MEDANESE NOVEL: HISTORY OF LITERATURES
IN MEDAN CITY (1930—1965)

ROMAN MEDAN: SEJARAH KARYA SASTRA DI KOTA MEDAN
(1930—1965)

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Abstract
This study aims to explain the history of the Medanese novels chronologically, starting from the development of the Medanese novels in the Dutch colonialism period to the old order, and the impact of Medanese novels to people in Medan. The sources of data are Medanese novels published from 1930 to 1965. Method used in this study was historic method studied through four stages as follows: (1) heuristic (to collect sources); (2) verification of data (to test validity of data); (3) interpretation; (4) historiography (writing). The data were analyzed by diachronic approach as a method in the length of time, but limited in space. The results of this study indicated that development of Medanese novels in Dutch colony time (from 1912 to 1942) experienced speedily progressing. Medanese novels were on its peak in 1930, until the term flood of romance emerged which was marked by the number of romances published. Medanese novels could compete against novels published by Balai Pustaka, a publisher previously established by the government of the Dutch colonialism. However, at time of the Japanese occupation (from 1942 to 1945), the Medanese novels experienced decreasing, even lost from distribution, and from early independence (from 1945 to 1950) to old order (from 1950 to 1966), the Medanese novels raised again, but the existence was unlike the previous. Moreover, the Medanese novels writing had impacts on social life in Medan, such as politic, education, social, and culture.

Keywords: Medanese novels, history, literature, Medan

Abstrak
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan sejarah perkembangan roman Medan secara kronologis, yang dimulai dari perkembangan roman Medan pada masa kolonial Belanda hingga orde lama, serta dampak penulisan roman Medan bagi masyarakat kota Medan. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah roman Medan terbitan tahun 1930—1965. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini, yaitu metode sejarah yang dikaji melalui empat tahapan, meliputi (1) heuristik (pengumpulan sumber); (2) verifikasi data (menguji keabsahan sumber); (3) interpretasi (penafsiran); (4) historiografi (penulisan). Adapun analisis data menggunakan pendekatan diakronis yang merupakan suatu pendekatan yang memanjang dalam waktu, tetapi secara ruang terbatas. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perkembangan roman Medan pada masa kolonial Belanda (1912—1942) mengalami kemajuan yang begitu pesat. Roman Medan berada di puncak kejayaannya pada tahun 1930 hingga muncul istilah banjir roman yang ditandai dengan banyaknya roman yang terbit. Secara kuantitas roman Medan mampu bersaing dengan roman terbitan Balai Pustaka yang merupakan penerbit buku yang telah didirikan terlebih dahulu oleh pemerintah Belanda. Akan tetapi, pada masa pendudukan Jepang (1942—1945) roman Medan mengalami kemunduran bahkan hilang dari pendaran, dan pada masa awal kemerdekaan (1945—1950) hingga masa Orde Lama (1950—1966), roman Medan bangkit kembali, tetapi ekistensinya tidak seperti dahulu. Selain itu, penulisan roman Medan ini memiliki dampak terhadap kehidupan masyarakat Medan di antaranya dalam bidang politik, pendidikan,
INTRODUCTION

Novel is a literature of prose form, telling an event or mental and spiritual experience of figures in specific time. Novel has typical characteristic, which may be attractive to readers. Lubis (2018, pp. 21--22) examines that novel, which is one of the literary works, is a characteristic of Indonesian literature. That it is not surprising as a large nation, Indonesian people have wide and rich resources of book readings. Novels were growing rapidly in the east of Sumatera during the Dutch colonialism era. It was indicated by the establishment of several publishers which were used as the centers for the production and dissemination of literary works and the number of books published in Malay in the Medan city (Sayekti, 2011, p. 734). Novels developed in Medan are mentioned as Medanese novel. This mention was certainly caused by novels published and printed in Medan. Medanese novel is typical characteristic of literature in Medan, which are usually telling situations in daily life of the people in Medan. Moreover, stories written in Medanese novel are very supportive for struggling of the common and anti-colonial people, so that many people in Medan are attractive to this literature. The presence of Medanese novel was inseparable enforcement of ethical politics in Indonesia. Ethical politics established by the Dutch affected development of educational world in Indonesia, both western and specific educations for native people. However, there was discrimination in the process of implementing education during the ethical politics period, such as the education system and special educational facilities and infrastructure for the native people were not the same as the aristocratic people. Nevertheless, the native people still made use of the available educational facilities, to be able to escape from the clutching power of the Dutch colonial government (Sayekti, 2011, p. 733).

One of the ways carried out by the educated native people in Medan was to write Medanese novels. By writing Medanese novels, the educated people and writers could express how the situation in Medan city at the time was. It would be expected to be able to change opinion and increase knowledge of people on nationalism interest in dealing with politics interest of the Dutch colony government. The Dutch did not only dominate Indonesia in economics, but they also tried to dominate Indonesia in cultural aspect, especially literacy.

This work of Medanese novel is different from other works as imagined by people who assume that novels usually contain a writing packaged in love stories of the young generation. However, the Medanese novel also generated nationalism spirit and anti-colonialism enthusiasm by its content. It occurred because most of the Medanese novel authors were groups of young people who actively moved and had anti-colonialism enthusiasm.

