

## The Social Criticism on the Anthology of Poetry *Portrait of Development* by WS Rendra

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**Abstract:** This study aims to describe social criticism in the poetry anthology "Portrait of Development" by W.S. Rendra. The social criticism studied includes social criticism of life, economic criticism, political criticism, and moral criticism. The research method uses qualitative. The primary data source in this research is the poetry anthology "Portrait of Development" by W.S. Rendra. Data collection techniques that will be used are documentation and observation. Data analysis using document content analysis. The results showed social criticism in the collection of poems "Portrait of Development" by WS. Rendra. The social critique of life is found in the poems "The Poems of the Poor" and "Jockey Tobing's Poem for Widuri," as well as in the poem "The Poem of A Corn." WS Rendra conveyed economic criticism in the poems "The Poems of the Poor" and "The Poems of the Condor Birds", "The Sun Poem", "The Poem of A Corn", and the poems "The Poem of an Old Man Under the Tree." WS Rendra conveyed political criticism in the poem "Young Children's Poems" and "Spouses of Spying". WS Rendra conveyed moral criticism in the poems "Poor People's Poems" and "Young Children's Poems", "Spouses of Spying", "The Poem of A Corn", and "The Poem of An Old Man Under a Tree."

**Keywords:** criticism, social, anthropology

### INTRODUCTION

Poetry is one of the relevant literature to describe the author's thoughts, both regarding the social life of society with its various gaps and one of the media to convey criticism to individuals and groups (Kennedy & Gioia, 2013). This idea is straightforward because the poet is also a writer who is in direct contact with the reality of life and then interprets it, explains it, or reacts accordingly (Emzir, Rohman, Wicaksono (Ed.), 2018). Poetry, an imaginative literary work, is more in charge of explaining, explaining, understanding, opening new views, and giving meaning to the reality of life.

Poetry is one the imaginative literature that emphasizes the density of words but still maintains the element of beauty (Wicaksono, 2014). Aminudin (2014: 134) explains that poetry is a person who has created a world of his

own, which may contain messages or descriptions of certain atmospheres, both physically and mentally (Surastina, 2016). Komaidi (2011: 161) states poetry is an essay that includes dense, concise, and short sentences. It is the essence of words. Moreover, poetry is an expression of the author's feelings which is translated into words in the form of rhythmic stanzas and has a deep meaning. So, poetry is the densest and most concentrated form of literature. The density of the composition is indicated by the use of fewer words but reveals more things.

Oksinata (2014: 40) explains that social criticism is a theme in literary works about the existence of injustice in society to tap the reader's conscience so that social justice is upheld and fought for. Social criticism is a refutation of things that are considered to violate the rules, laws, and values that have become general conventions. Social criticism in literary works is the author's means to express his dissatisfaction with the aspects of people's lives. Literature reflects the social problems that exist in society. If the author has a high level of sensitivity, his literary work must reflect the social criticism in that society. Social criticism is based on an understanding of the awareness of personal human attitudes towards attitudes outside of themselves. Social criticism is based on a human thought process in assessing and studying data related to the target of social criticism. Furthermore, humans as a unified unit are shaped by nature and the socio-cultural environment surrounding them.

Poems that are appropriate to provide social criticism, one of which is the writings of W.S. Rendra. His poems are enough to provide scathing criticism in his time and until the end of his life. The complaints in his poetry started from the new order period. W.S. Rendra, in writing his poems, dared to launch a pretty risky critique. Rendra appears as a brave writer and uses poetry and drama to articulate social criticism, and even the social complaints in his poetry are still very actual today. Some of the poems she wrote are full of social criticism, such as the dignity of women, education, capitalism, poverty, and politics and law. The languages he uses in articulating social criticism in poetry are also synonymous with metaphor, repetition, paradox, rhetorical questions, irony, and cynicism. Rendra's consistent attitude in conveying social criticism through his poetry has made him the most vocal and courageous writer in the history of Indonesian literature (Hermoyo, 2016).

"The Cockroach of Development" is one of Rendra's poems that conveys enough social criticism. In the poem, Rendra wants to convey how the leader runs his country's economy. The lead nation's leader at that time, instead of creating opportunities, actually made the country have a lot of debt because they applied the economic system of astronomy (Hamidah, 2017).

