

Construction of Social Criticisms in the Anthology of the Short Stories *GRES* by Putu Wijaya

I Ketut Nama¹, I Ketut Sudewa²

^{1,2} Study Program of Indonesian Language, Faculty of Humanities, Udayana University

ABSTRACT: This current study analyzes social criticismS in the anthology of the short stories entitled *Gres* written by Putu Wijaya using the theory of literary sociology. The data was collected using the literature review method with observation, reading and note-taking techniques. The collected data was sorted using the sampling purposive technique. The data sorted was descriptively analyzed and interpreted using the theory of literary sociology. The results of analysis were presented using the descriptive analysis method and the scientific language variety based on the predetermined research report writing format.

The results of analysis show that among the 17 short stories in the anthology of the short stories *Gres*, several dominant enough contain social criticisms. The social criticisms it contains are: (1) morality-related social criticism; (2) family-related social criticism; (3) violence-related social criticism; (4) education-related criticism; and (5) law-related social criticism. Such social criticisms seem to be relevant

if they are related to the current social life of the Indonesian nation. The writer presents his social criticisms so straightforwardly that they are easily understood. In addition, they are contextual to the social life. The shock technique and satires applied by the writer cause the readers to understand what is intended to be presented.

KEYWORDS: anthology, short story, social criticism

1. INTRODUCTION

The anthology of the short stories *Gres* is a collection of the short stories written by Putu Wijaya firstly published by *Balai Pustaka* in 1982. Then it was printed again in 1987 and 1992. The anthology used in this current study is the one lastly printed, that is, the one which was published in 1992 consisting of 139 pages. It contains seventeen short stories with different themes. However, some contain the same theme, that is, social criticisms. As well, the writer uses mental terrors and specific narrations.

It is essential to explore the social criticisms in short stories, especially the ones the anthology *Gres* contains. The reason is that man often forgets his identity (as narrated in the short story entitled "Babi"). He often undergoes mental pressure (as narrated in the short story entitled "Dompét"). He highly idolizes certain figures causing him to be depressed (as narrated in the short story entitled "Bisma"). Within this context, short stories, as one of the literary works, function to control social life. Based on the background of the study, the problem discussed in this current study is the social criticisms the anthology *Gres* written by Putu Wijaya contains.

2. THE RESEARCH METHOD AND THEORY

The method applied in this current study is the literature review with observation, reading, nota-taking, and interpreting techniques. The study was initiated by reading thoroughly and repeatedly the object of the study, that is, seventeen short stories as the population of the anthology *Gres*. Then, the purposive sampling technique was used to determine the short stories containing social criticisms used as the sample of the study. After that, what was read was observed and recorded in order to be able to answer the research question. Later, the data was analyzed by connecting one to another. Next, the construction of the social criticisms the short stories used as the sample of the study was interpreted.

The method used in the current study was the analytic descriptive method. Ratna (2007: 53) claims that the analytic descriptive method is applied to describe facts before analysis is made. Analysis is made in order not only to describe things but also to define and explain them in such a good enough way that they are in accordance with the focus of the study. The techniques used to analyze the data were reading, observation, note-taking, and interpretive techniques. The results of the study were descriptively presented.

The main theory used in the current study was the literary sociology theory supported with the other supporting theories, one of which was the semiotic theory. The reason why the literary sociology theory was used as the main theory was that attention

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had not been paid to the social problems appearing in society. The writer reveals them in the literary works he writes using such certain techniques that attention is paid to them by society.

The opinion that literary works reflect social realities contribute to the appearance of the literary sociology theory (Junus, 1986: 7). The writer reflects such social realities through the language signs using the literary work he writes. Therefore, the literary sociology needs to be supported by the semiotics theory in order to be able to reveal the meaning hidden in the language used by the writer. The reason is that language is already meaningful and, in fact, neutral (Pradopo, 1990: 121). In so far as this current study is concerned, the anthology of the short stories *Gres* written by Putu Wijaya reflects the social realities observed by the writer using language as the media.

The theories relevant to the construction of the social criticisms in the anthology of the short stories *Gress* written by Putu Wijaya are those proposed by Diana Laurenson and Allan Swingewood (1972). The literary sociological analysis includes three things. They are: (1) the literary sociology is not only supposed to find out the history and social reflection which a literary work contains, but it is also supposed to find out the facts it contains; (2) the literary sociology views that a literary work is a production of its writer's social situation; and (3) the literary sociology attempts to find out the traces a literary work contains that can be accepted as social facts.