Medanese novels, in the development, experienced a glory time from 1930 to 1940 that there was a term flood of novels. It can be seen from the number of published novels, namely in one month, there were 15 novels, in one year, there were 180 novels, and in five years, there were 900 novels (Umry, 2016, p. 121). Even, Medanese novels printed by all private printing companies could compete against books published by Balai Pustaka, which was a publisher established on 14th September 1908 by the Dutch colonialism to distribute books throughout Indonesia (Yudiono, 2007, pp. 66--67). However, during the Japanese occupation (1942—1945), Medanese novels experienced decreasing, even discontinuing, but the Medanese novels raised again from 1947 to 1965. Medanese novels had great impact in the
people of Medan city, such as in aspects of politics, education, social and culture. According to Sayekti (2011, p. 735) some works of Medanese novels showed themes of movements so that these resulted in nationalism feeling. Some of the nationalism forms found in the works were participation by the figures in works of Medanese novels in political organizations existing at the time. Moreover, these were not only entertaining readings, but they also helped to maintain Malayan identity. The works of Medanese novel were found having strong potentials for literature that could describe what nationalism and anti-colonialism enthusiasm developed by the writers. However, a study on Medanese novels is difficult to find now. Along with time running, the Medanese novel, which had experienced the glory, will disappear and be forgotten.

Studies on Medanese novels are still relatively limited. One of writings to study Medanese novel is a work by Sayekti (2011) titled “Nationalism Feeling in Medanese novel”, containing study on Medanese novel, which was a work by authors in the early time of independence. Medanese novel contains efforts to generate dynamics of nationalism feeling through a literature work. However, this study has not described details of development process of Medanese novel so that it generated the nationalism feeling.

Umry (2016) in his book titled Literature Wave, Contextual Study, paid attention at study on Medanese novel. The book describes process of periodic publishing of various literature books, including publication of Medanese novel pioneered by Pustaka Islam in Medan. A study by Shafwan Hadi Umry also pays attention at process of Medanese novel publishing, but the background of its appearance seems ignored.

The last work that was specifically discussing about Medanese novels was Koko Hendri Lubis’s work titled Medanese novel, a City to Develop Expectation. This work focuses on novel contribution to culture, main figure behind the novel writing, and cause of Medanese novel disappearance along worth time running. However, it has not been able to give general picture on impact of Medanese novels in political, education, social, and cultural aspects. It gives space for follow-up research on Medanese novels, especially general picture of impact of Medanese novel writing on the people of Medan city.

Overall, studies on Medanese novel by researchers showed tendency of the researchers to study process of Medanese novel publication and figures involved in the writing of Medanese novel. Moreover, the researchers also widely focused on generation of nationalism feeling contained in the writing of Medanese novel, so that it tended to ignore studies explaining details of background of Medanese novel writing with chronological concept, that could describe history of Medanese novel starting from the early time of appearance, development to end chronologically and systematically.

Based on the background, the researchers are very interested in studying history of literature works in Medan city, especially Medanese novel as a symbol of literature glory and cultural legacy in Medan city from 1930 to 1965. The selection of the Medanese novels period from 1930 to 1965 aims to find out the development of Medanese novels history systematically and chronologically, which began in 1930 coinciding with the period of the Dutch colonialism. It continued the development of Medanese novels during the Japanese occupation (1942—1945), early time of Indonesia independence (1945—1950), up to the old order (1950—1966), which was the end of Medanese novels published to markets. Furthermore, it describes the impact of Medanese novel writing on the people of Medan city.

**METHOD**

Method used in this study was historic method studied in four stages as follows (1) heuristic stage (to collect data). The primary data source of this research were Medanese novels published in 1930 to 1965 obtained through observation at the Mandailing North Sumatera Culture Documentation and Information Center on 6th—8th March 2018 and a history seminar and Medanese novels exhibition held by The Historical Education Department of Medan.
State University on 31st March 2018. Medanese novels used as samples of this research were selected based on the published year around 1930–1965, which became the focus of this research. Through the observation, the collected Medanese novels from these two locations were: “Roman Medan Bibir jang Mengandoen Ratjoen” (written by Joesoef Sou’yb, 1938); “Roman Medan Document Rahsia” (written by D.I. Lubis, 1941); “Roman Medan Tan Malaka di Kota Medan” (written by Emnast, 1941); “Roman Medan Roeh Bertjerita” (written by Joesoef Sou’yb, 1941); “Roman Medan Pulang dari Tawanan” (written by Zalecha, 1948); “Roman Medan Djiwa Pemuda” (written by A.A. Musa, 1948); “Roman Medan Gadis Motor Djiepp”, (written by Zalecha, 1948); “Roman Medan Logas” (written by Joesoef Sou’yb, 1949); “Roman Medan Djantan Deli” (written by Miranda’s, 1955); “Roman Medan Rol Komplotan dalam Merubah Negara” (written by Gubalo, 1955); “Roman Medan Djagoan Ketiil dari Tembung” (written by P. M. Rashi, 1961); (2) stage of data verification, namely a process to test validity of sources that had been found through two stages, namely to test authenticity of sources conducted by internal critics, moreover, the verified data were classified according to topics of problems to study. The data verification process validated with the previous research data and confirmed by interviewees, such as historians, litterateur, or cultural practitioners in Medan with the results of interviews about the history of Medanese novels; (3) stage of data interpretation or stage of interpretation, namely a process to study facts of historic sources to be one meaning unit. Finally, historic facts having the meaning were written integrally in a narration, based on the obtained data; and (4) stage of historography (to write history), namely a process to study (re reconstruct) the historic facts. Where the writing of history was not only descriptive but also explanatory, namely deeper writing in order that a study could be understood well so that finally the responded answers could be answered well (Sjamsuddin, 2012 p. 86).

Whereas technique of data analysis used by the researchers in analyzing study on history of this literature work utilized diachronic approach that is a long-time approach, but a limited space. The writing of literature work using this diachronic approach was conducted by prioritizing the process so that there were efforts to see events of literature work history, especially Medanese novel, of point of view of time interval focusing on Medanese novels published in 1930—1965. This diachronic approach analyzed the evolution of time so that it widely emphasized on change from past times vertically (Sulasman, 2014, pp. 26–27).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the obtained result based on the research question previously formulated at the end of the introduction section.

