reception to literary works.

Junus stated that literary reception is also referred to as literary response and aesthetic of reception, better known as literary reception theory, which is how readers interpret and interpret the literary works they read and to what extent this affects their responses and reactions to these literary

works. According to this theory, a literary text will have meaning when interacting with the reader. Literary texts need readers to produce impressions that may not exist without them. In literary reception theory, readers have flexibility in interpreting a literary text, although certain factors limit this flexibility (Intan, 2019).

Literary reception is a research method in the field of literature that does not focus only on the text itself. In this approach, literary research is not limited to the text alone, so it can be considered a broader approach than just examining the literary text. It concerns how a literary text affects the reader and how the reader responds to the text. In other words, this approach is rooted in the understanding that literary texts are written for readers to enjoy and analyse (Putri et al., 2020).

Jauss explains that the horizon of expectation of literary works is the interaction between literary works and readers. This horizon of expectations is shaped by the system or expectations that readers have of literary works and the system of interpretation that develops in the society of literary connoisseurs (Yudin, 2023). The horizon of expectations introduced by Jauss is a criterion readers use to consider literary texts of a specific period. Martyn Thompson (In Goodwin, 2016) states that the horizon of expectation is influenced not only by literary experience, but also by social, economic, and political experience (of the viewer).

Segers (in Pradopo, 2020) explains that three factors determine the horizon of expectation: 1) norms derived from the texts the reader has read, 2) knowledge and experience of all previously read texts, especially literary texts, and 3) individualised or emotional experiences determined by social and cultural. Jauss expressed seven theses of his theoretical thinking. Briefly, the seven theses are as follows:

1. Jauss explains that literary works are not structures that produce a single and fixed meaning, which contradicts the traditional view of history as an objective description. Instead, literary works have meanings that can vary and depend on different readers. Jauss argues that the personal experience of each reader influences the meaning that emerges in the experience of reading a literary work.
2. The horizon system of readers' expectations emerges from the historical moment of a literary work, of how readers of literary works attempt to avoid psychological traps that might interfere. This involves how analysing the reception and influence of a literary work is formed within the framework that prevailed at the time the literary work was written, taking into account the reader's knowledge of the genre, their experience with previous literary works, some aspects in the literary work, and the difference between poetic language and everyday language.
3. If there is an aesthetic alignment between expectations and the form of innovative literary work, the reception process may alter those expectations. This can happen by rejecting previous aesthetic experiences or becoming aware of newly emerging aesthetic experiences.
4. Returning to the expectations of literary works throughout their history, from the moment of their creation to the moment of their reception by society in the past and present, will result in diverse ways of responding to them according to the spirit of different times.
5. Reception aesthetics theory does not only focus on interpreting the meaning and form of literary works according to their historical context. It also emphasises the importance of individual work as an element that contributes to understanding its meaning and historical context within the framework of literary experience. In the progression from the history of literary reception to literary history, the latter is a passive reception process that takes place in the context of the original work. The following work can help overcome the moral and formal problems left by the previous work and raise new problems that will be faced in subsequent understanding.

6. If changes in aesthetic attitudes make understanding and interpreting literary works based on historical reception difficult, then we can use a synchronic perspective to evaluate the similarities, differences, conflicts, or interrelationships between current and past art systems.
7. It is crucial to complete the task of literary history not only by describing literary systems synchronically and over time (diachronically) but also by relating them to the general historical context.

## 2. METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research method with a literary reception study approach with theoretical thoughts from Hans Robert Jauss's seven theses on Muna Masyari's short story collection. This research uses a synchronic reader reception approach to reveal the reader's reception of literary works. Synchronic reception research is literary reception research that uses contemporary reader responses, meaning that the readers are used as respondents in one period (Pradopo, 2020). This research analyzed contemporary readers' responses using interview and questionnaire techniques.

