

Domestic Violence in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sing*

Wiwin Malinda

Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

wiwinmalinda@gmail.com

Abstract

Maya Angelou's autobiographical novel can be seen as an example of domestic violence. "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sing" was written by Maya Angelou, was an American autobiography, poet, journalist, education, and film director. The psychic injuries inflicted upon Angelou in her childhood by her separated parents and the guilt of having been sexually abused by her mother's boyfriend Mr. Freeman made her believe that she had been a mouthpiece of the devil. As an outburst, Angelou depict the isolation she felt as a young girl enduring racism and surviving violent sexual trauma and traces the journey of her development into a strong and independent woman. The notion of three-dimensional approaches and transitivity can be used to demonstrate domestic violent as happened in the "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings".

Keywords: *domestic violence, sexual abused, young girl*

Introduction

Domestic violence, as defined by the United States Department of Justice on Violence Against Women, is defined as acts of abuse in a relationship that can be committed anywhere with the intent of exerting control over another intimate partner. Maya Angelou's autobiographical novel can be seen as an example. "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" was written by Maya Angelou was an American autobiographer, poet, journalist, educator, and film director. The psychic injuries inflicted upon Angelou in her childhood by her separated parents and the guilt of having been sexually abused by her mother's boyfriend Mr. Freeman made her believe that she had been a mouthpiece of the devil. As an outburst, Angelou depict the isolation she felt as a young girl enduring racism and surviving violent sexual trauma and traces the journey of her development into a strong and independent woman.

Critical discourse analysis is about discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power about and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. In relation to the definition of CDA, Fairclough stated that "CDA as a form of critical research seeks to understand how contemporary capitalism in some respects five effect to human well-being with a view to overcoming or mitigating these obstacle and limits." We know from this definition that in conducting an analysis of CDA, we want to let people know about contemporary problems and how to solve them.

Domestic violence is also knowing as a violation of human rights in the community (Aziz, Idris, Ishak, Wahid, & Abu Yazid, 2018). This has occurred between humans and it can be found in the short story, newspaper, film, novel, and society in daily life. It occurs to make readers realize that in the story there is a person who is dominant and a person who gets dominated. The dominant person

often used his power to dominate the others. The power is reflected through their action to the person. In domestic violence, it appeared between husband and wife. The husband dominated the wife or vice versa.

From the explanation above, writer tries to analyse what is domestic violence in this story and the relation between domestic violence. First, writer will use the theory of Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to analyse domestic violence relation with the story. The second is applying the transitivity method accruing to Halliday et al.,. The phenomena of domestic violence like threatening and raping occurred in the text. These two theories can be used to make it clear about what is domestic violence found in text and why it has occurred.

Literature Review

Based on Journal of Adolescent Health (2007) domestic violence is a serious social and public health problem that occurs in all countries around the world. Domestic violence includes an array of physical and sexual violence, emotional abuse, and controlling behaviors by intimate partners. In 48 population-based studies form around the world, between 10% and 69% of women reported being physically assaulted by an intimate partner at some point of their lives, and for many of these women, physical assault was a part of continuing pattern of abusive behavior. Domestic violence is quite popular to analyze in text, short stories, novels, and other. Ann Dix describe that domestic violence is the phenomena or the relation of the phenomena controlling, intimidating, violence, or abuse that occur to those aged 16 or above who are or have been, partners or couple family members without considering their gender and sexuality (2015).

Methodology

This research applies two theories to analyze domestic violence in the *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. The first theory is Fairclough's three-dimension approach (2013) to analyze domestic violence. According to Fairclough (2013) there are three-dimension that can be used to analyze domestic violence in the text. The first element is text-analysis (description). Text analysis is analyzed about the data text as the object of research. In text-analysis, this theory analyses visual and verbal signs about the grammar, the structure, the meaning, the mood, the modality, and the relation between the participants in the interaction (Gowhary, Rahimi, Azizifar, & Jamalinesari, 2015). The mood analysis here such as a type of the sentence, whether it is a statement, question, or declaration. The modality analysis is showing the degree of assertiveness in the exchanges.

The second element is processing analysis (interpretation). This is about the relation between the text production and consumption described by Emery (2016). In processing analysis, there is a discourse practice. Discourse practice concerned about how or the way in which the text has been produced, including its relationship with similar texts, its mode of dissemination and the way it is received, read, interpreted, and used by human subjects. It can be analyzed through interdiscursivity of the text and intertextuality. Interdiscursivity is the way in which the text appears to subscribe to one or more discourses. The relation is between texts to another text. Intertextuality is the way in which other texts are utilized in the construction of a given text. According to Alafnan (2017) intertextuality is the text that is compiled with other texts. It transformed the past to the present texts.