Early Writing of Medanese Novel

Growth of literature works in Medan city was inseparable from application of ethical politics policy, namely in education (learning), conducted by the government of Dutch colonialism. The ethical politics programs in education initially made to meet the needs of the Dutch government, which would provide low wage qualifications. However, since the opening of various types of schools, it had welcomed a wider community to obtain reading and writing skills. (Zaidan, 2005, p. 164). Furthermore, through their skills in reading and writing, it was used by the community to establish various organizations for nationalism movements resulting in growth of nationalism enthusiasm and curiosity to self-release from colonization. It was reinforced by opinion of Aiyub (2000, p. 29-30), describing that education is one most important support factor for literature survival in a society because the ability to write literature works only owned by the educated people so that they could write and read.

In time of Dutch colonialism, with publications of books and literature works, name of Balai Pustaka was not strange. Balai Pustaka alone had a best position in the government of Dutch colonialism because it was a reading institution that was quite persistent in publishing novels, short stories, and poetries during
the Dutch colonialism. Furthermore, the books that would be published by the Balai Pustaka were selected previously by the gubernemen of Dutch (Lubis, 2018, p. 14). Therefore, compared to the novels published by Balai Pustaka, Medanese novel seemed like wild readings and also assumed as cheap reading because the Medanese novel had channel different from other novels. Kratz (2000, pp. 82--83) said that criticism of the Medanese novels as wild reading was very reasonable to be done by the gubernemen of Dutch, because it could destroy the existence of the Medanese novels.

Although it was called as wild and cheap readings, it did not reduce enthusiasm of authors and writers to show their ability to write and try to grow nationalism feeling and anti-colonialism through a writing of literature such as Medanese novel, packaged in love story (Sudarmoko, 2009, p. 29). Medanese novel functioned as organization of people’s struggle, to resist colonization through literature writing.

Typical characteristic to be attraction of Medanese novel is the theme that could illustrate condition of Medan and its society at the time. Lubis (2018, p. 81) explained that:

Medanese novel is a part of *melting pot* of Indonesian culture. Medanese novel is also an alternative filter against foreign culture. Its content is record of daily condition of Medan people with night club background, bookstore, art building, private office, and village situation with dense population. The author spoke of unemployed men with disappointment or women without empowerment due to their partners were by others. In context of Medanese novel, it could be said that imagination of author could be inseparable from factual reality. Few stories were reflection and experience of author observing events growing in the society. Reflection and experiences of author in observing the events could be really seen in the works.

The number of Medanese novel themes in Medan such as romance, drama, detective, tragedy, or horror made many people interested in this reading, especially lower-class community due to most of the novels highly supported them. As explained by Wardani (2019, p. 216) that fiction in folktales was associated with telling many figures of rabbles tended to be loved by readers. Background of organization of the young people who were active in movement, writers of Medanese novel were not afraid of criticizing the government of Dutch colonialism. Compared to novels published by Balai Pustaka that had to be sorted previously by the *gubernemen* of Dutch (Lubis, 2018, p. 14), Medanese novel was a literature work that was free to express opinion because this novel was published and printed by private publishers in Medan.

As if to compete with Balai Pustaka, the writers of Medanese novels became more persistent to publish their works. Most themes of Medanese novel such as tendentious novel (novel in which the writing had specific goal), historical novel, community novel, detective novel, custom novel, and pulp novel (novel that was found not quality) packaged interestingly in the stories, and it produced results, namely preference of Medanese novel books in Indonesian society, even reaching the foreign country, namely Malaysia. As result of many Medanese novels published at the time, there was term *flood of novels* and it was reinforced by Sapardi Djoko Damono’s work titled *flood of novels*.

### Main Figures in Writing Medanese Novel

The existence of Medanese novels, which had been known by the wider community, was inseparable from the figures behind the writing of the novels. They had produced several works that could be enjoyed by all people from various classes of society. The following are main figures in the writing of Medanese novel:

**Joesoef Sou’yb**

Joesoef Sou’yb was a main local figure and columnist who had been well-known as an author of Medanese novels. He was born on 14th July 1916 in Maninjau. He started his education in *volkschool* (public school) in Bayur, Maninjau, from 1922 to 1924, and then he moved to *gouvernementschool* which was state school in Langsa, Aceh. It started from 1925 to 1927. Joesoef went to Sumatera Thawalib school from
1928 to 1930 in Padang Panjang. Finally, he was registered as a student of Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah Candung in Bukit Tinggi from 1931 to 1935 (Lubis, 2018, p. 47).

According to Amin (2015, pp. 98--99) said that Joesoef Sou’yb profession started his career as journalist in 1939. He started writing news, comments, articles, scientific works in various newspapers, magazines, bulletins in other printing media. That being success as a reporter and journalist allowed him to lead many publishers in Medan, such as Doenia Pengalaman, Loekisan Poedjangga, Penoentoen Poedjangga, Minggoean Bintang, Waktoe dan Warta Berita, and Harian Lembaga.

Joesoef Sou’yb experiences in case of showing results of works in writing was not only due to his works similar to printing world, but also Joesoef Sou’yb existed in an atmosphere that was very warm in relation to correspondence in prose form, even he was also included in set of figure names introducing Medan with his pulp novels or Medanese novel from 1938 to 1940. He could survive from results of works because his books or pulp novels were loved in this archipelago, even overseas. Joesoef Sou’yb was included in one of novel writing pioneer figures in Medan in 1930 whose works were highly loved by the people in Indonesia and other country, namely Malaysia.