In this study, data were collected through interviews and observations. Interviews were conducted with English Literature students at Trunojoyo University of Madura who have and do not have a Madurese background, and who were asked to read the short story collection *Martabat Kematian* and *Rokat Tase'* by Muna Masyari. The data collection stage consists of five steps:

- 1) determining respondents: Trunojoyo University of Madura English Literature students with Madurese and non-Madurese backgrounds were selected as participants. The students of this university were chosen because it is located on Madura Island, while its students come from various regions in Indonesia. Madurese participants were chosen with the hope of providing a deep insight into the local culture in Muna Masyari's short stories, while non-Madurese participants offered a new perspective on the unique Madurese cultural elements. The combination of these two groups allows for a comparison of cultural perceptions, creating a broader understanding of the appeal and relevance of literary works.
- 2) Preparing Interview Questions: The formulation of the interview questions was done after reading the three short stories and identifying three distinctive aspects of Madura, namely the two traditional rituals, topeng gulur and rokat salera, as well as Suraksah's character who reflects the stereotypes of people outside Madura to Madurese people. The questions then focused on the readers' responses to the cultural elements and stereotypes of the characters in Muna Masyari's short stories.
- 3) conducting interviews: Interviews were conducted after first scheduling a meeting with each participant via WhatsApp. At the agreed time, the interview took place at a predetermined location. During the interview session, three questions were asked, focusing on the participants' responses to the cultural elements and characterization in Muna Masyari's short stories.
- 4) recording interviews: During the interview sessions, participants' responses were recorded to ensure that the data could be documented accurately and could be accessed again when needed.
- 5) transcribing interviews: Transcribed the interviews for further analysis.

After collecting data, the next step is to process and analyze the data using qualitative data analysis methods. Because the data is obtained as information, the researcher has conducted an initial analysis of the informants' answers. Data analysis follows several stages: data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Field reports are organized into more concise reports at the data reduction

stage, focusing on important information and emerging patterns. At the data presentation stage, data is presented in narrative text with support from literature and other references. Finally, at the conclusion drawing stage, the data is analyzed to identify patterns, relationships, and significant findings that emerge from the data that has been collected.

This study has several limitations that may affect its results and generalization. First, the research participants only came from English Literature students at the Trunojoyo University of Madura, so it is less representative of views from other more diverse educational backgrounds and regions. Second, the relatively small number of participants, namely eight people, limits the generalization of the results regarding the acceptance of Muna Masyari's literature by readers with different cultural backgrounds. Third, this study only uses qualitative methods through interviews and observations without involving quantitative approaches that can enrich the analysis. Fourth, the synchronic approach only covers readers' responses in one specific period, thus not considering possible changes in perception over time. For future research, it is suggested that participants be more diverse by involving respondents from other universities or the general public to get a broader perspective. In addition, using a combination method that includes a large-scale questionnaire can strengthen the qualitative analysis. Expanding the time coverage with a diachronic approach would also provide insight into the changing perceptions of readers from different generations. Future research can also discuss more short story titles in the short story collections *Martabat Kematian* and *Rokat Tase'* to create a more comprehensive understanding of Muna Masyari's work.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 RESULT

Analysis of readers' responses to Hans Robert Jauss' reception theory to the short stories *Topeng Gulur*, *Rokat Salera*, and *Tambang Sapi Karapan*. The sources in this study are classified into two groups: those with a Madurese background and those without a Madurese background. The classification of sources in this study is adjusted to the background of the respondents, who come from two different backgrounds with different focuses on each short story. The reader's response in the short story *Topeng Gulur* focuses on the reader's response to implementing the *topeng gulur* dance as a rainmaking ritual. In contrast, the reader's response in the short story *Rokat Salera* focuses on implementing the traditional ritual ceremony *rokat salera* as a ritual to avoid bad things. The reader's response in the short story *Tambang Sapi Karapan* focuses on the depiction of the character of Suraksah with the character of Madurese society.

##### 3.1.1 Readers' Response to The Rainmaking Ritual in The Short Story *Topeng Gulur*.

Local wisdom is a combination of sacred values derived from God's teachings with values influenced by the geographical conditions of a region. As a cultural heritage of the past, local wisdom needs to be preserved and passed on sustainably. Although it grows in the local environment, these values remain relevant and can be applied in various contexts. Therefore, local wisdom reflects human wisdom rooted in philosophy, ethics, lifestyle, and behaviour that is passed down from generation to generation (Effendy, 2021). According to Ufie (in Pamenang, 2021), local wisdom is a characteristic of the nation that must be preserved and passed on to the next generation. One effective way to protect local wisdom is through education, where the local wisdom-based learning process teaches students to be more familiar with the conditions and phenomena around them.

