

Portrait of Pegaten Society in the Novel “*Kubah*” Based on Marxist Literary Criticism Theory

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Abstract—This study aims to analyze the causality of class’ classification that occurred on the society of Pegaten in the Ahmad Tohari’s novel *Kubah* based on Marxist literary criticism theory. This study is a kind of a discourse analysis that made use of the novel as the main corpus. The exposure analysis includes the discussion of class’ structure on Pegaten society using Marxist literary criticism theory based on the paradigm of social class relation including the identification of social background into the context of the occurrence, and the identification of social classes. In addition, it also included the discussion of causal relationships between social classes in the novel by analysing social activities occurring among the characters; and the impact of class social causality relationships on Pegaten society. Based on the analysis, we found the form of social classes, ideology of class conscious, and positive and negative impacts of upper- and lower-class interaction in the Pegaten society.

Keywords—Pegaten Society, Marxist, Causality, Lower Class, Upper Class.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social class classification according to Marx refers to a social division between the owners of the means of production and the workers that happened in the society. This relationship includes patterns of social interaction created by the existence of the means of production. The fact that the social structure of society is determined by production activity [1]. Marx identifies the social structure of society into two levels, upper and lower classes. These include institutional structure, morality, religion, and literature [2]. Each era actually has its own social structure, but substantively the pattern of determination between classes is the same. This applies to both real and literary societies as narrated in the novel *Kubah*.

Kubah told Karman as the main character described as a poor man trapped in the political turmoil of Indonesia in the 1950s, the September 30th Indonesian Communism Movement [3]. He was a good, sincere, intelligent, and humble young man. Karman’s life and the pattern of interaction with Pegaten society described an economic determination that was influenced by environmental conditions and the burden of life. Karman who occupied the lower class changed his attitude and character due to the incitement of Margo and Triman as a representation of

the upper class. They were employers that provided the employment for the lower classes, including Karman that made him indebted. The shrewdness of the upper class made social stratification between classes unseen, so that they controlled Karman easily. The interaction between the lower classes that depended on the upper-class society as the owners of the means of production created a causality relationship. Objectively, it did not merely give rise to the social structures, but subjectively it also built a self-consciousness as a class, as a special class in the society with specific interests and willing to fight for it [4].

Based on the above explanation, Marxist literary critic theory as used in analyzing the phenomena of the causality relationship of social classification in Tohari’s novel *Kubah*. The classification of the social class in Pegaten society looked as a reality due to the differences in the mastery of the production equipment in the economic activity. This led to a causal relationship of the social interaction. Marxist literary criticism theory was appropriate to apply because it discussed the social class paradigm in which the focus of analysis lay in the relation between characters in the context of the social setting and the plot as events, so that the causal relationship between social classes in society could be identified.

II. METHODS

This study aimed to explain the relationship of social class causality in Tohari’s novel *Kubah*. Based on that objective, the research was called descriptive analysis that elaborated the facts followed by analysis [5], or also called qualitative research because it examined the quality of relationships or materials with a strong emphasis on the overall description of everything that happened to the certain situation [6] as well as in the form of written or spoken words of the characters and the observed behavior [7].

The researchers used a paradigm that analyzed the relation of social class structure with real society including the social class structure of literature and the relations of the social class structure of literature with the social class structure of the real society. The primary data source was the novel *Kubah*, and the supporting data source covered books, journals, and articles about the ideology of Marxism and the literary theory. The data were collected and grouped according to the categories using symbolic and semantic reading techniques, as well as quotation

and paraphrase note techniques [8]. Verification and validation of the data used the credibility test through three stages; perseverance, triangulation [9], and discussions with peers [10]. While data analysis used Miles and Huberman model as a systematic testing to determine the relationship between the whole and its parts [11] consisting of four steps; data collection, data reduction [12], data display, and conclusion drawing [13].

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this sub-chapter, the description of the results covers (1) the analysis of social class structure in the novel *Kubah* based on the social class relation paradigm, that is (a) the identification of the social background into the context of event, and (b) the identification of social classes; (2) the inter-class causality relationship in the novel *Kubah* by analyzing the social activities of the characters; and (3) the impact of the causality relationship between social class on Pegaten society.

A. Analysis of Social Class Structures in Literature

Marx believed that human social situations and conditions are strongly influenced by material-production aspects, therefore he identified the social structure of society as upper and lower classes. By looking at the literature as the world provided by the word, the focus of Marxist literary criticism theory analysis on the novel *Kubah* was the relation between characters in the context of the social setting and the plot as events.