Abdoe’l Xarim M.S.
A Medanese novels writer who stands out in politics, Abdoe’l Xarim M.S, was born in Idi, East Aceh, on 18th June 1901. He graduated from kweekschool (teacher education school) and he was tekenaar opnemer (draftsman and measurer), he was BOW (Public Work Department) employee in Langsa from 1914 and he was active in political movement since 1918. He ever became a manager of newspaper editorial of Hindia Sepakat in 1922 in Sibolga. After that, he moved to be a manager of Utusan Rakyat newspaper and he was the branch manager of Sarekat Islam Merah (Sarekat Rakyat) in Langsa in 1923.

In one year later, he became branch manager of Indonesain Communist Party in Langsa. After he was arrested by Netherlands many times due to his activities, he decided to move to Medan in 1932. During in Medan, he was continuously active in politics and he published periodic publication named Penjebar and he made small publishing enterprise named Aneka. His first novel titled Pandoe Anak Boengan was published alone via Aneka Medan. The story of novel contained live of an activist trying to resist social gap. In his novel writing, he criticized colonial system he found fettering all small people (Lubis, 2018, pp. 50--51).

Surapati
In his book, Lubis (2018, p. 53) explained that M. Saleh Oemar was an author of Medanese novel that was phenomenal. Novel work by M. Saleh Oemar characterized description of important part on people who were lonely, full ironic, and trapped in bad social system. M. Saleh Oemar was more popular as name Surapati. He was born in Pangkalan Brandan on 29th March 1909.

Surapati went to school for five years in vervolgschool (advanced public school) in Tanjung Pura. His talent in journalistic had seemed clear. He ever participated in publishing Soeara Islam magazine and then he made apprenticeship and became correspondent in Oetoesan Soematera. Surapati was a wanderer. He had habit to adventure to find buried materials for his works. Although his works were of detective themes, but he also ever wrote political novel. It signed his wide vision.

Matu Mona
Original name of Matu Mona is Hasbullah Parindoeri. Matu Mona, in Mandailing discussion, means baru mulai (just starting). He was born on 21st June 1910 in Kasawan, Matu Mona was a most intelligent student in lesson of Geography in St. Anthony International School, Medan. Because he was interested in journalistic in high enthusiasm, he became author and journalist. Matu Mona became important because most of his works were inspired by locality aspects. Notes of his journey and experiences in various places in Medan city were his typical characteristics in his works. He did not only write Medanese novels, but also, he
was a journalist of *Pewarta Deli* newspaper, the writer of historic figure writer, film review, and drama.

**Development of Medanese Novels**

The development of Medanese novels rapidly increased in the Dutch colonialism era. However, Medanese novels also had experience falling, especially during the Japanese occupation in Indonesia, which caused the production process of the novels to stop temporarily. Then they revived in 1947 until 1965. The history of the development would be explained completely in these following paragraphs:

**Development of Medanese Novels in the Time of Dutch Colonialism (1912–1942)**

Development of Medanese novels in the time of Dutch colonialism (1912–1942) increased significantly. As cited by Sapardi Djoko Damono (Zaidan, 2005, p. 163) stating that:

Reader may think: 15 novels are published in one month, 12 x 15 = 180 novels are published in one year, zegge one hundred and eighty novels … Nine hundred novels are published in five years…. *Amboi*, it will erect readers’ fuzz, it seems to be modern *julo-julo*, when there is money, Medanese novels are produced. Medanese novels have been sources of falseness and flood of money (Zaidan, 2005, p. 165).

The quote indicates that writers were very apprehensive about *banjir roman* (flood of novels), production of mass of short novels in the time of Dutch colonialism government. Quantity of Medanese novels experiencing increase so speedily were inseparable from desire to make works and love literature works and high spirit to increase local publications that so far, they were buried, could not be limited.

In 1939, there was monthly novel publisher named *Loekisan Poedjangga* produced by *Tjerdas* publisher. Then it was followed by *Indische Drukkrij* and *N. V. Sjarikat Tapanuli* in Medan. Generation of books of Medanese novels were widely criticized in reason indicating that works of Medanese novels did not have educational characteristics, even the writers were criticized as falseness because their stories told detective, crime, thief, and murder like work by Joesoef Sou’yb (Amin, 2015, p. 99).

The following are some Medanese novels published in the time of Dutch colonialism:

**Medanese Novel titled Bibir jang Mengandoeng Ratjoen, by Joesoef Sou’yb (1938)**

This novel tells an event of murdering performed by a painter as result of his love story. The following is short quote of the story of Medanese novel titled *Bibir jang Mengandoeng Ratjoen*.

Bakri Effendy worked as a famous painter. However, his love story with a woman named Rosni ended in heartbreaking. Rosin has married other rich man. Coming to the painting studio, a nobleman named Datuk Suri Endah came from Mingkabau. Jeasked Bakri to paint his wife. In fact, what he wanted to paint was Rosni, his former girlfriend. Bakri respected the professionalism ethics. He also painted Rosni in the whole soul. The painting was very good. Datuk Suri Endah was satisfied for seeing it. However, calmly before the painting was taken, Bakri scratched a poison powder on the painting. Finally, after he inhaled the fatal poison, Datuk Suri Endah died (Lubis, 2018, p. 149).

The quote of Medanese novel indicates that, in addition to painting with theme to grow nationalism feeling and anti-colonialism, in fact Medanese novels also had some writings on love stories. Thus, it was not astonishing that Medanese novels were highly preferred by readers because some of Medanese novel writings contained daily life stories that many people experienced.

**Figure 1**

**Novel titled Bibir jang Mengandoeng Ratjoen (1938)**
The cover of the Medanese novel in Figure 1 shows that Medanese novels at the beginning of its appearance did not pay much attention to the appearance or design of the cover. However, the authors and publishers tended to focus more on the content and the use of simple language that they were easily understood by ordinary people.