Rendra's insinuation was very strong about the regime leader at that time, whose records about trade in his country's economy were only his

accomplices who knew and implied that his economic system was a science belonging to high-ranking people who meant the opposite. In addition, Rendra also openly said that the highest leaders run a monopoly system and steal the rights of other people and the state. The rulers of the nation freely undermine this country, fantasize about the actual progress of deception, and the voices of truth are silenced and eliminated for the leader's benefit.

The stability that the government heralded at that time was, in fact, only stability that was only owned by the parties of the holy people who sat on the government bench and even security imbalances and bloodshed that occurred. There is no place for us little people to get the security that should be the right of every living being. Not just mere chatter, the words of the Rendra have happened until now.

The existence and leadership style of the leader at that time was like a nightmare that could be found every night while sleeping. Corruption, and injustice for the lower-middle-class people, are still common, as is the culture that has been attached to a country that is rich but poor at heart. The leader at that time was only concerned with personal interests and just sat on the throne, watching the suffering of the people who were getting worse. It was clear what was conveyed to Rendra that the leadership at that time was a monopoly, but he tried to calm the people's hearts with statements that he said were equal (Nurhadi, 2017).

Apart from the poem "Cockroach Development", many other poems by Rendra convey social criticism (Timmerman, 2017). One of these poems is the poem "Aminah". The poem "Aminah" contains a picture of a woman who longs for wealth and power. All paths are taken to make it happen, even though the course will plunge into disgrace. The implied message presented by the poet in this poem is summarized in two aspects of life which can be seen from the words, lines, and stanzas. The poem describes a need that must be met, namely material or property needs. It is undeniable that material needs are the primary needs in human life. To fulfill this need, man has an energy that he sells to earn money throughout his life. Man's power is limited, perhaps eighteen hours per day. Humans will rack their brains when their needs demand fulfillment. It causes humans to dream, hope, and yearn for everything maximum. Even the coveted dream can become a disaster if it is not balanced with efforts/tips to realize it

Based on this background, it is essential to analyze poetry regarding the social criticism conveyed by the author. Therefore, this research raises the issue regarding this matter and is edited under the title "The Social Criticism on The Anthology of Poetry "Portrait Of Development" by WS Rendra".

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative method using a descriptive strategy. The research data is described systematically, in an authentic, and authentic way concerning social criticism contained in the poetry anthology "Portrait Of Development" by W.S. Rendra. In addition, descriptive research seeks to reveal a problem, situation, or event as it is to show the facts. The primary data source in this research is the poetry anthology "Portrait Of Development" by W.S. Rendra. There are 31 poems in the anthology. However, the selected data are ten poems. The selection of the 10 data is based on careful selection, especially those that contain more social criticism.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Social Criticism**

The social criticisms conveyed in the poems of WS Rendra's Portrait of Development are presented in the following section.

Data (1): Poor people on the street,  
    who lives in the ditch,  
    who lost in the struggle,  
    teased by dreams,  
    do not leave them.  
(WSR, Poems of the Poor)

The social criticism in the quote from the poem "The Poem of the Poor" above is the existence of people who live below the poverty line. This condition illustrates that social life is experiencing inequality. The poor and the rich seem to be differentiated, and there is no attempt by the authorities to eradicate it. This criticism was conveyed by a WS Rendra so that the wider community knows that there are still many Indonesians who live suffering amid an unhealthy social life and need a helping hand.

Data (2): The poor march through history,  
    like hot air that is always there,  
    like a drizzle that always looms.  
    Poor people raise their knives  
    to our chests,  
    or their chest.  
(WSR, Poems of the Poor)

WS Rendra also expresses social criticism in the same poem. In the poem, the gaps in the community's social life are still stated, which causes the corners of people's lives to be like in despair. The line "Poor people raise their knives to our breasts, or their own chests" indicates desperation. People seem to be trapped in a life of poverty, as if angry with someone, as if mad at

themselves, until knives are pointed at his chest. This idea is a criticism conveyed by WS Rendra that poor people need a helping hand from rich humans or rulers who have everything.

Data (3): Against the backdrop of cardboard huts,  
I remember your face.  
On the dust of poverty,  
I stand facing you.  
(WSR, Jockey Tobing's Poem for Thistle)

WS Rendra, in particular, delivered social criticism of poverty in one of his poems, "Joki Tobing's Poem for Widuri". In the poem, the poet wants to convey that the complaint is that people live in poverty and live in the huts of the palace. *Kraton* means palace. The rulers live in luxury and wealth, and the people live in poverty. This idea is social inequality in that the ruler ignores the fate of his people. Naturally, the poor "writer" represents the people who live in poverty before the authorities hope for prosperity.

