

Social Criticism in “*Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan*” Short Story by Seno Gumira Ajidarma

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Abstract—The analysis of “*Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan*” short story by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, gave a view on the factual phenomenon of corruption at the national level, especially the cases in 2013 in which this short story was written. This short story was published in Kompas daily newspaper on May 20, 2013. The critical discourse analysis was used as an approach aiming to find out, analyze, and interpret the discourse in the short story representing the corruption cases. The critical discourse analysis used was Norman Fairclough’s perspective carried out in three ways, namely micro, meso, and macro analysis. This study used a sociological literature approach with descriptive qualitative method. The note taking technique was also used in this research. The data were analyzed descriptively, and the results of the study indicate that the writer criticized the rampant corruption behavior in 2013 in certain institutions and by individuals, and the silence of the journalists/media causing the huge losses to the country.

Keywords—*literature sociology criticism, corruption, “Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan” short story*

I. INTRODUCTION

Literary work has become an aesthetic in human life. It is an actualization media of the writer against the socio-political and socio-cultural conditions. Literary work is also a media of feeling expression and inspiration of the writer’s life and view [1,2]. Literature definitively results in a very broad discussion. In this case, the literary work is not only an expression of the writer’s soul but also a historical value the writer deliberately conveyed in the literary work as a warning or criticism.

As a cultural phenomenon, literary works such as novel, poem, or short story always summarize the social phenomena in the writer’s life. The Marxist theory [3], considering the economic as the basis of society’s superstructure, sees the literary and artistic works as a superstructure phenomenon occupying a significant role especially in developing the civilization.

This paper presents social criticism in “*Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan*” short story by Ajidarma [4].

The rest of this paper is organized as follow: Section II describes the proposed research method. Section III presents the obtained result and following by discussion. Finally, Section IV concludes this work.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this study was a descriptive qualitative method by taking note and describing the data and facts in the research object. Meanwhile, the object of

this research is “*Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan*” short story by Ajidarma [4].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

“*Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan*” short story by Seno Gumira Ajidarma illustrates the fact that there are very strong political practices in Indonesia. The writer described these conditions through literary work in the form of short story. There is a certain description providing images to the readers while reading this short story. To explore the meaning, there is a need of an appropriate analysis to understand the writer’s intention. Therefore, the researchers did the analysis using Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis.

Fairclough divided the discourse analysis in three dimensions [5,6]. The first is the micro level in the form of text dimension. The second is the meso level in the interdiscursivity and intertextuality. The third is the macro level, an analysis of socio-cultural practices. The text dimension was analyzed linguistically by identifying the vocabulary, semantics, and sentences including the cohesiveness and coherence, how the words or sentences combined to form an understanding. Furthermore, Eriyanto [7] revealed that discourse has three effects, namely (1) to construct social identities and subject positions; (2) to construct the social relations among people; and (3) to construct the systems of knowledge and trust.

Therefore, the Fairclough’s [8] three dimensions are appropriate to use in analyzing “*Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan*” short story by Ajidarma in finding out the socio-political values.

A. The text dimension in “*Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan*” short story by Seno Gumira Ajidarma

“*Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan*” short story by Seno Gumira Ajidarma has dimensions analyzed textually. While reading this short story, the readers were immediately invited to imagine and guess what the writer’s intention is.

The main character in “*Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan*” short story was depicted by a public figure (a public officer) that always washed his hands to avoid the law. That is the reason why he always washed his hands in the sink. Here is the quotation of the short story.

Tentu ia sendiri tidak tahu jika dirinya mendapat julukan seperti itu, ia hanya tahu dirinya selalu merasa tangannya kotor, dan setiap kali ia merasa tangannya kotor ia selalu merasa harus cuci tangan di wastafel.

Apakah ini karena aku selalu melakukan pekerjaan kotor?

The first quotation explains a person who always felt that his hands were dirty, so he needed to wash his hands. The dirty hand feeling is the feeling emerging because the character did a dirty work. This is supported by the second quotation, a monologue questioning his dirty work.

The dirty work done by the main character may have been corruption, bribery, or illicit businesses. This possibility occurs because the main character is a boss often appearing in the newspapers and television.

The second character supporting the storytelling clarity in semiotic is that he cleaned himself by washing his hand. Washing hands is the way the character cleaned his dirty hands explained by the quotation below.

Di depan wastafel ia mencuci tangan, pada saat mengangkat muka, ia melihat wajahnya sendiri.

“wajah itulah,” pikirnya, “wajah itulah!”