The third element is social analysis (explanation). Social analysis explained about the social

relation in the text. The focus of social analysis is on such things as the immediate situation that has given rise to its production and the various socio-cultural practices and discursive conditions at both institutional and societal levels that provide a wider contextual relevance (Mintarsih, Kodrat, & Emiliasari, 2020). It deals with social practices like hegemony and domestic violence. It depends on the context and situation in the text.

The second theory that was used to analyze domestic violence in this research is the transitivity method according to Halliday, M. A. K., and Matthiessen, C. (He, 2013). Transitivity, according to Halliday, M. A. K. and Matthiessen, C. (He, 2013), is a grammatical system which enables a language speaker to interpret the world of experience or as we know as an action or event, process, or state into a process type. We can say transitivity is realized in the grammar of the clause for constructing our experience of process types, participants directly involved in that process and circumstances. In other words, Wahyudin (2016) stated that transitivity analysis is about the experience related with meaning and people's perception in using the language.

Halliday, M. A. K. and Matthiessen, C. described that there are six (6) transitivity processes, which are material process, mental process, behavioral process, verbal process, relational process, and existential process. Material process involves an observable object (person, animal, thing) as a doer of action (Diana, Study, Obama, Maghfiroh, & Setiarini, 2015) and or the goal to which an action is directed to. There are two kinds of material processes which are creative (which have general intransitive, general transitive, and specific) and transformative (which have elaborating intransitive, elaborating transitive, extending, enhancing). There are 6 participants in the material process; actor, goal, recipient, client, scope, and attribute. Participants in the material process have two types, which are first is directly involved; actor and goal, and second here is obliquely (indirectly) involved; recipient, client, scope, and attribute. Next is the mental process, in which participants are behavior, manner, matter, time and place. The mental process involve the perception, emotion, cognition, and desire, which have participants like senser and phenomenon (Diana et al., 2015). Then is the verbal process, in which participants are sayer, receiver, verbiage, target, and matter. The relational process can be identified by the function (attributive and identifying) and the relation of the participants (attributive and identifying) and the relation of the participants (possessive, intensive, and circumstantial). Last process, the existential process, is the process of existence. It represents that something exists or happens which has the remarked with the introductory and a verb like be, seem appear and other linking verbs.

Findings and Discussion

Maya Angelou struggles to develop her dignified self and nonconformist outlook comes to block her after she was raped by her mother's boyfriend Mr. Freeman. The mysterious murder of her rapist creates the guilt, shame in her physics as she thinks that is responsible for his murder. Angelou suffering from the guilt and self-loathing result in her physic. Angelou tries to rise the voice of Black Women in achieve to dignified identity in the white racist and sexist American looking back on her childhood experiences. When she was returning to her mother's care briefly at the age of seven, then at that moment Angelou was raped. From the story we can know that Angelou get sexual abused since she was child, which can be seen in the description below:

He said, 'Just right here, Ritie, I ain't gonna hurt you.' I wasn't afraid, a little apprehensive, maybe, but not afraid. Mr. Freeman pulled me to him, and put his hand between my legs (Angelou, 2015).

According to Fairclough's three-dimensional approach, the first dimension is text analysis (description). The use of verb "pulled" (past participle) in this data from "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" story to inform the reader about the character of Mr. Freeman. The transitivity is as material process. The material process is identified by action word "pulled" and it implies the process happening. The actor or participant that performs the action (Emilia, Moecharam, & Syifa, 2017) in the data above. The goal or the participant of the process. The second dimension is processing analysis (interpretation) which has the relation between the text production and consumption. The relation can be analyzed through interdiscursivity and intertextuality of the text. In the interdiscursivity genre, the genre of the sentence is information. The interdiscursivity tenor of the sentence is information to the reader about the reason why domestic violence occurs in Ritie or Maya Angelou. The interdiscursivity mode is written. The interdiscursivity dimension of the data above is to produce the knowledge area about domestic violence formed from the story point of view. In the intertextuality chain, this data is produced by the author, converted into text, and consumed by the reader. The third dimension is social analysis (explanation). From the data above, it is found that the construction "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" story is influenced by social practice in the domestic violence aspect. The word "pulled" is used in the data to influence the society who ever get the domestic violence. It is able to influence the way people think about "pulled".