The relevant semiotics theory used as the supporting theory is the semiotics theory proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure (in Zaimar, 2008: 3). There are three things that can be used to understand what meanings are. They are the sign, the signifier, and the signified. In the application of the semiotics theory, the sign, the signifier, and the signified are simultaneously used when the literary sociological analysis is made in general, and when analyzing the construction of the social criticisms that the object of the current study contains in particular.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In several short stories that the anthology of short stories *Gres* contains several forms of social criticisms were discovered. They are revealed by the writer using the same techniques; they are the shock technique and satire, the two things featuring Putu Wijaya. The construction of the social criticisms that the short stories used as the sample of the current study contain can be clearly seen in the following description.

3.1 The Morality-related Criticism

Morality has something to do with what one should and had better do or how one should live one's life. Moral aspects are used as a guideline for behaving, carrying oneself, acting and developing actions so that one's life is successful. Philosophically, morality refers to a concept already formulated by society to identify what is good and what is not good. Therefore, morality refers to the norms of life that have special positions in social life. In *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (1989), morality refers to three things. First, it refers to an action, attitude, and manner accepted by the public as good or bad. Second, it refers to a mental condition that encourages one to stay brave, enthusiastic, and passionate etc.; it also refers to emotional state as revealed through one's actions. Third, it can also refer to a moral teaching that can be obtained from a story.

In a literary work, morality can be considered a message and trust. Even, the element of such a trust is actually an idea inspiring a literary work to be written to support the message. The reason is that the effect of the moral message presented through a fiction story is different from that of the one presented through a nonfictional one. Literary works always offer messages that are related to human natures; they always fight for human rights and dignity that are universal in nature (Nurgiyantoro, 2007: 322).

The short story entitled "Takut" narrates a family consisting of a couple and a daughter entering adulthood named Lila. The character Lila always hanged out with her friends of the same age, and showed life behavior, which was, according to her, modern. As well, she acted freely and did not feel that her behavior deviated from eastern norms and morals. One day she was seen to have just gone home from a discotheque accompanied by several boyfriends of hers. Before they left her, they took turns hugging and kissing her. Such a scene was seen by her father, causing him to feel embarrassed and turn her face away. Such a signifier can be seen in the following excerpt.

"Aku tahu betul bahwa mereka melihatku. Tapi dengan hangat sekali; dan ini membuatku tiba-tiba merasa risi dan malu, salah seorang kemudian memeluk dan mencium Lila. Sesudah itu yang satu lagi. Aku memalingkan muka pura-pura tak melihat. Tapi mereka tak segera masuk. Masih ada lagi beberapa perjanjian yang mereka buat. Kemudian baru Lila masuk".

"Lila mengenalkan kedua kawannya kepadaku. Dengan dingin kujabat tangan mereka. Tapi aku masih menunggu beberapa lama lagi, sebelum mereka kemudian pergi. Aku menarik napas panjang. Lila masuk, membuka sepatu dan terus ke kamarnya. Aku masih sempat memandang ke halaman. Beberapa lama tercenung. Memilih apa sebaiknya dilakukan. Aku ingin menghargai spontanitas. Aku tak suka dikatakan kolot. Aku tak mau dikatakan menekan anak. Tapi aku tersinggung dan malu sekali" (hlm.30).

[*"I knew very well that they saw me. They hugged each other warmly; and this caused me to feel embarrassed and uncomfortable; then one of them hugged and kissed Lila. Then the other one did too. I turned my face away and pretended*

not to see the scene. They did not come in immediately. There were still several appointments made. Finally, Lila came in". "She then introduced her two friends to me. I shook their hands coldly. However, I waited a few more minutes before they left. I took a deep breath. Lila came in, took off her shoes and went to her room. I was still looking at the yard and got lost in thought for a few minutes. I chose what to do better. I wished to appreciate spontaneity. I was not happy if I was said to be old-fashioned. I was not happy either if I was said that I had pressed my child. But I felt offended and seriously embarrassed" (p. 30)].

The above excerpt, as a signifier, shows that, sociologically, Lila's and her friends' behaviors serve as a signified, that Lila's behavior did not show the eastern social norm any longer, the norm adhered to by most Indonesians. Lila's and her friends' behaviors tended to be influenced by the western culture that tends to be free and unlimited. Lila's father felt seriously uncomfortable and wished to advise her that she had better behave according to the eastern customs; at least he hoped that her behavior would not cause him to be embarrassed and awry by the signifier (page 31).

