

Literary “abroad”: Ahmad Fuadi in the Indonesian’s Literary Arena: Sociology of Literature’s Study

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Abstract: *behind the success of the authors, letters, and/or novelists, there are some interesting wrestlings from their position in the Indonesian literary arena. For some of them, success is not only creating work, then read and bought. A recognition is more important, to have a more important position than being ‘author’ only. This case urges the researcher to conduct this research, about the position of a popular novel author, Ahmad Fuadi. Bourdeau (in Karnanta, 2013) by his concept, heterodoxa, discussed the explicit thought shared about whether legal or not of the perception and appreciation currently in effect. The investigation towards Ahmad Fuadi’s position in the Indonesian’s literary arena by using the sociology literature approach resulted that he never asked for his literary position, although he has international and well-appreciated works. For him, the most important is working, worshipping, continuously ‘going abroad’ for studying and ‘broadening’ knowledge toward others by his work.*

Key Words: *literature’s arena, heterodoxa, author*

I. INTRODUCTION

Status and position wrestling of an author in the Indonesian literary arena is being an interesting topic to be discussed. This case is in line with the concept heterodoxa of Bourdeau (in Karnanta, 2013), thought shared explicitly about whether legal or not of the perception and appreciation currently in effect. Andrea Hirata’s name is being quite a warm conversation. Behind his success in the novel *Laskar Pelangi*, there are some critics criticize him in the literary pace. Andrea Hirata who known as a kind-hearted author by the public expresses his pretension to be appreciated. “*literature in Indonesia is on one’s last legs to exist, being active in literature get no appreciation*” (Asrori in Karnanta, 2013).

Working in the same theme and genre, education and young adult, Ahmad Fuadi is being ‘just so so’. There is no news about him in terms of contestation polemic in Indonesian’s literary arena. His works are also popular and inspiring like Andrea Hirata’s, even though he came after Andrea Hirata. His most popular work *Negeri 5 Menara* has also translated into two languages, Malay and English language.

The other author who also wrestled in the Indonesian literary arena is Darwis who knows as Tere Liye. He knows as an introvert author, does not like to share his identity and personality, does not

like to meet someone freely, and does not like to take a picture with another. His works that contain moral values creates public pinions about his dedication. But this is then refuted by this decision stopped the cooperation with the Mayor publisher, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, and Republika on the grounds of royalty tax. Besides that, his work, *Hafalan Shalat Delisa* also being controversial work because reputed as plagiarism of the real story of a girl in Aceh named Delisa. Accused that, Tere Liye affirmed that he did not imitate the story of Delisa. This case sparked criticism from several parties about his literary status.

There are some authors want to be recognized legitimately. Some do not care about it, the importance of their work are being bought. In this research, the researcher wants to see Ahmad Fuadi figure in the Indonesian literary arena. So the researcher uses author sociology to investigate life of Ahmad Fuadi in the context of his literature.

The theory that will be used here is the theory of genetic structuralism of Pierre Bourdeau. Meanwhile, the approach is author sociology to investigate the life of Ahmad Fuadi before and after being an author.

Genetic Structuralism of Pierre Bourdeau

Bourdieu (in Zurnailis and Faruk, 2017) defined his theory about genetic as the analysis of objective structural towards different arena that

cannot be separated from genesis analysis and social structure (social public and dominant groups control it). Bourdeau's theory-driven by his desire to limit the room he called as fake opposition between objectivism and subjectivism or he called 'absurd opposition between an individual and public'.

The core of this theory is the concept of habitus and the arena. Habitus by Bourdeau is long and change opposition structure, structured structure and has function to structuring, perception principle actor and practical and representation controller (Bourdieu in Karnanta, 2013). Habitus is a dispositional system that will result in different styles and practices of life, based on the experience and internalization of the agent to interact with another agent or objective structure and social he lives in. Meanwhile, arena saw by Bourdeau (in Zurnailis and Faruk, 2017) as a relational network among objective oppositions in. In the case of literature, the literary arena by Bourdeau (in Karnanta, 2013) defined as the wrestling arena of agents (individual who are social subject and his ability face the social structure) to impose mayor definition about author which the bet is literature's legitimation. Status or literature's legitimation of an author is being crucial case because, by that definition, the author is getting recognition degree the way they can get a special place in the literature's arena. In other words, Bourdeau called as 'absolute entrance ticket' (Karnanta, 2013).

