

Rahman Shaari's Insights in Improving the Political Reality of Malaysia: A Realism Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Literary works have long played a significant role in reflecting and critiquing the political realities of societies worldwide. This intricate relationship between literature and politics reveals critical insights into power structures, societal dynamics, and political ideologies that shape nations. Therefore, this study explores how literature can contribute to improving the political realities of the nations. This is a qualitative study. Content analysis is based on Lukács' theory of realism in his four renowned works (1963, 1978, 1989, 1990), focusing on the works of Malaysia's National Laureate, Rahman Shaari, *Pernikahan di Lubuk Hantu* (2008), *Semoga Molek* (2012), and *Cengkaman Hasrat* (2015). The findings reveal that Rahman Shaari, as a realist writer, places significant emphasis on critiquing and addressing the negative aspects of political activities that harm society while offering constructive recommendations for creating a stable, democratic, and humanistic political reality. His insights on leaders' inefficiency, the belittlement of women, negative political trends involving incitements, and the importance of selecting leaders wisely underscore his commitment to improving Malaysia's political reality. These novels exemplify the dual approach of critique and recommendation characteristic of realist literature, as emphasized by Lukács (1963, 1978, 1989, 1990). Rahman Shaari's contributions provide valuable critiques and foster meaningful guidance for improving Malaysia's political landscape. This study concludes that his literary works significantly benefit societal life and positively shape Malaysia's political reality.

Keywords: *Literary works, political, Lukács theory of realism, Rahman Shaari, societal life.*

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between literature and politics is intricate and significant, as literary works often mirror political realities, offering critical insights into power structures, societal dynamics, and political ideologies that shape a nation (Barus et al., 2023; Oturgasheva, 2022). As explained by Nie and Zawawi (2023), political institutions rely on the mediatization of politics in their operations. This interplay underscores the broader relationship between literature as a form of media and politics, highlighting its profound and multifaceted impact. This is further emphasized by Lukács (1989), who explained that literature, especially in the realist tradition, functions as artistic expression and a tool for political engagement. Writers have long used literature to comment on, critique, and even influence the political landscapes of their times. By capturing a given period's social and political conditions, literary works can challenge the status quo, provoke dialogue, and encourage reflection on political systems and power relations (Khadafi, 2022; Udovič et al., 2023). For instance, Niccolò Machiavelli's *Il Principe* (The Prince) offers practical advice to rulers on acquiring and retaining power through manipulation, deception, and realpolitik (Jelahut et al., 2023). Similarly, in 1984, George Orwell critiques totalitarian regimes and how political authorities manipulate language and truth to control the masses (Rose, 2022). In *Das Kapital*, Karl Marx critiques

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