The above signifier (page 31) seems to implicitly show the morality-related social criticism. The signified presented by the writer is that young people should not have misinterpreted the freedom adhered to by the western culture. Such behaviors should not have been imitated by young people, especially those living in Indonesia.

Putu Wijaya, in his short story entitled "Bisma", presents morality-related social criticism. Morality is a fundamental thing that should underlie human behavior in society. It contains either the good or bad values of human behaviors and actions (Awaliah and Dewi, 2021: 25). Such a social criticism was presented through what was uttered by the character Bisma when facing people proud of him around Pasar Senen, Jakarta (page 130). The character Bisma was constructed as the current character in modern life with the current appearance and style. Bisma said to those around him that he was an ordinary human being as others; in other words, he did not show any specific thing, meaning that although he was a great character in the puppet story, as a human being, he also had weaknesses (Sudewa, 2025: 222). At that time, the character modern Bisma, resulting from the reconstruction of the character Bisma in the Mahabharata epic story, suddenly appeared at Pasar Senen Jakarta, causing those around him to get astonished. Putu Wijaya reflects Bisma's view and principle using what was uttered by Bisma, as the signifier, as follows.

"Saya akan merasa tidak adil kalau tidak menyalurkan potensi saya yang sebenarnya untuk kepentingan kebahagiaan saya dan kebahagiaan orang lain. Apa artinya kesucian, keteguhan pada sumpah, keberanian bekorban, kalau masyarakat merindukan lahirnya seorang pahlawan, seorang pemimpin? Segala kepentingan diri harus dikuburkan, kalau manfaatnya untuk umum lebih banyak. Dan kalau itu berarti mengkhianati sumpah, menjadi jahat, menjadi tidak luhur, jangan terlalu dipikirkan. Kita harus berani mengorbankan kepentingan pribadi, kesejahteraan batin pribadi, nama pribadi demi orang banyak. Artinya, pendek kata, kalau kita harus jahat apalah artinya kalau kejahatan-kejahatan kita membahagiakan rakyat kita semua?" (hlm. 132--133).

[I would feel unfair if I did not channel my true potential for the sake of my happiness and the happiness of others. What do holiness, steadfastness to the oath, and courage to sacrifice if society longs for the birth of a hero, a leader? All personal interests must be buried, if the benefits for the public are greater. And if that means betraying the oath, being evil and dishonest, do not think too much about it. We must dare to sacrifice personal interests and well-being, and personal name for the sake of the public, meaning in short that we have to be evil, what does it mean if our evil deeds make all our people happy? (pp. 132-133)].

Sociologically, the social criticism presented by Putu Wijaya, as a signifier, reflects the social situation he observed that dualism in social life, that is, faithfulness, courage to sacrifice, and steadfastness in keeping promises which are opposed to breaking promises for the sake of personal interests cannot be avoided. Dualism will always exist in social life and one should choose. The other choice offered by Putu Wijaya is that do not consider dualism into consideration when determining what attitude will be taken, and that do what can be done for the sake of the public interests and happiness. That principle seems to be the signified reflected by the writer in the short story entitled "Bisma" and is different from what is narrated in the Mahabharata story, in which he is pictured as a character who is faithful, powerful, intelligent, and willing to sacrifice. As well, he is pictured as a special character with strong principles and as a demigod (Randya, 2006: 73-74). It is also narrated in the Mahabharata story that Bisma is a character who does not think about the happiness of the Baratha family and society. He only puts forward the principles of life, although such principles destroy his big family and society. This can be concluded from the terrible war involving the Pandawa family and Kurawa family, which finally destroy his family and society. Putu Wijaya seems to offer a solution through the short story he writes that a knight should serve happiness and welfare of society, although he must commit a crime.

3.2 Family-related Social Criticism

The family disorganization-related social criticism refers to the breakdown of a family as a unit whose members fail to fulfill their social role-based obligations (Soekanto, 2017:324). The incomplete family unit resulting from extramarital affairs, the family disorganization resulting from divorcement, separate beds, lack of family members, lack of communication among family

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members, and any family crisis resulting from internal factors are classified under what is referred to as the family disorganization. A mentally disturbed family member may also result in the family disorganization. The family-related social criticism in the anthology of the short stories *Gres* can be found in the short stories entitled “Dompét” and “Takut”, as can be described as follows.