**Medanese Novel titled **Document Rahsia by D.I. Lubis (1941)

This novel tells details of life experienced by an escapee bringing secret document. The following is short quote of the novel.

A young person named Ariffin wanted to return to his orchard, namely Deli. In his returning journey, he was robbed and hit until serious pain, and he was unconscious. Strangely, when he woke up, he was in a house belonging to a rich Arab man named Joesoef Abdat. Joesoef Abdat had a pretty girl named Siti Daphne. Ariffin fell in love with her. Both agreed to marry in days later. Until in Deli, Ariffin was still detected. Because he did not stand to hunt, he made a decision to throw the document in pray paper burning place of Chinese man. After the condition was gradually safe, Ariffin married Siti Daphne (Lubis, 2018, p. 126).

The novel also contains love story packaged by background of some different places, so that this Medanese novel titled **Document Rahsia **is different from other novels having same story, concerning love.

**Medanese Novel titled **Tan Malaka di Kota Medan by Emnast (1941)

This novel tells the presence of Tan Malaka when he was in Medan. The following is short quote of this novel.

Tan Malaka was a mysterious figure making the Dutch intelligent and Communist figures in Medan had placed Tan Malaka as detective figure in a passionate detective fiction story. Names of big figures in this novel were made by nicknames, but Tan Malaka was not nicknamed by other name and identity. Novels on Tan Malaka in Medan in the time of Dutch are part of a nationalism movement and this novel had many readers (Emnast, 1941, pp. 32–35).

The Medanese novel titled **Tan Malaka di Kota Medan **is one Medanese novel highly preferred by readers, it was caused by the story plot is written systematically so that it is easily understood by readers. This Medanese novel...
also inserts nationalism values in the story plot.

The cover of the novel in Figure 4 shows that Medanese novels during the Dutch colonial government did not only tell the story of romance, marriage, murder, or theft but also the authors tried to present a story with a supernatural theme. The wealth of story themes that existed in the Medanese novels was expected to spoil their lovers.

Overall, it can be seen that Medanese novels published in the time of Dutch colonialism (1912—1942) contained meanings to generate nationalism spirit and anti-colonialism packaged in love stories of the young people. So, Medanese novel would be expected to be one organization of struggle to resist colonialism through a literature work. In relation to the issue, study by Sungkowati (2019, p. 201) also described that, through literature works, the writers tried to grow nationalism feeling in readers, such as contents of literature work of short stories shown in magazine *Panjebar Semangat* from 1937–1940, bringing nationalism spirit to majority of rubrics.

Literary works at each time have different characteristics. Literature works in time of Dutch colonialism have the literature characteristics, namely (1) dynamic, the literature works are written by adapting to occurring conditions. Dynamic characteristics are caused by societal conditions starting to be idealistic; (2) romantic-idealistic characteristics; (3) using Indonesian language; (4) novel form with themes making efforts to update, and novel themes highly emphasize on nationalism movement, emancipation, growth of national awareness, intellectual issue, or social life.

Development of Medanese Novels in time of Japanese Occupation (1942-1945)

Medanese novels in the time of Japanese occupation (1942–1945) experienced deterioration. It was caused by policy of the government of Japanese occupation making novel publication discontinue in East Sumatera, as result of tight control applied by the Japan troops. The government of Japanese occupation in Indonesia classified literature works into two types, namely broadcasted literature and stored literature. The former is literature work passing con-

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**Figure 3**
**Novel titled *Tan Malaka di Kota Medan* (1941)**

Source: Historic Seminar and Medanese novel Exhibition, in the State University of Medan

The illustrator, who designed the cover of this novel titled *Tan Malaka di Kota Medan* in Figure 3, tried to incorporate the values of nationalism through the figure of Tan Malaka that illustrated a detective against the Dutch colonial government.

**Medanese Novel titled *Roeh Bertjerita* by Joesoef Sou’yb (1941)**

This novel is different from other novel themes. This Medanese novel titled *Roeh Bertjerita* tells life messages of other world. The following is short quote of the novel.

"I am always disturbed by mystic sounds in the midnight. It seems that the fine sounds illustrate experience in other world. I have a friend named Ikmal who died due to hitting car after he watched film. Ikmal worked as cashier in a famous bank in Medan city, I was impressed by the friend (Lubis, 2018, p. 189)."

**Figure 4**
**Novel titled *Roeh Bertjerita* (1941)**

Source: Historic Seminar and Medanese novel Exhibition, in the State University of Medan
trol and successfully published through both government institution and private publishing. Meanwhile, the latter is literature work written in the time of Japanese occupation. However, it was just published after the Japanese occupation ended or in post-proclamation of independence (Mulyadi, 2017, p. 48).

There was only one Medanese novel published in the time of Japanese occupation, namely novel by Joesoef Sou’yb titled Ngao-eng Sirene di Singapoera, published by Tjerdas Publisher in series of Loekisan Poejangga novels in January 1942. Story of the Medanese novel tells love occurring in time of Great East Asia war and when the troops of Japan attacked Singapore. As result of the novel publication, when the troops of Japan had occupied Medan city, Joesoef Sou’yb was suspected as anti-Japan. Therefore, he was arrested and imprisoned by the troops of Japan.

Although the supervision was very tight when the government of Japanese occupation ruled, chance to write and publish literature works such as Medanese novel was used by authors or writers existing in Medan city. Way used was to store works of Medanese novels individually or distributed to limited group. Thus, the authors and writers could not implant nationalism spirit to resist colonization because the supervision by the government of Japanese occupation was very tight.