*Topeng gulur* is a traditional performance art from Madura that functions as a gratitude ritual for the abundant harvest. This art is part of the cultural heritage of East Madura and develops in Larangan Barma Village, Batuputih District, Sumenep Regency. The uniqueness of this dance lies in the distinctive movement called *gulur*, which is the movement of dragging the body on the ground,

symbolizing the human relationship with God, the Giver of Sustenance, through the soil. *Topeng gulur* performances are usually held after the rainy season when crops are abundant and in the courtyard of a house called *tanean lanjhang*. The dance is performed by three people wearing red masks of tough characters, with red headbands, long black hair, and black vests as part of their costumes.

- Madurese respondents

The Madurese respondents interviewed thought that the *topeng gulur* ritual in the short story has a history that was originally rooted in animism and dynamism. However, if connected to the current reality, they feel that the ritual is better focused as a form of respect to the ancestors, even though the majority of Madurese are Muslims. This tradition may still be practised in some eastern areas of Madura, such as Sumenep, but in Pamekasan it is no longer done. Each region in Madura has its way of performing rainmaking rituals. For example, in the city area of Pamekasan, there is a ritual of wrestling between two people and burning incense led by a charmer while chanting mantras. Despite good intentions, one respondent argued that using dance in the *topeng gulur* ceremony to pray was unnatural. Nevertheless, he and other respondents stated that in most areas of Madura today, if there is a drought, people more often hold *istisqo* prayers.

- Outside Madura Respondents

Respondents outside Madura viewed the narrated *topeng gulur* ritual as part of a tradition passed down from generation to generation and an important element in Madurese culture. They are more interested in the cultural aspects and symbolism contained in the ritual, considering it a unique and interesting form of local wisdom expression. According to them, the use of *topeng gulur* in the rainmaking ritual is not something to be disputed, as every region has similar traditions with the same purpose. However, the myth of a long drought caused by an unwed pregnancy is considered absurd and irrelevant, given that the rainy and dry seasons are natural phenomena that occur cyclically. Nonetheless, the preservation of *topeng gulur* as a Madurese cultural heritage and traditional art is seen as important. Meanwhile, the practice of rainmaking by doing *istisqo* prayers is considered more in line with the teachings of Islam, which is embraced by the majority of Madurese people.

### 3.1.2 Readers' Response to Implementing the *Rokat Salera* Traditional Ceremony in The Short Story Entitled *Rokat Salera*.

Myths emerged in ancient societies to store their knowledge, as they did not yet have a written record system. Myths serve as life guidelines that provide direction and meaning for humans, helping them understand the origins and purpose of life. According to Lubis (2011), myths provide a frame of reference that allows humans to direct themselves in life. Meanwhile, Kartakusuma (in Nasrimi, 2021) states that although myths are irrational, they still have a rationale. As intelligent beings, every human cultural product, no matter how small, is born from ideas influenced by the environment in which they live.

One form of tradition influenced by myth is *rokat*, a traditional ceremony performed for various purposes, such as asking for blessings, rejecting lousy luck, or expressing gratitude. In Madura, several types of *rokat* have different meanings and purposes. *Rokat Bumi* aims to ask for soil fertility and abundant harvests, while fishermen perform *Rokat Tase* to ask for safety and a large catch. *Rokat Rumah* is held when a family member is sick or has suffered a disaster, and *Rokat Desa* is performed for the welfare of all villagers, such as warding off disease or disaster. As well as *Rokat Bhelioneh*, which aims to obtain the pleasure and grace of Allah SWT. Every *rokat* ceremony involves several essential elements. Prayer is the central core of asking for blessings and protection from God. Offerings in the form of food, drinks or other valuable objects are given as a symbol of devotion to God and ancestors. Traditional music and dance, such as tambourines and gongs, are often used to

accompany the procession. Each type of *rokat* has different rituals but generally includes a procession of prayers, the slaughter of sacrificial animals, and other rituals as a form of respect and supplication to the Almighty. Thus, *rokat* functions not only as a tradition but also as a manifestation of human relationships with nature, ancestors, and God based on beliefs and cultural values.