About legitimation, Bourdeau clarified that legitimation of the literary arena is classified into three:

- a) *Specific legitimation*, a recognition given by others group towards another who being their competitor
- b) *Bourgeois legitimation*, aa legitimation conforming with buergeois taste given by dominant fractions in the dominant class
- c) *Popular legitimation*, legitimation given by consumers or public audiences.

An agent exists in the arena by provision or modal. Modal here is a bundle of strength source to get the power and authority in public (Bourdieu in Karnanta, 2013). Modal are classified into four: 1) *economic modal*, which is modal of production material and money; 2) *cultural modal*, which is intellectual ability obtained from formal education or family heritage; 3) *social modal*, which is network modal towards society; and 4) every kind of prestige, status, and symbolic modal.

Each agent has its agent and habitus to grab the position or compete with one another. In this case, an agent grabs legitimation monopoly *symbolic toughness*. *symbolic toughness* by Bourdeau (in Karnanta, 2013) is a power to change and create the reality recognized and believed by the public as the legal one. *symbolic toughness* is close related to the habitus or individual's view about specific perception and appreciation. Bourdieu (in Karnanta,

2013) explained the process of *symbolic toughness* by the concept of *doxa*, which is a set of fundamental reliance which does not need to be explicated. In other words, doxa is a mutual reliance on which the legality and validity need not be questioned. The process of *symbolic toughness* exists when that reliance challenged of questioned by the thought which by Bourdeau (in Karnanta, 2013) called as *heterodoxa*, is a thought explicitly shared to questioned the scheme of perception and appreciation currently in effect. At the same time, the dominant group will train to defend the literary arena they have powered by producing *orthodox*, is a thought explicitly pleads or defends the structure and rule on that arena (Bourdieu in Karnanta, 2013).

Social practice can be formulated as follows: (Habitus x Modal) + Arena = Practice.

Sociology of Literature

Sociology and literature are different. They are different disciplines. In the opinion of Damono (in Suwardi, 2011), sociology is an objective and scientific study about individuals and society, study about social process and institution. Between sociology and literature, has similarity, that is discussing humanity fact. Sociology discusses social matters to know the description of human in the way the adapted toward their environment, about socialization mechanism, and another case of social matter. Meanwhile, literature offers discussion about humans and all the things inside and outside themselves imaginatively. So that to analyze it needs critical study toward social facts. From those descriptions, can be concluded that definition of sociology of literature is the interdisciplinary approach who cares to aesthetical fact and social facts (Suwardi, 2011).

Which differentiate sociology and literature is their character. sociology is objective while literature is subjective. Literature also uses intellectual but more dominant the emotional one. So that for analyzing literature from a sociology perspective, we have to analyze social facts. Things make the sociology of literature is unique study is the object which is wide, deep, and related to each other. So that the interpretation of it is reversible, they are reality and confabulation (Teeuw in Suwardi, 2011). Damono (in Suwardi, 2011) stated that when two sociologists researching society problem, the result will tend to be same. Otherwise, when two artists write about social problems, the work will be different. This caused by the essence of sociology which is objective, while literature is subjective and creative, based on the view of the authors. Because the same work will be stamped as plagiarism.

Sociology of literature is a reversible dialectical relationship between literary work and society. Swingewood (in Suwardi, 2011) gave a positive view. For him, sociology of literature's

concept is not only “literature as the mirror of the society” but also “literature for society”, this case considering the aim of the author. Therefore, Harry Levin (in Suwardi, 2011) said that literary work does not reflect reality, it refract the reality. On the other side, Robert Escarpit (in Suwardi, 2011) added that literary work as the social fragmentation. It means that literature refracts part of life only.

In its essence, sociology of literature related to the creation of literary work, the existence of the literary work, and the function of the literary work (Winarni in Herlina, dkk., 2013). This concept also stated by a popular figure in the sociology of literature, Swingewood, he said that sociology of literature analyzes literature as: historical expression of time as a mirror and social-cultural aspect that has a valuable function (Suwardi, 2011). By the opinion of Watt (in Suwardi, 2011), good literature is literary work gives function: a) *pleasing*, or entertain and b) *instructing*, or giving worth value, reflecting didactic aspect. the didactic concept is given emphasis important, but sociology of literature forbid to leave the aesthetical unsure.

Sociology of literature by Wellen & Werek (Harjito, 2006) consists of: sociology of author discussed about motive, view, ideology, and the aim of creating literary work; sociology of literary work discussed about that literary work itself; and sociology of the reader that discussed about reversible relationship between literary work and the reader.