The short story entitled “Dompét” narrates the life of the Kasno family, his wife and child. The money collected at the cinema caused Kasno to be busy outside the house. Kasno’s attitude caused his wife, who stayed at home, to get angry, as can be seen in the following excerpt.

“Pasti mampir ke mana-mana dulu”, kata wanita itu. Kasno tak menjawab. Ia hanya bengong. Duduk di kursi. Pikirannya terus pada dompet. Dompét. Dompét. Waktu istrinya mengajaknya makan, ia terus memikirkan dompet.
“Dompét”, katanya lirih.
Istrinya terkejut. “Dompét? Dompét apa?” (hal.18).

[“Definitively stop by everywhere first”, the woman said. Kasno did not answer. He just stared blankly. He sat on the chair. His mind was always on his wallet. The wallet. The wallet. He kept thinking about his wallet, when his wife asked him to eat. “The wallet”, he said softly. His wife got shocked. “The wallet?” What wallet?” (p. 18)].

The above excerpt shows that he was considered negligent in taking care of his family and his wife’s needs, as he was taking care of his wallet. The wallet he had been thinking about all this time was actually his own wallet which his wife had tucked into his trouser pocket because his son, Agus, always asked for money. Apparently, Kasno was not careful and alert enough. He should have checked what was in the wallet carefully. He was made to be dizzy; and he pretended to be honest so that the wallet could be returned to its owner. The social criticism that the short story “Dompét” above contains, as a signified, shows that husband and wife should understand each other’s needs.

The short story entitled “Takut” reflects the life of a family consisting of father, mother and a teenage girl named Lila. The family disharmony resulted from Lila’s unusual behavior at least to her father. She was often kissed by her boy friends in front of her father when they took her home at night, as shown by the following signifier.

“Tapi kamu duduh membuat saya merasa malu seperti itu. Dan bukan sekali ini. Hanya baru sekarang papa bicara. Apa toh sulitnya untuk membatasi sedikit pergaulan. Bukan berarti tidak boleh bergaul. Bukan berarti tidak boleh bebas bergaul. Bukan berarti tidak boleh ciuman. Kalau kamu ulang tahun dan teman-temanmu mencium kamu di depan papa, papa anggap itu sopan. Tapi ini, mereka memperlakukan kamu seperti barang mainan tanpa perasaan segan justru di depan papa kamu sendiri. Apa modern itu begitu? Apa modern berarti kita boleh berciuman dengan siapa saja dan di mana saja? (hal.33)

[But you had made me embarrassed. Not only now. But only now I spoke. What made you difficult to limit your social interactions? This does not mean that your dad did not allow you to socialize, and that you were not allowed to socialize freely and to kiss each other. Your dad considered it polite when your friends kissed you in front of your dad when you celebrated your birthday. But what your dad saw was that they treated you as a toy without any feeling of reluctance in front of your dad. Did this mean modern? Did modern mean that we could kiss anyone and anywhere?] (p. 33).

The above excerpt shows the social criticism related to the family disharmony. It was mentioned that Lila’s father was made to be disappointed by the behavior “shown off” by her boyfriends. What is signified by the above signifier is that so far Lila’s father bottled up his feelings to avoid conflicts. However, the feeling of not accepting such a behavior was expressed to Lila that the concept modern did not mean unlimited freedom. Such a behavior could indirectly demean oneself, and, in this case, Lila. Her father was not happy and not willing to see his only daughter behaved like that.

3.3 The Violence-related Social Criticism

Humans are social creatures who need other people to carry out their activities. God creates humans to appreciate, help, and respect each other. As social beings, humans are also required to be able to appreciate the rights of the social beings living close to them. Therefore, every act violating human rights is not prohibited by the state and all religions. However, in fact, the acts violating human rights, such as the act of violence, often take place. Violence means the use of physical force against people or objects. Social violence means the violence committed against people and property as they fall into certain categories (Soekanto, 2017:323).

The short story in the anthology of short stories *Gres* which contains the violence-related social criticism is the one entitled “Aktor”, in which the fight over a woman named Roro Mendut is narrated. Part of the story is adapted from a legend story entitled Pronocitro Roro Mendut. It narrates “the unrequited love”, involving Wiroguno who would like to propose to Roro Mendut, although he knew that Roro Mendut had already had a boyfriend named Pronocitro. Wiroguno’s first sight of Roro Mendut inspired him to love her. Then, he expressed his feelings (pp. 44-45).