1) Identifying the Social Background

The social background was a social life space that organized all forms of social activity in literature. This social activity can be seen by identifying the relationships that occurred among the characters. The social background in the literature of course not was single, but multilayered.

Orang yang teliti dan cukup berbesar jiwa, bisa memahami pada saat itu sedang terjadi persaingan antara tiga kekuatan ... [2, pp. 122-123].

The quote shows the state of Indonesia in the fifties when the Communist movement began to emerge. Young men like Karman were the target of anti-government propaganda under the guise of the revolution. As an initially humble and religious villager, Karman was beginning to be affected as they offered a way out of her miserable life.

Yang terjadi di Pegaten pada awal tahun enam puluhan, sama seperti yang terjadi di mana-mana ... [2, p. 132].

The next was Indonesia in the sixties, when bloodshed broke out in Jakarta. There was no choice for the New Order government to maintain the stability of the state other than to quell the riot igniter. The evidences of the social background of the New Order government were (1) the bloody incident in Jakarta; (2) the revolutionary movement that Margo, Trimman, and the others carried; (3) communist values that were contrasted to the values of the Pegaten society throughout the Karman story.

2) Identifying the Social Classes

The possession of the means of production determined the identification of the social class that gave rise to both social classes. Here are two paragraph fragments that showed Haji Bakir and Trimman as representatives of the upper-class society.

Ternyata keluarga Haji Bakir tidak pernah memperlakukan Karman sebagai pembantu rumah tangga yang sebenarnya. Anak itu diberi kesempatan menamatkan pendidikannya di sekolah rakyat yang sudah dua tahun ditinggalkannya. Pekerjaan yang diberikan kepada Karman adalah pekerjaan sederhana yang bisa diselesaikan oleh anak seusianya ... [2, pp. 60-61].

Although in Marx's theory the landlord as described as a class that intimidated the marginalized, but in the novel *Kubah* Tohari described the family of Haji Bakir as a good upper-class society that was visible from his attitude toward Karman as a poor orphan giving him an age-appropriate work. In contrast to the other upper-class, Trimman made efforts to create a condition of indebtedness to Karman so that they instilled a communist propaganda easily because it had managed to tie Karman with the sense of gratitude. In this case, Trimman was not a direct holder of the venture capital, but he served as a ruling intermediary providing jobs for Karman.

Apabila dia bisa menjadi pegawai atas bantuan kita, maka perkenalan dia dengan kita berlangsung sangat wajar dan mulus ... [2, p. 79].

While the picture of lower-class society as represented by Karman who was the main character of the novel. He had no economic capital, so he tried to approach Rifah who was the daughter of Haji Bakir, a rich man in the village of Pegaten. Making toys to attract Rifah interest in order to provide him with a pack of rice indicated Karman's ability to earn his life depending on the owner of the capital. It was evidenced by the following quote.

Banyak cara bisa dilakukan agar Karman bisa bermain dengan gadis cilik itu. Untuk Rifah, Karman harus punya sesuatu yang menarik hatinya [2, p. 57].

B. The Causality Relationship in the Social Class

Social activities can trigger conflicts due to ideological differences between classes. This was in line with the origin of ideological concepts initiated by contradictions and disputes after the French revolution [14]. The analysis of the class ideology can reveal the social class that won the conflict. According to Marx's ideology, an awareness that was believed by the society to make the class contradictions was visible or invisible. Marx, therefore, identified two forms of the ideology as the result of human consciousness [15].

1) The Class Awareness Ideology

The ideology belonged to the subordinate class, which in the view of reality as something pseudo or false, generated an awareness of itself about its existence as a class. This can be identified through the relationship among the characters.

- *Karman with Haji Bakir*

... Sudah bagus bila aku tidak menuntut sawah itu kembali. Mengapa aku harus berbaik terhadap orang yang menyebabkan seisi rumahku sengsara? [2, p. 99].

The quote implies something. Karman as a representative of the subordinate society viewed the reality of the transaction of his father and Haji Bakir in the past as a false. Although it was systemically correct, Margo's propaganda evoked Karman's awareness of his existence as a marginalized economic class.

- *Karman with Kastagethek*

Dengar, Kasta. Kamu tahu, aku seorang pegawai kantor Kecamatan.....Jadi kuminta kamu rahasiakan pertemuan kita. Ingat, ini amanat yang kupercayakan kepadamu! [2, p.162].