Data (4): And he also saw  
one morning  
near the well  
girls joke  
while pounding corn  
to be Maisena.  
In the kitchen  
the furnaces are lit.  
In pure air  
smell the corn cake  
A pile of corn in the room  
and a young man.  
(WSR, Poem of a Pile of Corn)

In the verse of the poem, it is described that the young man saw the farmer and his crops, namely corn. At dawn, he saw women with corn slings going to the market and cool girls pounding corn into cornstarch with joy and the distinctive aroma of corn cakes that continually wafted from behind the kitchen walls. This situation shows a peaceful community social life situation in a rural problem. It gives a message and criticism that rural life will be more secure in social life than living in the city. However, behind these messages, there is an implied meaning that the ruler should be able to see the suffering of his people.

Data (5): We ask:

Why good intentions don't always work.  
Why good intentions and good intentions can compete.  
People say we have good intentions  
And we ask: Good intentions for whom?  
Yes! Some are victorious. Some are humiliated  
Some were armed, some were injured.  
Some sit, some sit.  
Some are abundant, some are depleted.  
And here we ask:  
Who do you mean well?  
Which side do you stand on?  
(Poem: Student Meeting Poem)

The social critique conveyed in the quote from the poem "Sacrifice of the Student Meeting" shows social inequality. The social gap in people's lives, especially those experienced by students. The line 'some are seated, some are occupied' implies that the poor only surrender and lose in their poverty, while the rich will always deceive their poor fellows. Furthermore, "there is abundant, and there is depleted" indicates an unstable social life in society. This is related to the unequal economic situation. When economic life is unequal and unequal, social life will fall apart in that society. WS Rendra conveyed this criticism as his critical thinking on the condition of Indonesia, which continues to suffer under the authoritarian rulers who oppress their people.

Data (6): Color party sky in the twilight

And I see  
latent protests,  
squeezed under the bed.  
I ask,  
but my question  
hit the foreheads of salon poets,  
who rhymes about wine and the moon,  
while injustice is happening beside her  
and eight million children without education  
stupefied at the feet of the goddess of art.  
(Poetry: Poetry A Lisong)

The social criticism conveyed by WS Rendar in his poem "A Cigar" is that the social life experienced by the community causes protests and demonstrations demanding justice and welfare from the government. This idea is very natural if WS Rendra represents the voice of the people or the voices heard and witnessed around him, experiencing a social life far from welfare. The government has hurt *Pancasila* by not providing interest to its

people, while the 5th *Pancasila* requires social justice for all Indonesian people. If the authorities witness this, it will at least message that the people must be prosperous and provide a sense of fairness to all Indonesian citizens.

### **Economic Critic**

The economic critique conveyed in the poem *Portrait of Development* by WS Rendra is presented in the following section.

Data (7): Don't tell me this country is rich  
because people thrive in cities and villages.  
Don't tell me you're rich  
when your neighbor eats the carcass of his cat.  
(WSR, *Poems of the Poor*)

WS Rendra illustrates that this country is rich, from Sabang to Merauke, abundant in natural wealth. However, people's economic life is not like living in a rich country. They remained poor while the bureaucrats living in the cities continued to get richer. Economic life that is experiencing inequality. WS Rendra refers to someone who considers himself rich while others are miserable and lives in poverty. WS Rendra described such a person as a greedy human being that he even ate the carcass of his neighbor's cat.

Data(8): The mountain winds seep down into the forest,  
then blows over the broad surface of the river,  
and finally, take home in tobacco leaves.  
Then his heartaches  
see the sad traces of the peasants - laborers  
which is stuck on loose soil  
but does not provide prosperity for the population.  
The peasants - laborers work,  
living in windowless huts,  
planting seeds in fertile soil,  
harvest abundant and prosperous fruit  
but their own lives are miserable.  
(WSR, *Poems of the Condors*)

WS Rendra clearly describes the economic crises in the above poem. WS Rendra tried to explain that the people's financial life is still in misery even though they continue to work, farm, and even harvest. However, people's lives remain poor because of the rulers who play with prices, so farmers are always the ones who are always disadvantaged. This criticism is at least a scathing suggestion for the authorities so that prices continue to follow the efforts of farmers.