Wajah yang selalu muncul di koran dan televisi, wajah yang selalu dijaganya agar selalu tampak terhormat, amat sangat terhormat, bagaikan tiada lagi yang bisa lebih terhormat. Demi kehormatan itulah ia selalu mencuci tangannya, karena dalam pikirannya, tangan yang kotor akan mempengaruhi pandangan orang banyak terhadap wajahnya.

Those three quotations are related each other to construct the meaning of this short story. Correlated to the dirty work, washing hand in the sink is the way the character cleaned his name and dignity, so that he always looked clean and respectable of the dirty work he did. In the real life, washing hand is a self-cleaning. It is very evident in the quotation of paragraph 11. Besides his position in his job as a boss, he also often appeared in the newspaper and television. Therefore, he always cleaned his honor from dirty things.

However, over time the main character felt that the water for washing hands in the sink became dirty and muddy. This is expressed in the quotation below.

Pada suatu hari, ketika ia mencuci tangan di wastafel, air yang mengucur dari kran dalam pandangan matanya agak kecoklat-coklatan.

Untuk seorang manusia yang selalu mencuci tangan, air kran yang kotor adalah masalah besar.

The both quotations tell the confusion of the character because the water he used to wash his hands was dirty. It conveyed the meaning that the way the character cleaned up his name and dignity was also dirty. The way could be blaming, killing, defaming, bribing others and so on. This description is also supported by the quotation below.

Suatu kali, ketika pekerjaan kotornya menumpahkan darah, kran itu pun mengucurkan darah.

That quote explains explicitly that the main character did a dirty job possibly hurting or killing others. This description supports the argumentation in the previous paragraph.

B. Interdiscursivity and Intertextuality in “Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan” Short Story by Seno Gumira Ajidarma

The second dimension in the framework of Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis is the dimension of intertextuality. In this dimension analysis, interpretation is carried out on discourse processing which includes aspects of income, distribution, and use of text. Some of these aspects have more institutional character, while others are in the form of discourse use and dissemination processes. Regarding institutional processes, Fairclough refers to institutional routines such as editorial procedures involved in the production of media texts. The practice of discourse covers the ways in which media workers produce text. This is related to the journalist himself as a person; the nature of the working network of journalists with other fellow media workers; the working pattern of the media as an institution, such as how to cover the news, write news, and become news in the media. Fairclough argues that the analysis of speech functions to determine the process of production, distribution, and use of text. Thus, the three stages must be carried out in analyzing the dimensions of discourse.

In the short story "People who always wash their hands" the work of Seno Gumira Ajidarma is a short story published by the Kompas Newspaper institution published on May 20, 2013. The production process of the discourse originated from the short story writer, Seno Gumira Aji Darma involving the editor of Kompas. In producing information, the Kompas newspaper pays attention to community factors or its consistency. This is because the readers of the Kompas Newspaper consist of various layers of society as readers, both in printed form and online. So that it gives birth to an educated, enlightened, respectful, and just and prosperous society as stated in the vision and mission of the Kompas Newspaper.

The title of the short story written by the author is clearly a subtle satire which is a form of protest from the author himself. This is the way the author gives criticism to the perpetrators of corruption at that time, as the principle that the author disclosed is that if literature is silenced literature must speak.

C. The Socio-Cultural Practice (Macro Structural) Dimension in “Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan” Short Story by Seno Gumira Ajidarma

The practice of Norman Fairclough's third stage analysis or socio-cultural practice (macro structural) dimension is a broader analysis, so that it is also often called a macro-level analysis based on the socio-cultural context influencing the discourse in the text. The socio-cultural practices analyzed are economic, political and cultural situations.

“Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan” short story by Seno Gumira Ajidarma is very relevant to the condition of the Indonesian people nowadays. This short story tells about the condition of practically destroyed Indonesia's politic. This short story tells about the public officers already having a bad habit. Because of their familiarity with these bad habits, they could no longer distinguish the right or the wrong things to do. Their bad habit in this short story is corruption.

Related to the year this short story was written, 2013 was the presidential election year for the 2014-2019 period. It was possible to find corruption practices carried out by the public officers. This is in line with the findings of the Indonesian Corruption Center (ICW) that in 2013 there were corruption cases by misusing the Country's Budget (APBN) for the 2013 general election. In addition, in 2013 the corruption cases were rampant such the case of Hambalang, Century Bank, SKK MIGAS (the Special Task Unit of Upstream Oil and Gas Business Activities) bribery, and others.

The following is the quotations taken from the short story.