- Madurese respondents

Madurese respondents explained that the *rokat salera* ritual is not evenly practised throughout Madura, with different variations of rokat implementation in each region. In Pamekasan, the *rokat salera* ceremony is no longer performed, while *rokat tase'* (sea alms) still survives in coastal areas. In urban areas of Pamekasan, this tradition has disappeared, although in some other places in Madura, it may still take place. The people who still perform the *rokat salera* ritual are probably only a small group that still strongly holds the ancestral tradition. The essence of *rokat salera* is viewed positively as a form of gratitude for the birth of a baby. *Rokat salera* is considered part of the tradition and rituals of belief, but the myth that links facial resemblance to a sign of death is just an old belief shrouded in myth. The belief that facial resemblance between children can bring death if *rokat salera* is not performed is just a coincidence that is considered an ancestral heritage. Facial resemblance between children and parents is a natural phenomenon governed by genetic factors and has no logical connection with death. From a scientific point of view, the link between facial resemblance and adverse events is irrelevant, as death is more influenced by fate and other natural factors.

- Respondents Outside Madura

Although less familiar with the specific details of the *rokat salera* ritual, respondents from outside Madura recognized its similarity to Javanese traditions such as “banca'an”. Stories describing the belief in *rokat Salera*, which involves facial resemblance between children and parents as a way to avoid calamity or death, raised concerns among them regarding potential polytheistic interpretations. They considered that attributing facial resemblance to bad events tends to approach polytheism and contradicts the concept of God's will in religious teachings. Most respondents stated that facial resemblance is a natural result of genetics, and the myths about the adverse effects of not performing the *rokat salera* ritual were considered absurd. As an alternative, they suggested that the *rokat salera* ritual could be replaced by the tradition of *toron tana*. This Madurese ritual welcomes the birth of a baby by introducing the baby to the ground for the first time, similar to *Tedak Siten* in Java, which aims to pray for the child's safety. Despite the many myths accompanying this practice, *rokat salera* remains vital to Madurese cultural heritage. They propose that this ritual be immortalized in written form to preserve traditional cultural values.

### 3.1.3 Readers' Response to The Portrayal of Suraksah's Character in The Short Story *Tambang Sapi Karapan* with The Character of Madurese Society.

There are various social stigmas against the Madurese community, such as assumptions about their background and the violence that seems to characterize them. Many describe Madurese society and culture with an attitude that seems harsh, easily using violence or weapons to solve problems (Azizah et al., 2023). Madurese is often perceived as easily offended, suspicious of others, having an explosive temper, vengeful, and prone to violence (Dartiningsih, 2015). However, this view is not entirely accurate. Like other tribes, Madurese also exhibits polite, courteous, appreciative and respectful attitudes that are reflected in their thoughts, attitudes and actions.

- Madurese respondents

Suraksah's character in the story *Tambang Sapi Karapan* reflects some aspects of Madurese cultural identity, as recognized by Madurese respondents. They stated that the depiction of certain traits, such as the rough tone of voice due to the Madurese accent, as well as the emphasis on self-

esteem and the importance of keeping promises, are traditional values of Madurese society. The tradition of *karapan sapi* was also recognized as an integral part of their culture. However, respondents underlined that the story does not fully reflect the nature and social dynamics that develop in Madura. For example, the practice of arranged marriages and early marriages, once common, is now on the wane as social norms change and access to education increases. Also, while patriarchy was once a prominent feature, women's role in decision-making is now more respected, especially in certain areas such as Sumenep.

- Respondents Outside Madurese

Respondents from outside Madura generally viewed Suraksah as a firm but rigid figure with traits such as irritability, stubbornness, and high self-confidence. Some respondents, based on personal experience, recounted their encounters with Madurese who exhibited similar traits, such as arrogance and unwillingness to admit mistakes. However, they emphasized that Suraksah's character does not fully reflect today's Madurese, who is more open-minded and less mystical. Therefore, Suraksah's character cannot be considered a fully representative picture of the nature of Madurese society today.