Overall, literature characteristics in the time of Japanese occupation are (1) the broadcasted literature works were generally tendentious, it means that the literature works discussed social problems leading to and favoring of Japanese propaganda; (2) some literature works were symbols, it means that these symbols illustrate against propaganda, ideas or bitter life realities in the time of Japanese occupation, but these were not addressed directly; (3) stored literature works contain criticism against the government, these literature works could be published only after the independence was proclaimed; (4) literature genre was dominated by drama, because it was the easiest media to address Japanese propaganda. The drama was not only censored for document when it was shown, but also its players were not allowed to improvise; and (5) literature works were realistic, the widely presented works discussed bitter life reality in the time of Japanese occupation.


Early time of independence (1945—1950), Indonesia had legal and politic sovereignty. In such situation, the authors of Medanese novels tried to resurge again. They wanted independence to express through literature works without restrain regulation. Their works were widely criticized until works widely expressing miseries and sufferings for all people in dealing with colonialism were produced, especially concerning Japanese occupation in Indonesia.

One typical characteristic of Medanese novel publication in the early time of independence is attention of publisher at novel cover. Illustrator was needed to make picture on front cover and page in Medanese novel. Arrangement of a story was so beautiful, it could be said that land is arid when it has no illustration. Therefore, some special illustrators appeared to make package of Medanese novel to be more interesting to read and collect. One important illustration figure in Medanese novel was A. Siregar, a painting teacher who was famous in Medan. He is the realism painter who was top and able to record corners of Medan well. In era of 1950, specific advertisement on painting course he guided distributed widely to various magazines published in Medan. Some Medanese novels published in the early time of independence (1945-1950) were:

**Medanese Novels titled Pulang dari Tawanan by Zalecha (1948)**

This Medanese novel tells love story of two persons with full obstacles in the time of colonialism. The following is short quote of the Medanese novel titled *Pulang dari Tawanan*.

Sjamsul (Sjam) fell in love with Tengku Eisjah. In the time of colonialism, the Tengku Eisjah’s family was familiar to Tengku Eisjah government of Dutch colonialism. After marrying, Sjam brought his wife to Medan. Sjam was disappointed because his wife was nev-
er at home, during he was prisoned lonely. It seemed that Tengku Eisjah worked in the government of East Sumatera State. Temptations continuously faced Sjam. Many women loved him, his heart had been vapid. One time, he was advised by his mother in law in order that he was not highly jealous and relying on one’s talking that intended to destroy him. Sjam accepted the advice and he was not offended to hear the suggestion. He was ready to accept Tengku Eisjah again in his life. And he rearranged his ever fading love story with Tengku Eisjah (Zalecha, 1948, p. 26).

Sufferings of all people in the time of colonialism were seen in short quote of the Medanese novel. Authors of Medanese novels tried to display bitter life reality in the time of colonialism, packaged well by a love story, so that it was expected to be an attractiveness to readers who would read the Medanese novel titled *Pulang dari Tawanan*.

**Figure 5**

*Novel titled *Pulang dari Tawanan* (1948)

Source: Historic Seminar and Medanese novel Exhibition, in the State University of Medan

Figure 5 shows that Medanese novels in the early days of Indonesian independence had a good quality cover and was designed with very interesting illustrations. The improvement of the cover gave the impression that Medanese novels were popular literary works that must be read and collected widely by the public.

**Medanese Novel titled *Djiwa Pemuda* by A.A. Musa (1948)**

Story of this Medanese novel titled *Djiwa Pemuda* contains sufferings of a young Heiho soldier. Short quote of this Medanese novel can be seen in the following paragraph.

The youth was named Hanafi, he loved Aminah. Their close relationship was granted by Aminah’s father, namely Engku Dachlan. However, when Japan came to Indonesia, Hanafi permitted to wander. He would study engineering to develop farming field. In fact, Hanafi joined Heiho. His life highly suffered after Japan defeated in war. Hanafi intended to make his love story again with Aminah. Unfortunately, Aminah had married other person. Seeing the bitter reality, Hanafi wanted to suicide. Fortunately, Maswani failed his desire. Finally, they planned to join Republic-pro youth group (Musa, 1948, p. 40).

Nearly all unsuccessfully published Medanese novels in the time of Japanese occupation, could be published in the early time of Indonesian independence (1945—1950), all stored literature works contained criticism and fulmination against the government of Japanese occupation which was cruel and made the people suffer, could not be published by authors of Medanese novels because there were tight policies of censor made by the government of Japanese occupation. Including this Medanese novel titled *Djiwa Pemuda*, it could not be published in the time of Japanese occupation because the content of this novel was found generating nationalism feeling of the people.

**Figure 6**

*Novel titled *Djiwa Pemuda* (1948)

Source: Historic Seminar and Medanese novel Exhibition, in the State University of Medan

The cover of a Medanese novel titled *Djiwa Pemuda*, which can be seen in Figure 6, tends to illustrate the story of the various vi-
olence committed by the Japanese occupation government, symbolizing the misery suffered by a young man, a Heiho soldier.

**Medanese Novel titled Gadis Motor Djepp by Zalecha (1948)**

This novel tells love story of a woman working as nurse in the time of colonialism. The following is short quote of the novel.

The woman named Sjamsiah (Sjam) working as nurse. To entertain her depressed heart, Sjam was asked by Rustam to go out riding a jeep. Many people viewed and concentrated on her. She was supposed as a jeep girl who liked partners alternately. Then, Sjam knew a sympathetic youth named Rifian. Unfortunately, Rifian preferred Asni as his partner. Moreover, there was a youth named Ridwan falling in love with Sjam. Inversely proportional, Sjam’s heart was locked closely because she still expected Rifian (Lubis, 2018, p. 163).