'We was just playing before.' He released me enough to snatch my bloomers, and then he dragged me closer to him. Turning the radio up loud, too loud, he said, 'If you scream, I'm gonna kill you. And if you tell, I'm gonna kill Bailey.' (Angelou, 2015)

According to Fairclough's three-dimensional approach, the first dimension is text analysis (description). The use of verb "dragged" in this data from "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" story to inform the reader that Mr. Freeman is a rude from the way text told his action. From the data above, the use of "kill" applies in the sentences to inform the readers about the unspecified action occurred. The transitivity is a verbal process. The verbal process is identified by transferring verbal message (Haryadi & Suardi, 2018) from the word "If you scream." The second dimension is processing analysis (interpretation) which has the relation between the text production and consumption. The relation can be analyzed through interdiscursivity and intertextuality of the text. In interdiscursivity genre, the genre of the sentence is information. The interdiscursivity tenor of the sentence is giving the information to the reader about the psychological abuse or sexual abuse in domestic violence started to emerge Ritie or Maya Angelou. The interdiscursivity mode is written. The interdiscursivity dimension of the data above is to produce the knowledge area about psychological abuse in domestic violence formed from the story point of view. In the intertextuality chain, this data is produced by the author, converted into text, distributed through the internet and then consumed by the readers. The third dimension is social analysis (explanation). From the data above, it is found that the construction of "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" story is influenced by social practice in sexual abuse in the domestic violence aspect. The word "kill" used in the data to influence the social practice in psychological abuse occurred in domestic violence.

Concluding Remarks

The lack of knowledge about sexual violence that Maya faced when she was a child made her must face a very scary childhood for most children her age. Mr. Freeman or the boyfriend of Maya's mother who initially only considered Maya as a surrogate figure of her father since the divorce of her mother and father, made little Maya not understand what Mr. Freeman has done to her. As an

outburst, Angelou depict the isolation she felt as a young girl enduring racism and surviving violent sexual trauma and traces the journey of her development into a strong and independent woman. The notion of three-dimensional approaches and transitivity can be used to demonstrate domestic violent as happened in the “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”. The readers can reduce from the dimensional that the story contains information on the domestic violent that occurs in the story. The transitivity process outlined the abuse action in detail. In the story “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”, the material process transitivity in the most common. According to the finding discussion above, the theory of three-dimensional approaches and transitivity is an excellent theory to employ in analyzing domestic violence in the story “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”.

Acknowledgement

The writer had the chance to enroll in an American Literature class that provided extra resources for my paper thanks to my classmates and professor Dra. Novita Dewi, M.S., M.A. (Hons.), Ph.D.

References

- Al Afnan, M. A. (2017). Critical Perspective to Genre Analysis: Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity in Electronic Mail Communication. *Advances in Journalism and Communication*, 05(01), 23–49. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ajc.2017.51002>
- Angelou, M. (2015). *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. In New York: Random House.
- Aziz, N. N., Idris, S., Ishak, M., Wahid, N., & Abu Yazid, Z. N. (2018). *FACTORS AFFECTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS. 4*.
- Diana, T., Study, T., Obama, B., Maghfiroh, D. T., & Setiarini, R. (2015). (*Pembelajaran Transitivity Pada Komentar-Komentar Pada Foto-Foto Selfie Obama*) *Research Methodology*.
- Dix, A. (2015). Telling Stories: Dramatherapy and Theatre in Education with Boys who Have Experienced Parental Domestic Violence. *Dramatherapy*, 37(1), 15–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02630672.2015.1055778>
- Emery, C. (2016). A critical discourse analysis of the New Labour discourse of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) across schools in England and Wales: Conversations with policymakers. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24, 104. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.24.2236>
- Emilia, E., Moecharam, N. Y., & Syifa, I. L. (2017). Gender in EFL classroom: Transitivity analysis in English textbook for Indonesian students. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(1), 206–214. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v7i1.6877>
- Fairclough, N. (2013). Critical discourse analysis the critical study of language, second edition. In *Critical Discourse Analysis The Critical Study of Language, Second Edition*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315834368>
- Gowhary, H., Rahimi, F., Azizifar, A., & Jamalinesari, A. (2015). A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Electoral Talks of Iranian Presidential Candidates in 2013. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 192, 132–141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.06.020>
- Haryadi, D., & Suardi, M. (2018). *Transitivity Analysis on Sri Mulyani Speech At the Singapore Summit 2017*. 1(4), 442–447.
- He, Q. (2013). Textual Metaphor from the Non-Finite Clausal Perspective. *Open Journal of Modern*

Linguistics, 03(04), 308–313. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2013.34039>

Mintarsih, S. S., Kodrat, D., & Emiliasari, R. N. (2020). Tempo'S Perspective on the Representation of Government in Dealing With Covid-19 Cases. *Call*, 2(2), 125–137.

<https://doi.org/10.15575/call.v2i2.9403>

Yudi Wahyudin, A. (2016). A Study of Transitivity System: An Analysis of Process Type Used in News Item. *TEKNOSASTIK*, 16, 1. <https://doi.org/10.33365/ts.v14i1.79>