### 3.2 Discussion

#### 3.2.1 The Implementation of Juss's Seven Theses in The Short Stories *Topeng Gulur*, *Rokat Salera*, And *Tambang Sapi Karapan*

- Thesis One

Jauss emphasizes the significance of the reader's horizon of expectations, shaped by social, cultural, and historical factors. This was evident in the contrasting responses of Madurese and non-Madurese readers. Madurese respondents, with their intimate knowledge of local traditions, readily understood the cultural nuances embedded within the stories, particularly regarding rituals like *topeng gulur* and *rokat salera*. In contrast, non-Madurese readers, lacking this direct experience, perceived these rituals as unique cultural phenomena, recognizing them as part of Madurese heritage. Similarly, the portrayal of Madurese characters in *Tambang Sapi Karapan*, while resonating with some Madurese respondents, was viewed with varying degrees of accuracy by those from outside the region. Some non-Madurese readers perceived the character of Suraksah as a reflection of negative stereotypes about Madurese people, highlighting the influence of pre-existing biases on their interpretation.

- Thesis Two

Jauss highlights the influence of the historical moment on reader expectations. In this study, the readers' prior knowledge of Madurese culture significantly influenced their expectations. Madurese respondents, with their existing knowledge of local traditions, anticipated encountering familiar cultural values and philosophies within the stories. In contrast, non-Madurese readers approached the stories with a desire to gain a deeper understanding of Madurese culture and its unique rituals.

- Thesis Three

Jauss' concept of aesthetic distance emphasizes the interaction between the reader's expectations and the literary work itself. Madurese respondents, due to their cultural proximity, experienced a smaller aesthetic distance, finding it easier to connect with the story and identify themselves with the characters and situations. In contrast, non-Madurese readers, who had no direct experience with the traditions depicted, experienced greater aesthetic distance. This requires them to engage more actively with the text, seeking additional information and context to fully appreciate the cultural nuances.

- Thesis Four

Jauss emphasizes the influence of the "spirit of the times" on reader responses. This study observed how contemporary values and perspectives influenced the readers' interpretations. Madurese respondents, while appreciating the cultural significance of the rituals, also expressed concerns about the relevance of certain beliefs in the modern context. Meanwhile, non-Madurese readers viewed the stories as insights into a past cultural landscape. For instance, some questioned the rationale behind performing rituals like *topeng gulur* or *rokat salera* in the face of modern scientific explanations and technological advancements.

- Thesis Five

Jauss's fifth thesis emphasizes that a reader's personal experiences influence their interpretation of a text. This was evident in the diverse range of responses observed within each group of respondents. While some Madurese respondents readily identified with the cultural portrayal, others expressed reservations about certain aspects of the stories. Similarly, non-Madurese readers, despite their shared lack of direct experience, demonstrated varying degrees of engagement and appreciation for the cultural elements presented.

- Thesis Six

Jauss emphasizes the importance of examining literary works in their historical and social contexts. This research reveals a significant shift in cultural practices, particularly regarding rituals such as *rokat salera*, which is no longer widely practised in many areas of Madura. Madurese respondents were well aware of these changes and acknowledged the evolution of religious and social norms within their community. Non-Madurese readers, while recognizing the historical significance of these rituals, emphasized the importance of preserving these rituals as part of Madurese cultural heritage, even if only as performing arts or literary subjects. Tambang Sapi Karapan also highlights shifts in gender expectations, where the patriarchal dominance seen in the story contrasts with increasing equality in contemporary Madurese society.

- Thesis Seven

Jauss argues that literature can play a significant role in shaping social understanding and behaviour. This was evident in the responses of some non-Madurese readers. By encountering the unfamiliar world of Madurese culture through the short stories, they gained a new perspective on cultural diversity and the importance of preserving local traditions. He reinforces the idea that literature can either challenge or perpetuate cultural perceptions.

The results of this study show that literature can mediate cultural understanding and challenge stereotypes. The depiction of the ritual and purpose of *topeng gulur* in the short story itself and the reader's response to it reflect social changes that lead to a stricter application of religious teachings. Preserving this ritual as a performing art can be a bridge between cultural heritage and modern values, encouraging an appreciation of culture without contradicting prevailing religious beliefs. The difference between the depiction of *topeng gulur* in the short story and the reality shows that rituals like this can be a rich source for exploring cultural identity. Preserving the ritual practice every harvest season can maintain its existence as a cultural heritage. In addition, making it a performing art and elevating it in literature can increase its appeal, so that more people know and appreciate Madurese culture.