Wajah yang selalu muncul di koran dan televisi, wajah yang selalu dijaganya agar selalu tampak terhormat, amat sangat terhormat, bagaikan tiada lagi yang bisa lebih terhormat. Demi kehormatan wajah itulah ia telah selalu mencuci tangannya, karena dalam pikirannya, tangan yang kotor akan mempengaruhi pandangan orang banyak terhadap wajahnya.

Bisa ditarik kesimpulan jika Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan ini adalah sosok terkenal seperti pejabat negara atau elit politik. Sering muncul di koran dan televisi serta suka "jaim (jaga image)" dengan aneka ragam pencitraannya. Sangat takut jika dinilai "jelek" oleh masyarakat. Lebih lanjut, pengarang menceritakan sebagai berikut.

Ia sendiri meragukan, manakah yang sebetulnya lebih baik, antara selalu mencuci tangan karena merasa tangannya selalu kotor dibandingkan dengan selalu mencuci tangan karena tangannya betul-betul kotor. Namun ia sungguh-sungguh ingin percaya, meskipun ia selalu melihat tangannya betul-betul kotor, betapa tangannya itu sendiri sebetulnya bersih.

Tokoh ini sangat mirip dengan sosok elit politik yang mengalami disorientasi. Karena seringnya melakukan hal yang kotor, seperti korupsi – lama kelamaan tidak mampu lagi menilai mana yang benar dan mana yang salah. Suara batin mereka sudah dikalahkan oleh ketamakan. Yang paling parah, selalu mencari alasan pembenar untuk tindakan mereka. Kadang menampilkan sosok religius sebagai kamuflase.

Hebatnya lagi, ketika kesalahan mereka terungkap dan dikenai sanksi – mereka tidak mau mengakui. Aparat penegak hukum diserang sebagai tidak adil dan memiliki motif tersembunyi. Media massa ikut dilabrak sudah tidak independen lagi. Pokoknya semua yang mengungkapkan borok mereka dianggap sebagai kelompok yang anti. Mirip dengan nasib air dan para tukang dalam cerpen ini.

Pada suatu hari, ketika ia mencuci tangan di wastafel, air yang mengucur dari kran dalam pandangan matanya agak kecoklat-coklatan.

"Ah, kenapa airnya kotor sekali?"

Untuk seorang manusia yang selalu mencuci tangan, air kran yang kotor adalah masalah besar.

"Mencuci tangan kok jadi tambah kotor," pikirnya, "mana boleh jadi?"

Segeralah para tukang dipanggil untuk memeriksa, apakah kiranya yang membuat air pencuci tangan yang seharusnya membuat tangan menjadi bersih kini justru membuat tangan semakin kotor.

Namun ketika dikucurkan, ternyata air kran itu baik-baik saja adanya.

"Airnya tidak apa-apa Pak," ujar para tukang.

Air seperti diungkapkan pengarang dalam teks cerpen tersebut dijadikan kambing hitam atas apa yang telah dilakukan. Begitupun dengan nasib yang dialami oleh para tukang yang digambarkan pengarang lagi-lagi menjadi kambing hitam. Pemimpin yang diceritakan sebagai seOrang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan dalam cerpen ini, setelah selesai masa kepemimpinannya tidak terjerat hukum atas kasus korupsi yang telah dilakukannya.

IV. CONCLUSION

Seno Gumira Ajidarma is a journalist as well as a writer whose works criticize the political depravity in Indonesia. He believes that "when journalism is silenced, the literature must speak up". In his short story entitled "*Orang yang Selalu Cuci Tangan*", he finds the way in responding the silence of the journalists in revealing the facts

As we read this short story, we can clearly see how Seno Gumira Ajidarma wants to satirize someone with a high position, such as public officers, company leaders, political party members, and others working arbitrarily and always sacrificing other people. This is proven from the social position of the main character as a boss at his office. His washing hand and face habit is a symbol of someone doing an action to look good and respectful, even though the work he did sacrificed other people. The water used for washing hands and face is the measure of how dirty the work he did. The dirtier the work he did, the dirtier the water.

This short story is one of the recent literary works written in 2013. However, it is comparable to the other preceding short stories. The theme of this short story is still important and relevant to the condition of the Indonesian nation nowadays. There are still people with high social positions doing the dirty jobs and always sacrificing other people. One example is the fact that there are still corruption cases in the institutions, especially in governmental institutions indirectly afflicting the people. As the result, the country's development and programs are hampered. Automatically, the people's welfare is delayed. Indirectly, this short story also reminds the readers that in Indonesia there are still dirty jobs carried out by certain people causing misery for the others. This short story also motivates the readers, especially those ruling the governmental institutions, to act decisively in the hopes of no more future events as described in this short story.

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