Data (9): Your face comes out of my forehead,  
    O you, poor woman!  
    Your feet sink in the mud.  
    You expect a quarter bushel of rice,  
    and in the middle of the fields, the landlord planted you!  
    (WSR, Rhymes of the Sun)

The theme of poverty seems to be a popular thing for WS Rendra in his poems. The poet conveyed this because he was concerned about the economic condition of the nation, which was not felt by the poor. The life of the poor is a word that does not escape the poems of WS Rendra. It is ironic. Indeed, poverty continues to be the flower of life for the people of Indonesia, which is rich in nature and its contents.

Data (10): A pile of corn in the room  
    and a young man  
    less educated.  
    (WSR, Poem of a Pile of Corn)

A lump of corn means limited possessions that are meaningless to live; Meanwhile, a youth who has not been educated means that a child does not have an adequate education. Thus, this stanza describes a young man who is less educated and does not have sufficient knowledge due to unfavorable economic situations and conditions. It can also be said that there is a social inequality between the poor and the rich, which seems to have a limit that only the rich have the right to go to school.

Data (11): I look at the times.  
    I see the economic picture  
    in a shop window full of foreign brands,  
    and the dilapidated streets between villages  
    which does not allow interaction.  
    (WSR, An Old Man's Poem Under a Tree)

The data above shows a very harsh and unequivocal criticism of the economy. WS Rendra conveyed that the nation's economic condition can be seen from the economy of the people in the villages. It is worrying if foreign products become the display of people's stalls while domestic products are marginalized. This condition is also natural in today's life. Foreigners very much control the nation's economy. Foreign rice imports, foreign agricultural equipment, and so on. It is as if the rulers are unable to protect the copyrights of their nation and are trapped in the clutches of foreign countries.



### **Political Criticism**

Political criticism conveyed in the poem Portrait of Development by WS Rendra is presented in the following section.

Data (12): We lack formal education  
in terms of justice,  
because they are not taught politics,  
and not taught the basics of the law  
(WSR, Youth Poems)

The political criticism conveyed in the poem is WS Rendra as "we" who lack official education so that a sense of justice is not obtained. Political education is only available to those who have formal education, while young people who do not receive it will only become political tools without making any profit.

Data (13): Why should we accept life like this?  
A person is entitled to be awarded a doctor's degree,  
considered an educated person,  
without being tested for his knowledge of justice.  
And when there is Tyranny running rampant,  
he doesn't speak,  
it only works by injection.  
How? Are we going just to keep quiet?  
Law students  
are considered ceremonial flags,  
while the law is betrayed repeatedly.  
(WSR, Youth Poems)

The political life of a country is synonymous with silencing the critical soul of the youth. The youths receive higher education but are not taught the attitude of justice and are not taught intelligence in seeing the condition of the people squeezed by Tyranny, who continues to thirst for power. At least, this is how WS Rendra felt when he wrote the poem. He saw that political life in his country seemed to be silent without any critical attitude towards the authorities. WS Rendra criticized this 'silent' act that the human conscience has died because educated people are quiet when the law that should be enforced relatively is betrayed by the ruler who makes the law itself.

Data (14): I do not know. You don't know.  
Nobody knows.  
How will we know  
if the censors press the newspapers  
And free pulpits have been controlled.  
Newspapers are our eyes.  
Now it has been replaced by the official eye.

We no longer see multiple realities.  
We are only given a picture of the state model  
which has been sewn by an official tailor.  
The eyes of the people have been removed.  
(WSR, Spy Poem)

Politics in this country is exciting but miserable. This is what WS Rendra said. The state's political life justifies all means to pave the way for achieving and maintaining power and re-achieving it. In the path taken by banning freedom of speech, the people's voices are controlled and spied upon so that they are unable to do anything about the injustice of the rulers. Disgraced justice and freedom. A nation that is said to be fair and upholds the principles of democracy and freedom of speech is just a mere symbol without any reality. This is the criticism of WS Rendra for the injustice of the ruler to his people.

### **Moral Criticism**

The moral critique conveyed in the poem Portrait of Development by WS Rendra is presented in the following section.