The quote of Medanese novel tells real life situation of a woman working as a nurse in the time of colonialism. The story of Medanese novel was typical characteristics of literature in Medan city, usually telling a real situation in daily life of people.

**Figure 7**

**Novel Titled Gadis Motor Jeep (1948)**

Source: Historic Seminar and Medanese novel Exhibition, in the State University of Medan

The illustration of the novel cover in Figure 7 expects to give a message to readers about the story of the struggle of women who were willing to spend their time and energy to become nurses in the colonial period.

**Medanese Novel titled Logas by Joesoef Sou’yb (1949)**

Story adopted in this Medanese novel tells soldiers of Japan. The following is short quote of Medanese novel titled Logas.

Nursan was a young person leaving his orchard to Logas to work forcibly due to troops of Japan. The troops of Japan applied forced work miserly. Logas alone was an area located between Muara Lembu and Taluk. According to plan, Logas would construct alternative roads to Lubuk Jambi. Japan ignored sick workers. If they still had energy, the workers had to be employed. When they would die, they were buried while they were still alive. Seeing such condition, Nursan could only be calm and not be brave to resist the troops of Japan with complete weapons (Sou’yb, 1949, pp. 17–20).

**Figure 8**

**Novel titled Logas (1949)**

Source: Historic Seminar and Medanese novel Exhibition, in the State University of Medan

The illustrator, who made the cover of this novel in Figure 8, aimed to instill a spirit of nationalism and anti-colonialism to the readers to fight all forms of colonialism. They were very torturing and miserable to the people especially a forced labor system carried out by the Japanese army, told in a Medanese novel entitled The Logas.

Based on some titles of the Medanese novels, it can be concluded that the people in the early of independence (1945-1950) had a
number of characteristics, such as (1) literature works were of realism characteristics, the literature works were based on real events; (2) contents of literature works were more important than forms of current literature works in using no forms complying with regulation and the language was complicated; (3) in general, the literature works were themed by struggle, it means that the literature works adopted struggling themes, both struggling against colony and struggling to find existence; (4) prose works were dominated by novels and short stories, if, in the time of Dutch and Japanese occupation, prose works were dominated by novels, in the early time of independence, prose works were dominated by novels and short stories. So that Medanese novel in the early time of independence did not have quantity as same as in time of Dutch colonialism.

Development of Medanese Novels in time of Old Order (1950—1966)

Medanese novels in the time of old order (1950—1966) still tried to resurge again. However, censor policy against Medanese novel were also applicable. Censor was used to limit novels found indecent and novel with completely examined and censor passing document would be allowed to distribute. Nevertheless, in the time of old order, Medanese novels kept showing their existences. It is seen from high quantity of published novels, as result of many official publishing organizations that might distribute books to all parts of Indonesia. The following are some Medanese novels published in the time of old order.

Medanese Novel titled *Djantan Deli* by Miranda (1955)

*Djantan Deli* is a Medanese novel that contains the story of a detective packaged in a love story. The story began in a small tenement in the city of Medan, with a middle-aged woman in silence, in her 17-year-old son, Irah and her younger sister. Irah’s father died due to suffering from T.B.C. One day, Engku Hatip came to collect his debt from his mother. The debt could not be paid by Mrs. Irah. Engku Hatip offered a way out, the debt could be paid off, provided that Irah was willing to be his wife. His mother and Irah hurriedly refused Engku Hatip’s request. Irah’s family was only given a time limit of 3 days, to be able to pay off all of his debts. A person with a coat came, and called himself Djantan Deli sent Rp 3,000 to Irah’s new rented house. The money was put in an envelope and placed under the door. The story was closed with Irah’s marriage to a sympathetic young man named Armad (Lubis, 2018, p. 116).

![Figure 9](image-url)

*Figure 9
Novel titled Djantan Deli (1955)*

Source: Historic Seminar and Medanese novel Exhibition, in the State University of Medan

The Medanese novel in Figure 9 illustrates a Medanese novel story that contains a detective story packed in a love story was preferred by readers in the old order. In the contents of Medanese novel, titled Djantan Deli, the author tried to be able to describe the atmosphere that occurred in public life at the beginning of the old order government which experienced a very bad economy, a lot of unemployment and poverty.

Medanese Novel titled *Rol Komplotan dalam Merubahkan Negara* by Gubalo (1955)

Medanese novel’s writing, entitled Rol Komplotan dalam Merubahkan Negara contains a reconnaissance story, accompanied by a seasoned inner conflict between love and the obligations of his character as a state apparatus. In
a nutshell, this Medanese novel’s quote can be seen as follows.

A young man named Wardana, during the revolutionary period, joined the ranks of paramilitary troops who dared to die. Then, he was appointed as commander. And then, he was given a position as army leader with the rank of Captain. Wardana was arrested by all the Dutch espionage gangs led by Indo woman named Nelly, she was nicknamed Mata Berlian, who had made the government of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia uneasy. She was hunted continuously, finally she and friends were arrested. Mata Berlian did suicide because she was falling in loved with Wardana. This novel is combined with romance detective, romance, and exciting politics (Lubis, 2018, p. 132).

The story in Medanese novel also openly dared to make President Bung Karno who was presented as a plotagonist in this fictional novel work. It was an imaginative and courageous work. In addition, Medanese novel entitled Rol Komplotan dalam Merubahkan Negara tried to portray various situations of conflict in the politics of government that occurred during the reign of the old order.

**Figure 10**
Novel titled *Rol Komplotan dalam Merubahkan Negara* (1955)

![Figure 10](source)

Source: Historic Seminar and Medanese novel Exhibition, in the State University of Medan

The cover of the Medan romance in Figure 10 is one of the Medanese novels covers produced and published by Pustaka Rosjada. The published works from Pustaka Rosjada is easily recognized because it has specific genre themes such as Medanese novels about tragedies, detectives, and drama. (Badudu, 1986, pp. 32--35).