The sentences above informs the existence of the main character awareness. Karman realized his status as a higher and powerful government employee than Kastagethek who was only a rafter and a fisherman on the *gethek*. Karman made use of it to suppress Kastagethek in order to carry out his mandate.

- *Karman with himself*

... Sangat jelas terasakan ada garis pemisah yang tajam antara dirinya dengan alam sekitar. Ia merasa tidak menjadi bagian dari bumi dan lingkungan yang sedang dipijaknya ... [2, p. 9].

The quote explained Karman's class consciousness did not arise because of the interaction with other parties, but was due to the consciousness of his own existence as a political prisoner, a second-class society. Being aware of the social and infrastructural changes that took place outside of B island for 12 years intimidated Karman to return to the society.

2) *The False Consciousness,*

It was an awareness that did not emerge independently from economic conditions, but it emerged depending on other factors.

- *Karman with Triman*

... Sementara, Karman tak bisa berbuat lain kecuali selalu bersikap hormat kepada para penolongnya [2, p. 87].

The sentence describes the main character attitude. Karman's attitude was a consciousness that did not appear independently from economic conditions, he was obedience because the help of Triman to be an employee. This was related to the terms that Triman proposed as a form of gratitude. Because this job was something of value in Karman's life, so the relationship between classes became a false consciousness and bias.

- *Kastagethek and Karman*

Oh, memang tidak pantas seorang seperti Pak Karman mencari ikan sampai dini hari. Dan aku bersyukur telah membuat Pak Karman tidak pulang dengan tangan hampa [2, p. 163].

In the previous explanation, the relationship between Karman and Kastagethek belonged to the class consciousness because Karman positioned himself as an upper-class party. On the contrary, Kastagethek against Karman showed awareness of a false class consciousness as a result of the value of admiration adopted by Kastagethek.

- *Karman with Haji Bakir*

Dan Karman merasa bangga sekali ketika ia diberi kesempatan memperbaiki sumur mesjid Haji Bakir [2, p. 179].

In exile, Karman unleashed all the ideology and principles of the communist party, and his mind was open to return to the values of society and religion. Therefore, when interacting with Hajj Bakir, the difference between both social classes became biased because his position was not as the owner of capital but someone who deserved to be repaid for his mistake in the period before the exile.

- *Karman with Pegaten society*

Padahal yang sangat dikhawatirkan oleh Karman adalah sikap membenci dan dendam yang mungkin diterimanya begitu ia muncul kembali di Pegaten.... [2, p. 173].

The quote above illustrated the relation between classes in peaceful village communities. This was because the value of humanism underlay a false consciousness as the ideology of a rural society capable of being a binder and fusion of a cohesive relationship, so that social stratification was biased and tended to be invisible. Yet Marx held whatever was the source of collective consciousness. This false consciousness kept the lower classes in a state of exploitation by the upper classes. Forever Karman remained in the lower social class because of his dependence on Haji Bakir as the landlord. This ideology of the class consciousness and pseudo-consciousness was what made the subordinate class understand as an exploited class, and start a business designed to discuss the old social order with the new economic order [16].

C. *The Impacts of Causality Relationship Classification on Pegaten Society*

Previously it has been described the classification form of the social class and the classical causality relationship in the novel *Kubah* from both of which arise impact on the life of Karman as the main character. This impact is an influence that has both positive and negative effects. Based on the analysis of the classical causality relationships in Pegaten society before, the positive impacts arose when the ideology adopted by society was a false consciousness, that did not appear independently from the economic conditions.

- *Getting a Decent job from Haji Bakir's family*

Dengan memberi pekerjaan kecil, Bu Haji bermaksud mendidik Karman sehingga ia tidak terbiasa bergantung kepada pemberian orang.... [2, p. 59].

The relationship between Karman and the family of Haji Bakir was not based on the social class of the rich or the poor,

but the compassion that made Mrs. Haji Bakir take care of Karman as an orphan. Even she wanted to educate him to become an independent and responsible child through the work she gave.

- *Getting Good Treatment from Kastagethek*

Tak usah takut dimarahi istri. Bawalah barang beberapa ekor ikan yang saya jala ini, yang besar-besar. Itu rezeki Pak Karman [2, pp. 161-162].

Kastagethek has a sincere character in seeking sustenance different from Karman's ideology at that time which was considered the poor to rise up and seize control of the society system. In fact, it was precisely that the state of Kastagethek was not ideal for Karman showing a comfort of life.

- *Establishing good relations with the Pegaten society*

Ia merasa heran dan terharu, ternyata orang-orang Pegaten tetap pada watak mereka yang asli. Ramah, bersaudara, dan yang tak kalah penting: gampang melupakan kesalahan orang lain [2, p. 173].