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Pronocitro and Roro Mendut fled to the South Coast of Java. However, Wirogono did not remain silent. He and his troop chased and interrogated them, as can be seen from the following excerpt.

“Akan tetapi tentu saja aku tridak bisa membenarkan ada yang mencuri begitu saja hak milikku. Apa yang kamu inginkan, dalam hal ini, Mendut, kalau memang ingin kamu miliki, aku akan serahkan sekarang. Sekarang juga. Tetapi apa yang sudah pernah kamu perbuat, yaitu melarikan sesuatu – kebetulan di sini seorang wanita – atas dasar apa pun namanya, harus tetap diakui sebagai pencurian. Jadi, tidak perlu ada pertumpahan darah. Kecuali kalau kamu menghendaki sejak semula, atau hari ini, bahwa kamu sebenarnya hanya ingin membuat aku marah. Kalau memang begitu, kita akan selesaikan ini di sini sekarang dengan tuntas kalau perlu dengan darah. Bagaimana? (hlm.45).

[But I cannot justify if there is someone stealing my property without any reason. What do you want? Do you want Mendut? If you do, I will hand her over to you. Right now. But what you have done, that is, running away with something, which, in this case, happens to be a woman – whatever the reason is – it is a theft. If that is the case, we will solve it completely here right now, and, if necessary, with blood. What is your response? (p. 45)]

The above signifier shows that Tumenggung Wirogono was made to be seriously offended and disappointed by the attitude of Roro Mendut and Pronocitro. His honor and self-respect felt violated. As a family member of Tumenggung, who was still influential and had physical power, Pronocitro challenged Pronocitro to a fight (p. 46). The peak of his anger was poured out through a fierce and unequal fight between Wirogono, who was a very powerful prime minister, and a young man who was still very innocent named Pronocitro. In just a few moves, Wirogono's double bladed dagger managed to stab the body of Pronocitro, caused him to pass away. The above signifier shows the signified that nobody benefited if problems were resolved with violence.

3.4 The Education-related Social Criticism

Putu Wijaya seems to reveal the education-related social criticism in his short story entitled “Moh”. Criticism in the field of education in general and in the field of higher education in particular seems to be relevant to the current condition of Indonesia. There are so many university graduates are becoming intellectually unemployed. The reason is that they are not prepared to be employed as what they have learned is only theory. Sociologically, a university student is said to be successful if he or she has been able to obtain a certificate of completion of study. This is also confessed by Martono (2010:342) that a university student is said to be successful if he or she has been able to obtain a certificate of completion of study which then “can be sold” to get a “decent” job based on his or her perception. Sociologically, such a view reflects the current social life of Indonesian society. Semiotically, this also shows that the developing society still views formality in every aspect of social life. The social criticism presented by the writer in his short story reflects social realities that should be resolved by society and related parties (Hieu, 2021: 176). The education-related social criticism is presented by Putu Wijaya in his short story entitled “Moh”, as can be seen in the following dialogue between a father and his child as a signifier.

“Ayah” kataku dengan formil, tegas dan mantap. “Ayah harus memberikan saya hak untuk bicara. Menurut pendapat saya menjadi sarjana hanya salah satu jalan yang bisa diempuh. Apa salahnya saya tidak ingin menjadi sarjana? Sudah saya katakan dulu bahwa saya tidak mampu, tapi ayah tidak peraya. Bagaimana kalau saya katakan begini. Cobalah ayah lihat. Apa gunanya saya menjadi sarjana kalau mutu saya sama dengan sarjana-sarjana yang ada sekarang? Setiap tahun ribuan sarjana dilepaskan oleh kampus. Mereka berebutan cari kerja. Tapi setelah test tidak ada yang benar-benar matang. Mereka semuanya hanya jadi robot. Sedikit sekali yang benar-benar bisa memiliki ilmu tetapi menumbuhkan dirinya sebagai manusia biasa (hal. 103).

