CODE SYSTEM IN A SHORT STORY ENTITLED "BUNGKUSAN" WRITTEN BY HERMAN RN

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Abstract

This study reveals the meaning of short story written by Herman RN entitled "Bungkusan" using the five system of Barthesian codes i.e. hermeneutic, cultural, symbolic, narrative and semantic code. Using the method of descriptive analysis, this study presents the meaning of the short story by explaining one by one the code meaning of the text. The result of the study shows that through five system of Barthesian codes, the humanity facts containing in the short story can be realized i.e. the protest toward the uncertainty of Aceh's social life. An unstoppable political conflict, rapid modernization, as well as natural disasters are the factors underlining the facts found in the short story.

Keywords: short story entitled "Bungkusan", five system of Barthesian codes, hermeneutic code, cultural code, symbolic code, proairetic/narrative code, semantic code.

A. Introduction

Short story is a piece of prose fiction, usually under 10.000 words (Webster Dictionary; 1989: 1319). Short story has shorter length than novels because it usually has only few characters and focused on single or few plots. The elements of short story is actually the same with novels such as plot, theme, setting, point of view, character and characterization, and symbol. Short story posits its popularity after the novels in literary work.

Short story entitled "Bungkusan" written by Herman RN was first published in Daily Newspaper *Republika* in May 19th 2013. It tells about character "I" who is positioned as a witness of odd phenomenon. He woke up among the people wearing white clothes hanging white package on their shoulders walking here and there with no direction. Many of them are confused and busy with their own business. The character "I" sees the condition with lots of questions. Among these people, only two characters is recognized i.e. the character "I"'s father and grandfather. All the character "I" can do is watching them talking from distance. The plot of the story is then glided through the conversation between these two characters revealing the real phenomena underlining the scene.

This short story drives character "I" as well as the reader to know more about the humanity facts behind the puzzling phenomena. Then after reading the text, the writer finds out that there are codes existed in the text to help the reader as well as character "I" understanding the facts behind the scene. Even though this short story is written in 2013, the issue of social facts found in the short story still relates to the social and political condition nowadays.

Thus, to reveal the details of the actually facts, the five system of Barthesian's code i.e. hermeneutic code, cultural code, symbolic code, pro-airetic/narrative code, and semantic code are used. By studying the code, the intention of the text can be formulized.

B. Literature Review

In the beginning, literary interpretation cannot be separated from its author. The interpretation expressively started in 3 BC, in time when Longinus proposed the sublime concept rewarded to the author (Abrams, 1979: 22). In this case, Longinus argues that literary creator is the sources of sublime who has high knowledge, emotion, and technique. This view developed until 19th century though Christian doctrine about creation had ever been an obstacle in which human cannot be claimed as a creator but God. The sublime concept posits the expressive aspect related to author's feelings, soul, and creativity as the most important aspect in interpreting literary works.

However, this perspective started to dim out because the existence of realism, naturalism, impressionism, symbolism, and structuralism. This new perspective thinks that there is no relation between the author and its works. Wimsatt and Bearley in Teeuw (1084: 169) even argues that extracting the writer's intention as element of literary works is a sin.

Structuralism emphasizes the literary criticism to the text leaving the author alone in which is debated by the other perspective that cutting out the writer's intention will never reach the objectivity of critics since the interpretation will obtain its validity only with verification between the text and its author.

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After all the debate, structuralism is able to interpret the literary works from the objectivity of its text, in which the signs are constructing a system and inevitably creating meanings. One sign is giving meaning to the other signs and it continues to the other signs.

Semiotics is branch of science in structuralism, in which signs of texts such as language, code, signal and else are studied to get the intention built by the text itself. Saussure works on semiotics theory stating that sign is divided into signified and signifier or signifies and significant. The meaning will be created after association between the signified and the signified.

The Saussure concept is then developed by Roland Barthes, stating that sign is derived from historical and cultural convention. Barthes proves his point of view that literary work interpretation is to find out unconsciousness built by the text itself. In order to give the text meaning, researcher must divides the texts into lexis or unit of reading such as word, phrase, or sentence based on its connotation meaning.

The division of lexis will enable researcher to define the text for combination and reduction for each variable. Of this each lexis, Barthes applies five codes to get the implicit meaning of lexical connotation such as hermeneutic code, semantic code, symbolic code, pro-airetic code, and culture code.

C. Method of Investigation

The type of this research is descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative research does not use calculations but description. The written or oral data is descriptively analyzed. The source of data is taken from the short story entitled

"Bungkusan" by Herman RN. The technique of obtaining the data is by reading the novel and watching the movie carefully. All data is categorized based on the topic of discussion then described in details.