The social life would work well if there were a harmony among fellow citizens. While the harmony would be created if mutual respect and tolerance applied without differentiating the economic base in the society, so that the harmonious society order would be realized. Similarly, what happened in Pegaten society was that they accepted Karman as he was and put aside his past as a former political prisoner.

- *Getting flattery from the Pegaten society*

"Beruntung," sambung yang lain, "kita mendapatkan Karman kembali. Kalau tidak, kalau tidak, niscaya kita tidak bisa bersembahyang di dalam masjid sebagus ini [2, p. 189].

The society of Pegaten welcomed him as Karman, who since birth was a part of the village. Therefore, he felt moved and repaired the dome of Haji Bakir mosque without expecting anything in return because the warm and unvarnished attitude of the society was enough to make him a normal human without any moral burden. For his hard work, the people of Pegaten village flattered Karman so much. They did not regret about receiving Karman back. It was as an evident that false class awareness could create a positive impact for every class in the society. On the contrary, the ideology of class consciousness in the society would have a negative impact by giving a false view of reality because it was based only on an economic basis.

- *Conflict with family*

"Aku sudah dewasa, Paman. Benar, aku mengaku telah Paman beri biaya. Kalau Paman menghendaki segala biaya itu kembali, pasti akan kubayar." Laknat...!" [2, pp. 99-100].

The quote above showed Karman's disobedient attitude to his own uncle, Hasyim. The influence of Margo and Triman in the life of Karman led him to oppose the principle with his uncle, Hashim. Karman's actions that openly unleashed religious values unsettled the uncle that brought about a conflict with the family.

- *Karman's application was rejected by Haji Bakir*

Pasti ia menganggap kau tidak pantas menjadi menantunya lantaran kau anak keturunan rakyat jelata ... [2, p. 93].

The class consciousness made Karman think that his application was rejected by Haji Bakir because of the social class differences between himself and Haji Bakir. Karman's dark eyes clung to the stance that the reason for the rejection of the application was that Abdul Rahman came from a rich family while he was not, however he was later to apply than Abdul Rahman.

Suti sering berkunjung ke rumah Karman...Pernah juga Suti datang sebelum fajar, dan keluar lagi ketika para tetangga Karman pulang dari mesjid...Kini rasanya kau bukan lelaki yang cocok dengan persyaratan yang ku maksud [2, pp. 120-121].

Karman's application got rejected for the second time. The second, of course was still unseparated from the influence of Margo and Triman groups. They made a ploy by involving Suti, a female party cadre who served as a party servant. Margo and Triman deliberately showed the conspicuous interaction of Suti and Karman to the society so that Karman's dignity fell in the eyes of the neighbors and of course Haji Bakir.

- *Being a fugitive and experiencing inner stress*

Ya, Karman sadar dirinya kini jadi manusia buruan, sebuah sebutan yang amat rendah dan tak pernah terbayangkan bisa terjadi atas dirinya [2, pp. 141-145].

Registered as Partindo's secretary was just a mask of Karman to hide his status as a member of the communist party. Unfortunately, the authorities could not be deceived, Karman was included in the group of people who became fugitives. Though he was able to escape, his deep guilt to Marni and his children made Karman frustrated. At first a false awareness that made Karman not able to escape from Margo and Triman, and then turned into a class consciousness because of their shrewdness manipulating his life situation. It led to prejudice against Haj Bakir as an upper class for refusing his application on the grounds of different social status.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of analysis using Marx literary criticism theory, it can be concluded that the social background of Pegaten society in the novel was the condition of Indonesia in the fifties and the sixties with the division of social classification as (a) the upper classes represented by Haji Bakir, Margo, and Triman as the owners of capital or with economic power, and Karman as the representatives of (b) lower classes because he had no economic base and power.

In Pegaten village, the ideological differences caused conflict in interaction among social groups resulting the emergence of contradictions of social class, or vice versa. (a) The ideology of class awareness led to Karman's consciousness

of social class differences as the cause of his suffering. Whereas (b) the ideology of false consciousness made interrelated relations apart from economic conditions and determination of social class distinctions.

As a result, the interactions that occurred between both classes within the Pegaten society brought a positive impact on the ideology of false consciousness because of harmony and mutual respect applied without a socioeconomic basis. While, the negative influences occurred in the ideology of the class awareness, in which Karman was aware of his social class within the society that demanded a social class struggle.

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