[“Father”, I said formally and firmly. “Father should give me the right to speak. In my opinion, becoming a university graduate is one of the paths I can take. What is wrong if I do not want to become a university graduate? Once I said that I could not go to university, but you did not believe. What is your opinion if I listen to this? What’s the point of me being a university graduate if the quality I have is not equal to that of the university graduates currently available? There are thousands of graduates every year. They are scrambling to find work. However, after they are tested nobody is really mature. They are all just robots. Only a few who really have knowledge and are able to be unusual human beings (p. 103)].

The above excerpt, as a signified, shows the current social situation of the Indonesian society in general, and the intellectual Indonesian society in particular. Children are forced to follow their parents, but they are free to determine their ways of life. Nowadays, there are so many university graduates who are becoming unemployed as what they have learned is theory only; they do not learn from any phenomena and what is needed by society. In fact, they all expect that if they will have decent jobs and able to improve the quality of their lives if they are equipped with higher education (Alam, 2016:251). According to Putu Wijaya, this results in “robotic graduates” who only have intellectual intelligence; they do not have social intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and

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emotional intelligence. The word ‘robot’ is used by the writer to emphasize that higher education in Indonesia does not have the spirit of struggle and effort. The life of graduates is not realistic and, in general, they are not willing to work hard and face life challenges. They are used to living in comfort and convenience with adequate life facilities. As a consequence, they are becoming a weak generation which is not creative. “Being robots” means that they are not creative enough to open job opportunities. They are not willing to create small but useful things. They only want to have good jobs with good salaries, good and prestigious appearance, and the like. It is this phenomenon that is currently taking place in Indonesia to which attention must be paid by the government as the decision maker in the domain of education, especially in the domain of higher education.

The social criticism presented by Putu Wijaya is not only related to the higher education producing ‘robotic graduates’ but it is also related to the national language. Pay attention to the social criticism presented by Putu Wijaya through the character “aku” which has something to do with the social reality in Indonesia in general and with the view of so many Indonesian people on the mastery of foreign languages, especially English language (pp. 105-106).

What is stated by Putu Wijaya, as a signifier, shows a social criticism of foreign language, especially English language, hegemony in Indonesia. In the world of education, students and university students “are forced” to master English language. Scientific articles must be written in English; in scientific meetings materials must be presented in English; English must be understood if one intends to understand the contents of books; even in certain families English is used as a means of communication. Mastery of English symbolizes intellectuality, prestige, and modern culture. Using foreign languages, especially English, are not prohibited but language use should be in accordance with the 1945 Constitution and the language policy issued by *Badan Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa* reading as follows: “*utamakan Bahasa Indonesia, kuasai Bahasa Inggris, dan lestarikan Bahasa Daerah*” (prioritize Indonesian, master English, and preserve local languages). This indicates that the Indonesian nation is only good at theorizing but there is no practice. The sense of nationalism of many Indonesian people is doubted. They feel prouder to use English in their activities, and they feel less proud to use Indonesian and local languages. The criticism offered by Putu Wijaya should be responded by the Indonesian society. The criticism is as follows: “can English guarantee that people will be able to work well?” (p. 106).

3.5 The Law-related Social Criticism

Putu Wijaya presents his law-related social criticism in his short story entitled “Maria”. Such a social criticism is relevant to the current law-related social reality in Indonesia, which seems to be undergone by the character Maria. She was sentenced to death due to her wrongdoing to the king. The death sentence imposed without being given a chance for defense can be categorized as a human right violation. Human rights are the basic rights that humans are born with (Waluyo, 2022:18). The death sentence could be cancelled if Maria had apologized to the king. She did not apologize as she considered the death sentence imposed on her was unjust and arbitrary. The law must be enforced based on its substance, that is, justice (Sukadi, 2011:44). Pay attention to the following signifier in the form of a dialogue between Maria and the priest before the death sentence was carried out.

Kematian adalah satu kerja kolektif antara nasib, takdir dan manusia serta seorang pendeta macam aku ini. Itu sebabnya ada orang yang ditembak mati karena bedil-bedil macet, ada juga yang tidak jadi mati karena tiba-tiba tersadar dari mimpi dan ternyata itu permainan tidur. Ada yang batal mati karena ada keputusan susulan. Dan kini masih ada waktu untuk terjadi keajaiban, karena Baginda sudah mengatakan kepada kita semua, demi anak-anakmu, hukuman mati ini akan dibatalkan asal saja kamu mau minta ampun. Hanya sekedar minta ampun, mengucapkan beberapa buah kata, menunduk dan kemudian mengikuti beberapa upacara kecil, Pendeta itu mendekatkan mukanya ke telinga wanita itu dan menambahkan dengan berbisik. “Hanya sekedar minta maaf secara formal, kalau dalam hati tidak minta maaf juga tidak apa, yang penting bagi Baginda adalah bahwa kamu tampak, sekali lagi minta maaf tampak minta maaf di muka umum (hal.126)