D. Findings and Discussion

The short story entitled *Bungkusan* (in English: *package*) is telling about the character 'I' witnessing an odd phenomenon. In his view, he sees so many people wearing white clothes walking in group here and there in a wide field bringing a package as big as their body size on their shoulders. The package are wrapped in white. Everyone seemed walking here and there looking for something, stops a while then continued walking. They seemed like losing their direction.

There are relatives of the character 'I' walking here and there with no direction. He saw his father, mother, sister, brother, uncle, aunt, and grandmother with the white package on their shoulders. They do not know each other, and are busy with themselves. It's only the character "I" does not bring any package on the shoulder as well as his grandfather. He sees his grandfather talks to his father from far away. Soon, he understands that all of them have already died and the package on the shoulders is their dead body. They have no idea to where they should burry their body. "I" finally remembered that his family; father, mother, brother, sister and aunt died after a big flood hitting the village, while the other aunt and uncle died because of conflict between government and rebel group, and the other uncle died because of kidnapping.

The problem faced by his family in a wide desert is because of no more space to bury the body

for it has been fully occupied by human funerals and huge buildings.

If carefully seen, this short story contains some separated lexical to analyze based on the codes attached to each. The relation between signifier and signified which will create new sign have to be searched to get the meaning. This sign will create a myth i.e. second meaning which is not directly gotten from the message object.

Barely seen, myth is not easy to detect since it tends to transform the history to something more natural and distract the readers' mind to take the text as natural as it is. Myth has no purpose of hiding meaning but it distracts the reader's mind and it is driven from the connotation. Barthes said that people do not live among dead things but from living opinion. What worrying Barthes is when the opinion is considered natural for usually it has dominant power.

To get the text meaning relation, lexia are realized from the text. Each lexia is then analyzed based on the code attached to finally creating meaning by relating its each variable. Yet, this study will not analyze the text sentence by sentence but directly on the five system of Barthesian's code. It will not disrespect the literary structural interpretation, but to get the whole meaning of the text, focusing on five code is more important than explaining the unit of meanings.

a. Hermeneutic Code

This code is the sign creating tense; it causes questions to the reader during the reading process. This code covers the placement of enigmas as well as the realization of the enigmas themself. This codes are existed in the text "Bungkusan." The word *Bungkusan (*in English*:*

Package) itself creates question to the character "I" in the short story as well as the reader during almost half of reading process. The readers are pushed to feel curious to what actually the *package* on the shoulder is, whether it can be understood as a real *package* (denotative meaning) or the other (connotative meaning).

Besides the lexia "package," there are other lexia creating enigma in readers' mind i.e. the odd phenomenon witnessed by the character "I." The phenomenon where people wearing white clothes walking in group here and there in a wide field bringing a package as big as their body size on their shoulders contains much of lexia to understand. Why white dress, what actually the package is, etc.

The existence of these lexias has already puzzling the character "I" and the readers of the short story from the beginning and creates enigma among them and feels like urgent to know the answer and real truth.

The characters who do not have any package on their shoulders such as "I" and the grandfather also automatically drives questions on the reader's mind. They question what phenomena actually happen in the story and wonder if the phenomena showed there is a particular sign giving message.

If we relate to the middle and the end of the story, the enigma driven among the reader's mind is finally solved. The awareness of the character "I" about the death of his parents and relatives eventually solve the enigmas. The conversation between the "grandfather" and "father" helps the reader to get the picture of real condition. However, the whole story still leaves

questions among the reader's mind. How the character "I" and "grandfather" experience the phenomena i.e. wandering alone the desert full of dead people having trouble in finding place to bury their body. What has happened, was that the picture of life after the death or what? Why these two people has no Bungkusan on their shoulders, have they died or about to die in real world?

The story tells that the grandfather refuses "father's" invitation to find the land to bury their body. He prefers taking care of "Ahmad" the name of character "I." It means that the "grandfather" prefers to stay alive and take care of Ahmad.

The enigma is there when the "father" says that there are too many people died this day without reasons. This raises question of why people are dying these days. What makes them die and else.

The text is creating its own fact from the questions arises during the reading process which is eventually solved by the text itself.

b. Cultural Code

This code is the text reference in form of knowledge or value system explicitly stated in the text covering sociology, philosophy, culture and else. What social phenomenon is actually existed, how the mass death happens, why the people are holding the white package on their shoulders, and what makes the land become so hard to find to bury the body?

The questions are then answered by the text stating by the "father" that most land is occupied by the people died because of big flood seven years ago. The word "huge flood seven years ago" must relate to the Tsunami disaster in

Aceh. More than a hundred thousand people died and few are missing and cannot be found. Meanwhile the character "uncle and aunt" died because of a conflict between the government and a group of rebel.