The survival of myths reflects the strong influence of traditional beliefs despite changes toward more rational and religious thinking. Integrating cultural education about these rituals can foster respect for cultural heritage while encouraging a critical attitude toward the myths behind them. Written documentation of *rokat salera* can help improve cultural literacy and prevent the loss of intangible cultural heritage. Among the various *rokat* ceremonies known and performed by the Madurese community, *rokat salera* is a ritual that is rarely found. Based on the storyline and

procedures, *rokat salera* is similar to a combination of *Rokat Desa* and *Rokat Rumah*. It is also possible that *rokat salera* is only performed by small groups of Madurese in remote areas, so it is not widely known by the wider community.

This characterization provides an understanding of how identities are constructed and how stereotypes are reinforced. Although Suraksah's portrayal is in line with Madurese cultural values that emphasize pride, loyalty, and the importance of *karapan sapi*, the shift towards gender equality and personal independence reflects a significant social evolution. Madurese respondents acknowledged these traits but rejected generalizations, noting that gender roles have changed and arranged marriages are becoming less common due to the influence of modern education. Meanwhile, non-Madurese respondents attributed Suraksah's rigidity and temper to stereotypes they had encountered firsthand, although they also recognized that such portrayals did not fully represent reality. The role of literature in reinforcing or challenging stereotypes emphasizes the importance of more nuanced narratives to reflect the current state of society and encourage critical reflection on cultural representations.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on data analysis through research and interviews that have been conducted, it is found that the responses of Madurese respondents and respondents outside Madura have their critical angles. Madurese respondents' responses to the short stories of *Topeng Gulur* and *Rokat Salera* show that they believe *topeng gulur* and *rokat salera* are rituals that have existed from the time of the Madurese ancestors long before they knew Islam. However, implementing the two rituals in the present is rarely done. This is due to the advancement of the times that affected the development of technology and the arrival of Islam to the island of Madura, making the two ceremonies slowly begin to be abandoned. Then, respondents' responses to the short story *Tambang Sapi Karapan* showed the pros and cons simultaneously. They agreed that Suraksah's character showed more or less the character of Madurese but disagreed if this depiction was generalized. Meanwhile, respondents outside Madura argued that the rituals in the short stories *Topeng Gulur* and *Rokat Salera* are typical Madurese rituals that exist in other areas but have different names and processes. However, the reasons for doing them are more or less the same. Meanwhile, according to respondents outside Madura, Suraksah's character in the short story *Tambang Sapi Karapan* is based on existing stereotypes plus the experiences of several respondents involved in conflict with Madurese.

Readers' responses to Muna Masyari's three short stories may vary due to differences in social, cultural, historical, and environmental backgrounds. The diversity of readers' responses to a literary text emphasizes that the text is not fixated on a single meaning. In literature, readers are free to interpret the text from various points of view. This allows the reader to determine a particular point of view and meaning when interpreting the text. This research also reveals that the purpose of the *topeng gulur* ritual, in reality, is different from that depicted in the short story, and *rokat salera* is a ritual that is not commonly performed by the Madurese community at large. Possibly, the ceremony is only performed by a small group of people in remote areas.

For future research, it is recommended to involve more diverse participants, such as students from other universities or the general public, to obtain a broader perspective. The use of combined methods, including large-scale questionnaires, can strengthen the qualitative analysis. In addition, expanding the time coverage with a diachronic approach can help understand changes in readers' perceptions across generations. Further research could also include more or other short stories from *Martabat Kematian* and *Rokat Tase'* to provide a deeper insight into Muna Masyari's work. Researchers are also advised to further examine the narrative purpose of the difference in ritual

meaning between fact and fiction in the short stories to understand the dynamics of Madurese culture more comprehensively.

