

UNDERSTANDING GENETIC STRUCTURALISM FROM ITS BASIC CONCEPT

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Abstrak

Strukturalisme genetik muncul untuk menjembatani kesenjangan antara teori strukturalisme dan teori sosiologi sastra. Lucien Goldmann, sebagai penggagas, selain mengungkapkan teorinya juga menawarkan metode analisisnya. Teori ini lebih mudah dipahami lewat gagasan Goldmann tentang sifat dasar perilaku manusia yang dipengaruhi tiga sifat dasar, yaitu kecenderungan terhadap signifikansi, konsistensi, dan transendensi. Sifat-sifat dasar ini adalah dasar bagi semua penelitian sastra. Sesuai dengan konsep itu, teori strukturalisme genetik berawal dari konsep tentang fakta kemanusiaan (*human fact*). Subjek fakta kemanusiaan meliputi *subjek individual* dan *subjek kolektif*. Fakta kemanusiaan yang memiliki peran dalam sejarah, termasuk karya sastra, merupakan fakta sosial yang hanya mungkin diciptakan oleh *subjek trans-individual*, yaitu subjek yang mengatasi individu, yang bertindak karena dorongan aspirasi kolektif dan merepresentasikan pandangan dunia masyarakatnya yang lahir melalui *structural process* dan *de-structive process*. Karena itu, studi tentang karya sastra tidak bisa dipisahkan dari totalitas kehidupan masyarakat dan hubungan sosial historisnya. Untuk memahami karya sastra secara menyeluruh, Goldmann memakai metode dialektik dengan menerapkan konsep 'keseluruhan-bagian' dan konsep 'pemahaman-penjelasan' yang hasil akhirnya adalah penemuan struktur yang dipahami sebagai pandangan dunia masyarakat.

Kata Kunci

Signifikasi, Strukturalisme Genetik, Sosiologi Sastra

Introduction

The emergence of Genetic Structuralism, one of the 20th century critical methods, cannot be separated from the development of literary theories in the very beginning of the century. At the time, there was a kind of contradiction between structuralism that focuses on the autonomy of literary works and the sociology of literature that focuses on the relation between literary works and other factors outside the literary works, such as the authors, society, and historical background. Genetic Structuralism emerged to make a bridge between them.

Genetic Structuralism was developed by Lucien Goldmann, a French Sociologist. In his theory, Goldmann not only explains his theory but also offers the method to analyze literary works.

Genetic Structuralism

Genetic Structuralism can be understood more easily through Goldmann's ideas of the fundamental characteristic of human action. In 'Genetic Structuralism in the Sociology of Literature' as edited by Elizabeth and Tom Burns (1973:119), Goldmann states that the fundamental characteristic of human action includes:

1. The tendency towards adapting to the realities of the environment and, hence, its characteristics form of relating to that environment, through rationality and by rendering it significant.
2. The tendency towards overall consistency and towards creating structural forms.

3. Its dynamic nature, i.e. the tendency towards modifying and developing the structure of which it forms part.

According to Goldmann, in their lives human beings are influenced by three basic natures in the form of some inner tendencies. The first is the tendency to adapt themselves to the reality in their surroundings. They do this in a certain way called 'rationality,' that is, human efforts to respond all the problems they face in their surroundings. They always direct the response to 'significancy.' It means that the response they give is not just any response but a response that is suitable or useful for them.

The second tendency of the fundamental characteristic of human action is the tendency towards 'consistency' in its totality, that is, the human tendency to create consistent patterns in their thought, behavior, and feeling or the structures of thought, behavior, and feeling as their responses to all the problems in their environment.

The third is the dynamic nature, that is, the tendency to change and develop the structures of thought, behavior, and feeling that have been formed before. Goldmann calls this kind of tendency as the tendency toward 'transcendancy' whose meaning is similar to Pascal's concept of transcendence, that is, the practicality, the activeness, and the dynamics of all the social and historical movements (Goldmann in Burns, 1973: 117).

The three fundamental characteristics of human action are the basic concept of Genetic Structuralism theory or, in the other words, the concept encompasses or becomes the basis of the other concepts in Genetic Structuralism. Goldmann also thinks that the fundamental characteristics of human action provide the basis of all literary researches, "It seems to me that these three fundamental characteristics of human action are basic to all positive research into literary." (Burns, 1973:118).