**Medanese Novel titled Djagoan Ketjil dari Tembung by P. M. Rashi (1961)**

Medanese novel work by P.M. Rashi, entitled *Djagoan Ketjil dari Tembung*, contains a brave child who fought against the Dutch colonialists. The following is a short quote of Medanese novel.

In 1947, the city of Medan was still a battle ground between the fighters of the Dutch counter-military republic. Tantang, a responsible child who was sociable and was one of the sons of the KNIL sergeants, moved to help the struggle of the youth. His achievement was successfully killing a group of Dutch troops with a hand grenade weapon. Captain Markam sent him to enter the base of Captain Schaars, the figure of the Great Bridge escort commander in Pelawan. Captain Schaars’s men had no suspicion to him. After he made it to headquarters, pro-republican intruders managed to install explosives on the road that the Dutch convoy would pass. Thanks to the perseverance of the Indonesian fighters, the entire Dutch army was destroyed. They returned safely to headquarters (Rashi, 1961, p. 49-54).

**Figure 11**
Novel titled *Djagoan Ketjil dari Tembung* (1961)

![Figure 11](source)

Source: Historic Seminar and Medanese novel Exhibition, in the State University of Medan

The illustrator, who made the design of the cover of this novel in Figure 11, tried to illustrate a child who dared to fight against the
Dutch colonial forces. It expected the readers of the Medanese novel also had the same spirit and motivation to fight all forms of colonialism.

The characteristics of Medanese novel during the old order (1950-1966) were with social issues, such as a deteriorating economy, unemployment, and poverty. These themes were raised because during the period of the old order, many social problems occurred. In addition, the picture of the war atmosphere in Medanese novel began to diminish. However, it widely illustrated the atmosphere of conflict in government politics that occurred in the 1960.

Approximately 35 years Medanese novel has been active and enriched the world of Indonesian literature. The authors of Medanese novel expressly described the condition of the city of Medan in simple and straightforward language. Because the authors did not want to devote their lives to the Dutch governor, they preferred to become Medanese novel writers with all the obstacles they faced.

**Impact of Medanese Novel Writing**
Writing of Medanese novel had several impacts on the life of the people of Medan, namely:

**Impact in the Political Field**
The presence of Medanese novel was used by writers to foster a sense of nationality (nationalism feeling) through several movement themes in the Medanese novel. This novel was used by its authors to convey their sense of nationalism and also to become the mouthpiece of that nationalism. The movers of publishing in Medan were firm and conscious to unite themselves with political life.

Since the appearance of Medanese novel in 1930, literary works had grown rapidly. The writers increasingly dared to express their ideas through writings, and provided with private printing in Medan. The characters in the Medanese novel writing dared to print the works. Meanwhile, the literatures published by Balai Pustaka were written and printed according to Dutch colonial decisions, so that no writings dared to raise the spirit of resistance and nationalism.

Medanese novel tried to be able to uncover all the problems that existed in the society that were presented simply by the writing packed in a novel story so that people were interested in reading it. So, this opportunity was used by the writer to foster a sense of nationality through the themes of the movement. Medanese novel writers were not afraid of the Dutch governor, although their writings were considered cheap literary works, pornographic books, and often compared to literatures published by Balai Pustaka, but they continued to write, from 1930 to 1940 there was the term *banjir roman* because of their best-selling Medanese novel on the market.

**Impact in the Field of Education**
The number of Medanese novels could be an alternative reading that was still very minimum in the colonial period until the beginning of the old order. When the people began to be able to read, Medanese novel became a popular reading for the people with fresh and familiar language for the public, without having to use metaphoric language.

However, the impact of Medanese novel is not really felt by the younger generation in education at this time because teachers are not able to develop literary learning, especially using Medanese novel as a medium of learning in teaching and learning in the classroom. Based on the results of Adhi’s study (2015, p. 225), it explains that in learning process, teachers should be able to apply authentic assessment holistically in literary learning, especially Medanese novel as a medium of learning. The way to perform a holistic assessment system includes several aspects, namely (1) knowledge aspects (through oral, written and assignment tests), (2) attitude aspects (through observation, self-assessment, and journals), and (3) skill aspects (through assessment of practices, projects and portfolios). Thus, indirectly a teacher can introduce and develop a learning model based on literary works to students.

**Impact in the Field of Social-Culture**
Literary work is a documentation of the writer’s thoughts and imagination about events that occur in society (Rokhmansyah, 2014, p. 26).
Medanese novel, which is part of literary works in Medan, can be a source of values for the community. In literary works, there are various styles, one of which is the flow of realism. According to Harjito (2016, p. 76), the flow of realism focuses literary works on what is in real life. Therefore, this flow is very closely related to social changes that occur in people’s life. Novel that uses this flow has a very big influence on social change in Medan, especially in terms of mindset. The public will consider the values in the work because the work presents concrete reasons and consequences in daily life (Nurgiyantoro, 2015, p. 12).

CONCLUSIONS

Medanese novel is a literary work that has been forgotten by some people at this time and the books are starting to be hard to find, Medanese novel is not only a literary work that has been lost by the times. However, it is also a symbol of the triumph of Medan’s literary work that has high historical value because Medanese novel has contributed in efforts to fight for the independence of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia. The peak of the glory of Medanese novel occurred during the Dutch colonial period (1912-1942). So that, in 1930, the term *banjir roman* emerged, which was signed by the number of published novels.

Therefore, the researchers hope that all people and city government in Medan always save and try to preserve the legacy of art and cultural heritage of North Sumatra as one of the historic assets in the city of Medan, especially in the field of literacy.

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