## REFERENCES

- Anton, S. (2012, November 1). *Sastra Madura: dari Lisan sampai Modern*. Lontar Madura. <https://www.lontarmadura.com/sastra-madura-dari-lisan-sampai-modern/>
- Azhar, I. N. (2013). MEMBICARAKAN SASTRA MADURA: DARI POTENSI, REALITA, DAN HARAPAN. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Bahasa Ibu*, 2–7.
- Azizah, M. N., Hazin, M., & Mariyam, S. (2023). Analisis Komparatif Stereotip Budaya Madura Oleh Etnik Jawa Di Desa Jaddung Pamekasan. *Meyarsa: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Dan Dakwah*, 4(1), 3. <https://doi.org/10.19105/meyarsa.v4i1.7513>
- Backman, M. (2023). The Gaps in Our Stars : The Fault in Our Stars and Reader-response Theory in the Swedish EFL Classroom (Dissertation). Retrieved from <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:lnu:diva-126958>
- Dartiningsih, B. E. (2015). *Madura : masyarakat, budaya, media, dan politik* (Surokim, Ed.; pp. 22–28). Puskakom Publik.
- Elpariani, S. R., Hermawan, S., & Alfianti, D. (2022). REPRESENTASI PEREMPUAN MADURA DALAM CERPEN-CERPEN KARYA MUNA MASYARI MADURESE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN MUNA MASYARI'S SHORT STORIES. 5(1).
- Goodwin, B. (2016). SECOND STAR ON THE RIGHT AND STRAIGHT ON 'TIL MORNING: THE RECEPTION OF J.M BARRIE PETER PAN (Thesis). Retrieved from <https://twu-ir.tdl.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/0cc31746-aa97-43d7-b67e-cf8e5ff6ada6/content>
- Hartanto, E. C. S., & Roifah, M. (2020). MADURESE WOMEN AND BINDING CULTURE IN MUNA MASYARI'S MARTABAT KEMATIAN: GYNOCRITICISM ANALYSIS. *HUMANIKA*, 27, 156. <http://ejournal.undip.ac.id/index.php/humanika>
- Intan, T. (2019). LE PETIT PRINCE KARYA ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY DALAM TANGGAPAN DAN HORIZON HARAPAN PEMBACA (Le Petit Prince of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in Readers' Response and Horizon Hope). *Kandai*, 15(1), 89. <https://doi.org/10.26499/jk.v15i1.873>
- Kalidin, F. (2024, July 2). *Sastra Madura Modern: Cerkas dan Puisi - Review Buku Lawas*. <https://ifaikahkalidin.com/sastra-madura-modern-cerkas-dan-puisi-review-buku-lawas/>
- Pradopo, R. D. (2020). *Beberapa Teori Sastra, Metode Kritik, dan Penerapannya* (Puput, Ed.). Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Putri, W., Mursalim, & Dahlan, D. (2020). TANGGAPAN REMAJA DI SAMARINDA TERHADAP NOVEL POPULER JINGGA DAN SENJA KARYA ESTI KINASIH: KAJIAN RESEPSI SASTRA (Vol. 4).
- Saputri, D. N. G., Wijaya, D. W., Huda, M., Bahasa, P., & Indonesia, S. (2015). BUDAYA PADA NOVEL MEMANG JODOH DAN SITI NURBAYA KARYA MARAH RUSLI SERTA TRADISI PERNIKAHAN MINANGKABAU: PERSPEKTIF KAJIAN SASTRA BANDINGAN. 184.

- Syamsuddin, M. (2019). *History Of Madura Sejarah, Budaya, dan Ajaran Luhur Masyarakat Madura* (Kafabillah-Nayantaka, Ed.). Araska Publisher.  
[https://books.google.co.id/books/about/History\\_Of\\_Madura\\_Sejarah\\_Budaya\\_dan\\_Aja.html?id=14r\\_ygEACAAJ&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.co.id/books/about/History_Of_Madura_Sejarah_Budaya_dan_Aja.html?id=14r_ygEACAAJ&redir_esc=y)
- Yudin, J. (2023). HORIZON HARAPAN PADA NOVEL WISANGGENI: SEBUAH TINJAUAN AWAL RESEPSI SASTRA. *Estetika*, 5(1), 12. <https://doi.org/10.36379/estetika.v5i1>