In the sociology of literature, there is no differentiation of literary class which is serious literature, popular literature, *high culture*, or *low culture*.

In sociology of literature research, Goldmann (in Suwardi, 2011) emphasized some important concepts: 1) social reality and fiction reality which should be connected each other, cannot seen in one side only; 2) humans live in two dimensions which are individual dimension and social dimension; 3) understanding that social fact is dynamic and transformative.

Two important things should be considered when doing research using the sociology of literature approach: 1) looking at society aspect which enable a production of literary work; and 2) giving attention to the effect of literary work towards society.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research will be explained by descriptively qualitatively. The data are from some sources such as online mass media and blog which collected by documentation technique. Analysis is conducted by the theory of Bourdeau, genetic structuralism and sociology of literature approach which is the sociology of the author. By them, the researcher will analyze the position of Ahmad Fuadi in the Indonesian literary arena.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ahmad Fuadi is an author from West Sumatra. He was born in Bayur Maninjau, West Sumatera, September, 30th 1973. Besides being an author, he was also a columnist, reporter, teacher, and communication director. He has many achievements during and after taking education, during and after writing *Negeri 5 Menara* novel. During the education, he got many scholarships abroad such as Fullbright, Chevening, dan many more. The awards he got was also undoubted. Some of them are Best Book and Fiction Writer from National Library of Indonesia 2011; Liputan6 Awards, SCTV for Education and Motivation Category 2011; Best Author from IKAPI/Indonesian Book Fair 2011, dan etc.

He is author who consistent in writing about abroad actors and education. His works are: (1) trilogy of *Negeri 5 Menara: Negeri 5 Menara* (2009), *Ramah 3 Warna* (2011), *Rantau 1 Muara* (2013); (2) *Berjalan Menembus Batas* (2012); (3) *Menjadi Guru Inspiratif* (2012); (4) *Berjuang di Tanah Rantau* (2013); (5) *Anak Rantau* (2017); dan *Daily Dose of Shine* (2018). His contribution does not stop there. Besides writing, he also built *Komunitas Menara*. The mission is to help children who have no opportunities to school so that they can study and get decent education as others. Children who are accommodated are pre-school age children because that time considered as the golden time to develop their character. This community has a big dream to build one thousand schools throughout Indonesia.

The position of Ahmad Fuadi in Indonesia is not as phenomenal as Andrea Hirata. Most of society regarded him as a writer or author.

in case of his reason being an author, he said he wanted to give something worth or valuable to the society. “*I think that I have to make something valuable and I can write only*” (Hutomo in *m.liputan6.com*). Then, to *kompasiana.com* he added, “*hopefully the experience that I wrote could inspire others. And that was part of worship.*” From that comment, we know that an ideology of an Ahmad Fuadi is work to be useful in the world and afterlife. The explanation above about the didactic works and the community of Ahmad Fuadi enough to provide the additional information about the human aspect that he has.

To *Kompasiana* too, Ahmad Fuadi added his comment, “*a book will have no meaning, an author will have no meaning if their literary work did not read. So (I) thanked. If there were people read, it meant that hopefully, they got inspiration and spirit. In the case of several sold-out book, meant that people have prioritized books in their life*”. This is about the euphoria of fantastic people's appreciation for his novel. Based on the data from Gramedia Pustaka Utama as the publisher of *Negeri 5 Menara*, *Negeri 5 Menara* is the most printed local book for

37 years at the company was founded (*kompasiana.com*). in more than one year, this book has been printed 9 times with circulation reaching 155 thousand copies. From the comment by Ahmad Fuadi, seen the personality of him who was humble. He writes to dedicate and thank of the appreciations of the people who wanted to read his work.

Ahmad Fuadi was born from mother and father who are gentle, lovable, and educated. His mother is an elementary school teacher while his father is an Islamic school teacher. He has been taught about Religion and Morality since his childhood. This long education has created good habitus in Ahmad Fuadi. So no wonder if Ahmad Fuadi grew as a boast, useful, and kind-hearted one. He writes as his dedication toward education, to give inspiration and to worship.