Data (15): Don't tell me this country is rich  
because people thrive in cities and villages.  
Don't tell me you're rich  
when your neighbor eats the carcass of his cat.  
(WSR, Poems of the Poor)

The moral critique in the quote above is the collapse of human morals when life is full of inequality so that one human being claims to be rich and another person is poor. It is a moral critique that humans must be wise and able to see the condition of each other. Therefore, WS Rendra stated that humans should not feel rich if they still see their neighbors eating the carcasses of other neighbors. In this case, WS Rendra invites fellow human beings to experience other people's complex lives.

Data (16): And their industry goes on without stopping.  
But what are we prepared to become?  
We are just a bureaucratic tool!  
And the bureaucracy becomes redundant  
, no use-  
become parasites on the branches.  
(WSR, Youth Poems)

The moral critique that needs to be underlined in the quote above is about humans who relentlessly use other humans as bureaucratic tools. Such a human is a human who has low morals. In terms of bureaucracy, identical to the political world, it has become a familiar and inappropriate thing because

bureaucrats have the pleasure of using other human beings to satisfy them. This kind of human being meant by WS Rendra is immoral.

Data (17): There was the disorganized speech among the houses.  
There was an erratic cry in the middle of the rice fields.  
And, you know, it's behind me  
there is a grumpy soldier.  
(WSR, Spy Poem)

The moral criticism conveyed by WS Rendra in the poem is an alarming condition experienced by the Indonesian people. The authorities are still watching people who have suffered and live full of misery. They are "soldiers" in the arm of the ruler without guilt, rebuking the people who might be fighting for their rights as people. It illustrates the moral of the rulers who have collapsed and are no longer taking sides with the people.

Data(18): I ask :  
What is the use of education  
if it will only make someone a stranger  
In the midst of reality?  
What is the use of education  
when just pushing someone  
become a kite in the capital  
clumsy to go home?  
What's the use of someone  
study philosophy, literature, technology, medical science,  
or whatever,  
when in the end,  
when he returned to his territory, then said:  
Here I feel strange and lonely!  
(WSR, Poem of a Pile of Corn)

In the poem above, WS Rendra wanted to challenge the village youths for their excellent moral values. Someone who is highly educated but shy and proud when he returns to his hometown. Someone who is highly educated has learned a lot about a good and moral life. However, when what WS Rendra insinuated becomes a reality, the good moral values that should be able to be implemented will only become mere theories without truth. This is the reality that WS Rendra feels in his poem.

Data (19): I saw looting and decay.  
I spit on the ground.  
I was standing in front of the police station.  
I saw the bloody face of a demonstrator.  
I see lawless violence.  
(WSR, An Old Man's Poem Under a Tree)

The poem above shows the moral critique conveyed by WS Rendra. Robberies occur everywhere, leading to the moral crisis caused by the decline in the nation's economy. The morale of the rulers has fallen due to violence against their people under the pretext of keeping the demonstrators safe. The demonstrators are also people who demonstrate to fight for their rights and fight for justice. People's protection laws are cut without feeling guilty or guilty.

Data(20): Damn the education I received.

Taught me counting, typing, foreign languages,  
neatness and order,  
But forgot to teach:  
when the employer hugs from behind,  
then how do I do!  
Don't just hug me.  
Meanwhile, my boyfriend didn't dare to do that.  
What is the purpose, sir? It's enough, I know,  
When lord elbow my chest,  
(Poetry: A Girl And Her Majesty's Rhyme)

The moral critique conveyed in the quote from the poem "A Girl And Her Majesty's Rhyme" shows a message of moral depravity from an employer. Such a situation describes a difficult life for the maids, especially female maids who work in the household. The lives of domestic helpers are very vulnerable to sexual harassment from the actions of their employers.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In summary, the social criticism of life is found in the poems "Poor People's Poems" and "Jockey Tobing's Poem for Widuri," the poem "The Poem of Seonggok Corn," the poem "Student Meeting," and the poem "A Cigar" Furthermore, the economic crises was conveyed by WS Rendra in the poems "The Poems of the Poor" and "The Poems of the Condor Birds", "The Sun Poem", "The Poem of a Seonggok Corn", and the poems "The Poem of an Old Man Under the Tree". Moreover, the political criticism was conveyed by WS Rendra in the poem " Young Children's Poems " and in the poem " The Spy Poems ". Likewise, the moral criticism was conveyed by WS Rendra in the poems "Poor People's Poems" and "Young Children's Poems", "The Spy Poems" "The Poem of A Corn", and "The Poem of An Old Man Under the Tree" and the poems "Girl and Employer".

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