The conflict is stated in the text and it refers to the conflict between Indonesia and Aceh Freedom Movement which is popular in the late 19th. This movement is assumed as a treat to the country's unity. The text shows that the "uncle" died when trying to save the "aunt" from being raped by the soldiers. The soldier's treatment to women at that time is shocking since what they have mentioned is saving the country for unity.

There are many dead victims because of this conflict in which bodies are neglected lying on the ground in the mountain foot. The "grandfather" said to his son to walk behind the mountain, but his son said that there is no space for there are many dead bodies because of gun shots. This indicates the reason of lack of area to bury the body.

The other social phenomena happens reflected from the lexia in the texts is the slaughter of the Islamic students accused as terrorist. This issue was prominent last few years ago. The Beutong Ateuh is one of Islamic boarding house's owner slaughter by the national troop and this phenomena signify the text of "Bungkusan."

There is then another social phenomenon reflected from the text that is the effort of changing the country side to the metropolitan by constructing high buildings, supermarkets, and apartments causing the lack of space even for funeral. This fact gives a deep concern on how

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bad the condition of a nation is. It is not only affecting the living people inhabited the country but also the dying one.

All the social facts found is built up by the text "Bungkusan" itself. From the lexia analyzed under the cultural code, there is a myth of message that the life of Aceh people is far away from peace and comfort for there are many social problems found caused by the human itself.

c. Symbolic Code

This code brings the readers to reveal the meaning of signs scattered in the text. This code also has tight relation with the real meaning of the theme since it has something to do with the connotative code. The symbol is the element of unique structural fictional coding.

This short story tries to hide the message through metaphysic life described as real itself. The character "I" who is trapped in the after death life is actually the text link to create myth or meaning.

In consequence, the text "Bungkusan" refers to two meaning i.e. connotative and denotative meaning. However, connotative meaning is more preferred than the last one so that it will give an exploration to the reader enjoying the texts.

The term "package" itself gives another connotative meaning as human deeds during lifetime even though there is another sign signaling that the package contain their dead body.

However, the text telling that some people bringing the package in various manner signals the connotative meaning of the package. Some people brings the package with great efforts,

meanwhile some brings the package easily even though the size of the package is bigger than their body. The way the people bring their package indicates the connotative meaning of the package.

d. Proairetic Code

This code guarantees the text read is a story containing the sequence of action related to each other. This code is the main element of a text. Every action in the story can be well arranged or systematized. That actions relates to each other even if they are overlapping each other.

In this short story, the action of the character "I" is not much. What he does during the whole story is just standing in one point witnessing the actions of the people around him including the action of his grandfather who stands in the other side.

By just standing alone, however, the social facts and phenomena are then revealed along with the memory told by the character "I" which is dynamically moved forward. As whole, the action of character "I" indicates a dynamic passive movement.

e. Semantic Code

This code refers to the psychological condition of characters, atmospheric situation of places and particular objects. The semantic code is the signs of connotative world containing certain message and tone.

In this short story, the psychological condition of character "I" is similar to a child condition witnessing the confusing phenomena. While the other people bring the package, he finds himself with none of it and feels anxious. He

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thought that his package must be stolen by someone.

Witnessing the odd situation, he stays still hearing the conversation between his grandfather and father. Seems like a child waiting for adult conversation business ended and find the answer.

He also feels frightened when his pale-faced and red-eyed father suddenly asked him to see what inside the package. The psychological condition of character "I" shows that this character is trapped in an odd frightening situation; the situation of death life. The connotative signs found in several part is building a message and particular issue.

The message need to be delivered here is the protest toward a social condition disadvantaging many people; the natural disaster caused by the people's careless hand and actions, political conflict taking many victims, and terrorism issue endangering the humanity life.

The connotative meaning of the whole story is that the peaceful life in the Aceh territory does not anymore existed as the effect of particular interest. To this issue, the atmosphere created in the story is actually not a depiction of an after-life situation but real-life situation. Many people are not easy to find a place to live since there are too many social and political conflict. This myth is what the text need to tell.

E. Conclusion

The short story contains lexias which is then analyzed into five system of Barthesian's code i.e. hermeneutic code, cultural code, symbolic code, proairetic/narrative code, and semantic code. Each lexia contains certain codes which eventually creating

sign and the sign creating meaning derived from the initial signifier and signified.

The five codes found in this short story creates a link to generate text meaning. It is obviously clear that the signifier and signified in the text refers to the protest of uncertain Aceh's social life. An unstoppable political conflict, rapid modernization, as well as natural disasters are the human disaster caused by the hand of human itself.

Acknowledgement

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