[Death is one of the collective works between fate, destiny, humans and a priest like me. That’s why there could be someone who was shot dead as the gun they were shooting with jammed; there could also be someone who was not shot dead because he or she suddenly woke up from a dream which turned out to be a sleep game. There could also be someone whose death was cancelled because there was a subsequent decision. And now there was still time for a miracle to happen, as the king had said to us all that, for the sake of my children, this death sentence would be cancelled if you had apologized. Just asking for forgiveness, saying a few words, bowing and following some small ceremonies. The priest brought his face closer to Maria and whispered a few words. “Just formally ask for forgiveness; if you did not ask for forgiveness in your heart, that’s ok; what was important to the king was that you once again seemed to ask for forgiveness before the public (p. 126)].

The above signifier shows that Putu Wijaya criticises the legal condition in Indonesia that is full of pretences, farces, arbitrariness, and manipulations. Making the ruler happy is important. What is signified by the above signifier is that law can be negotiated. Even a priest cooperates in the legal game for the benefit of the ruler. Maria’s refusal to apologize symbolized the resistance of small people to the ruler, although her family was at stake. The discourse of the symbolic resistance to the law shown by Maria signified that some people were still brave enough to fight against the tyranny of the law. This should be the discourse that continues to be fought for amidst the legal injustice in Indonesia. Maria’s strong principle to accept the death sentence imposed

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upon by the ruler and to refuse to apologize was a lesson for her children to live life. The other Maria's principle was that her family did not want to live at the mercy of others. She was not willing to risk her pride and principles for the safety of her children. Putu Wijaya expresses such a thing through what was said by Maria to her children as a signifier (p. 128).

The social criticism expressed by Putu Wijaya above, as a signified, shows that Maria was very firm in upholding her principles, although her children and family were suffering. Sociologically, such attitudes are scarcely found within the legal sociological life in Indonesia. That was implicitly expressed in the form of sharp satires addressed to those who do not have any principle or who sacrifice their life principles for the safety of themselves and their families. The signified also implicitly contains the educational elements of independence and positive characteristics. Maria maintained her life principle as her identity whatever happened to her. Such a life principle can contribute to the identity of the Indonesian nation (Diningsih, 2024: 72-73). The phrases "menetek (sucking)", "pahlawan dalam hidupmu (heroes in your life)", and "kamu tidak akan mati karena menangis" (you won't die of crying) strengthen the social criticism expressed by the writer.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that among 17 short stories the anthology of short stories *Gres*, five short stories, namely the short stories entitled "Dompét", "Takut", "Aktor", "Moh", and "Maria" contain morality-related social criticism, family-related social criticism, violence-related social criticism, education-related social criticism, and law-related social criticism. The morality-related social criticism can be found in the short stories entitled "Dompét", "Takut", and "Bisma". In the short story entitled "Dompét", it is narrated that if something considered valuable is found, it should be reported to the security officer. In the short story entitled "Takut", the life of teenagers which seem to be free and westernized and is not in accordance with the eastern norm, is found.

The short story entitled "Bisma" is constructed in such a way that Bisma is also an ordinary human being with good and bad sides. The family-related social criticism was found in the short stories entitled "Dompét" dan "Takut". In the short story entitled "Dompét", it is narrated that a wallet caused husband and wife to fight. Their family almost broke up. In the short story entitled "Takut", it is narrated that a teenage girl caused her family to become disharmonious. Her behaviour was westernized, causing her father to feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, and disappointed. The violence-related social criticism was found in the short story entitled "Aktor", in which it is narrated that an official committed violence against an innocent young man, who was inexperienced in the field of fighting, causing him to die. Then, the education-related social criticism was found in the short story entitled "Moh", in which it is narrated that university graduates were pursuing academic degrees in order to get decent jobs. Finally, the law-related social criticism was found in the short story entitled "Maria", in which it is narrated that the character Maria was arbitrarily treated as a consequence of being sued by the king. She did not get a proper defence; therefore, the treatment she received could be categorized as a violation of human rights.

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