In accordance with the concept, Genetic Structuralism starts with the concept of human fact. Human fact means similar to human

behavior, as what Faruk says that human fact means all human activities and behaviors, both the verbal and the physical ones, which sciences try to understand (Faruk, 1988:70). This is the same as culture used in social sciences. Thus, human fact, just like culture, can be in the form of certain social or individual activities, including cultural works, such as paintings, musical compositions, and also literary works.

Human fact is a significant structure. Every time human beings do something, they always face the problems they have to solve. In their efforts to solve the problems, they try to modify the situation in order to be suitable with their aspirations. Moreover, they try to give significant responses to the problems they face (the tendency toward significance). Furthermore, they tend to reconcile or bring into line all the different responses as the result of the complexity of the problems so that resulting one form of response that match each other as a whole (coherent). In this case, human beings tend to create the structures of thought, behavior, and feeling that are more or less significant and coherent (the tendency toward consistency). In this perspective, the cultural activities in their various forms, including literary works, are significant and coherent structures.

The subject of human fact comprises two kinds, that is, the individual subject who is the subject of individual fact and the collective subject who is the subject of collective fact. Not all human facts come from the individual subject. Human facts that have important roles in human history, such as social, politic, and economic revolutions, as well as great cultural works, are social facts that can only be created by the trans-individual subject, that is, the subject who surpasses the individuals, who acts due to the collective aspiration. Likewise, great literary works are also considered as social facts created by the trans-individual subjects.

Suggested by the tendency to create a significant structure, each member of a certain social group or community tends to create the same significant structures. Thus, a social group tends to have the same pattern of significant structure. This provides the basis for Goldmann's

concept of worldview. Worldview is the result of interaction with the environment or the social group.

As the result of interaction between an individual and his or her environment, worldview springs from a long process consisting of two interrelated processes, namely, structural process and destructive process. The former is the process of constructing a new structure, while the later is the process of destructing the old structure. In the society, the two processes go on continuously whose last orientation is to reach an optimum equilibrium for human and a whole certain social group being survivable. This is the core of the third fundamental characteristic of human action.

Literary works are considered as coherent worlds that can be made the same as worldview because literary works are the products of interaction between collective subjects and the situation around them. Indeed, literary works do not directly reflect the collective consciousness, but they accelerate the degree of structural coherency the collective consciousness itself has. It means that through the literary work created by an individual who directly gets in touch with his or her social group we can see clearly the worldview of the social group in question because the social group will not be able to or it is very difficult for the social group to realize their own aspiration without any intervention from the creative individuals; and the same individuals will never be able to produce their works if they have not found the basic elements and their relations in collective consciousness. Thus, as a matter of fact, cultural works have both high individual and social characters in the same time.

Based on the concept explained above, Genetic Structuralism considers the quality of a literary work is extremely determined by the degree of its coherency. It means that a literary work is considered significant if the work is the result of intense interaction or interrelation between the subject who creates the work and his or her environment. Therefore, the study of literary works cannot be separated from the totality of the social life and its social-historical relation. The study of

literary works and human facts generally should involve two disciplines all at once, namely, sociology and history, to find scientific and realistic results.

In order to have a comprehensive understanding about literary works, Goldmann uses dialectic method, that is, literary analysis method that mainly focuses on coherency, on how a literary study results in a single comprehensively coherent meaning.

Dialectic method perceives that there is no starting point that is absolutely valid, and there is also no problem that can be thoroughly solved. Therefore, our thought never moves linearly, but continuously goes in a circle without being identified the beginning and end (Faruk, 1988: 105). Nevertheless, Goldmann does not deny that a research must regard at least one hypothesis that comes from a certain assumption. According to Goldmann, the assumption that human behavior must be more or less significant as the result of the interaction with the environment is the only general characteristic of human action that can be used as the starting point.

Conclusion

In his dialectic method, Goldmann develops two pairs of concepts. The first is the concept of 'whole-part' that means analyzing a literary work should start with the smaller parts and then be related to the whole hypothesis to find out the coherent and comprehensive structure that is, according to Goldmann, the worldview of the novel. The second is the concept of 'understanding-explanation' that is considered as the efforts to describe the structure of the literary work and find out the significance of the structure by combining it with the larger structure. The larger structure, in this case, represents the worldview as the decisive instrument because a literary work is considered as the expression of the larger structure.

From the overall explanation, we can see that to understand Genetic Structuralism is to understand its basic concept. It is the basic concept that develops the other important concepts in this theory.☑

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