His habitus is written in his works. In the article written by Yudhono in *kompas.com* page (2012), Ahmad Fuadi told, “one day, my mother entered my room then went out brought thick paper. I asked, ‘what is this, mak?’ then she answered ‘this is your collection of letters when in Gontor for four years’. Those were I re-read and ‘the feel’ is amazing”. Though that comment can be viewed about the belief of Ahmad Fuadi that reading will give us something great motivation which also give a great effect. So by that he wrote, to be read, to inspire others. His habitus also influenced by the status that he once carried as the reporter. Getting used to writing every day made him not too difficult to write anymore. Although he admitted to write a novel also need long and difficult research. He spent 1,5 years to write *Negeri 5 Menara*. So *Ranah 3 Warna* did (Yudono in *kompas.com*, 2016).

According to formula of social practice by Bourdeau above, what Ahmad Fuadi did is (*Habitus* principle, belief, and kind-hearted x *Cultural Modal* knowledges he got from his parents and education and *Social Modal* that is his network to the fellow writers, reporter, and others) + *Arena* of Indonesian education especially and world generally = writing practice by novels and books.

Ahmad Fuadi is also a member of a legitimate literary constellation, *Forum Lingkar Pena* established by Helvy Tiana Rosa. This is evident from an article on mass media *makassar.tribunnews.com* who uploaded a photo of Yanuardi Syukur (prospective chairman of *Forum Lingkar Pena* 2017-2021 period) with three of his colleagues in FLP, Asma Nadia, Helvy Tiana Rosa, and Ahmad Fuadi. Two of all the works of Ahmad Fuadi are also anthology with writer colleagues such as Eka Kurniawan, Asma Nadia, Dewi Lestari, Putu Fajar Arcana, Sintia Yudisia, etc. The works are *Rahasia Penulis Hebat Menciptakan Karakter Tokoh* and *Dari Datuk ke Sakura Emas*.

Besides joining in the legitimate literary constellation, Ahmad Fuadi also a columnist. One of his article entitled *Pendidikan 24 Jam* ever published

in the opinion rubric of publisher media institution, *Kompas*.

As a writer who is consistent with his works on education and overseas children, Ahmad Fuadi greatly appreciated the works of the nation's children abroad. He stated his admiration to them, Indonesian migrants who wanted to take time to work amid busyness and with all their limitations. They are university students, Indonesian migrant workers, and the general public.

“I appreciate those migrant writers. *Literary abroad needs to be appreciated*” said Fuadi at the awarding ceremony Bilik Sastra Voice of Indonesia (VOI) Award 2016 and a dialog titled “*Karya Anak Bangsa di Perantauan*” in Jakarta (*m.republika.co.id*). Ahmad Fuadi also thanked RRI especially VOI who has routinely organized Bilik Sastra VOI Award to Indonesian writers who lived abroad.

Ahmad Fuadi was also a student abroad when he decided to continue his study at Darussalam Gontor Islamic School, Ponorogo and when he got some scholarships to study abroad. From his 4-years journey in Gontor, he got many experiences, especially one great effected spell, he uses it until now as the life principle, *Man Jadda Wa Jada*, “he who gives him all will surely succeed”. For him, he had to spread that enthusiasm atmosphere to the public, and the way is by his works.

In the earlier page of his novel, *Negeri 5 Menara* he also presented one verse by Imam Syafi'i that told and encouraged others to travel abroad. What Ahmad Fuadi wrote in his works is the document of his own culture. The culture of attitude and thinking. This inline with Suwardi (2011), literary work was born from a certain culture, human culture, concerning attitude, thought, and belief. Ahmad Fuadi described, retold the principle *Man Jadda Wa Jada* he has ever gotten from his teacher by his works. He also strengthened principle ‘abroad’ in his every literary work. For him, going abroad give a new atmosphere, new experience, new habitus, and better self. In other words, he cultivated culture through literary aesthetic.

Although Ahmad Fuadi never contested in the literary arena, but all of his achievements, contributions, and dedication, he undoubted to get *popular legitimation* from public society. For him, the most important is usefulness, ‘abroad’ go on to draw (working), and ‘abroad’ knowledge toward others.

IV. CONCLUSION

As a writer who has not known well and clear about his literary status, Ahmad Fuadi who came from ‘below’, never asked for his literary status, although he has international and well-appreciated works. He also collaborates with mayor and the biggest publisher in Indonesia, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, he also ever published articles on opinion

page of Kompas, wrote together with writer colleagues of legitimate literary constellation in anthology book, *Forum Lingkar Pena*, and many more other evidences that actually 'maybe' can already call Ahmad Fuadi as a writer. For him, the most important one is working, worshipping, continuously 'going abroad' to unstop learning and 'abroad' knowledge toward others by his work.

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