

The Moving Body and The Rebellious Reason: Counter-Hegemony in the Prose Fiction of *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori

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Abstract

Teeuw (2004) mentions that literary works, at a certain point, can be considered as a social documentation for society. This can and may happen because in a literary work, there is no clear boundary at which point the fiction begins, and at which point the reality takes part. Laut Bercerita, as a historical novel, presents the background of an event which for the majority of Indonesian people is the beginning of the end of the New Order government under President Soeharto. In the context of maintaining the stability of its power, a government must have two main instruments, namely domination to subdue, and hegemony to bring order. On the instrument of hegemony, the government will act subtly through various cultural instruments, ranging from the monopoly of the mass media, rewriting history, learning in schools according to the will of the authorities, even entering all forms of institutions of other people's lives. Based on such historical facts and data, Laut Bercerita lives the lives of the fictional characters in it more or less with the same situation and conditions. In this study, the author will present several facts-based findings related to forms of resistance as a form of counter-hegemony carried out by organic groups to fight hegemonic efforts by the government as the holder of power.

Keywords: Counter-Hegemony; *Laut Bercerita*; New Order

A. Introduction

Literature offers an imaginary odyssey for its readers through the complexity of the story and the development of various characters in it. The events that the author presents to live the literary works he writes are displayed in the form of fiction, the result of a series of imaginations, or fragments of events that actually happened. Leila S. Chudori has produced many prose fictions that adorn Indonesian literary treasures,

one of which is the *Laut Bercerita*.

The manuscript, which was first published in October 2017, tells about the behavior and twists and turns of Biru Laut's life as the main character who struggles to live his life as a student cum activist in the midst of Indonesia's political turmoil in 1998. Departing from this, the opinion of Teeuw (2004) which states that literary texts are social documents can be legitimate. Nurgiantoro (in Warsiman, 2013) mentions that

fiction is not just fiction or fantasy stories, but every prose in a literary sense is called fiction. However, even though a prose fiction looks very "realistic" with data and facts, it is still a fictional prose shelter under the dome of imaginative fiction. In prose fiction, it cannot be decided and determined, at which point reality begins and at which point fiction takes part.

As a prose fiction set against the backdrop of real political conflicts, *Laut Bercerita* offers many things that can be studied by using Hegemony from Antonio Gramsci as an analysis knife. Antonio Gramsci's hegemony was born when he saw the failure of the workers' action that took place in 1917 in Italy as a starting point. When Mussolini won the political contest and immediately eradicated parties from the opposition side, Gramsci was no exception (Siswati, 2017). Later while in prison, Gramsci sees institutional factors, on form as The State, holds power as the third factor in Karl Marx's class concept as the institutional key holder at the level of the superstructure. The State is present not only to dominate

in order to maintain order, but to insert its influence through the institutions of community life in order to actively win consensus from the lower classes (Suyanto & Amal, 2010).

In several studies, the theory of hegemony is used as an analysis to show the forms of hegemony that occur in fictional prose (Zein et al, 2019; Falah, 2018). Some research that uses the fictional prose of the *Laut Bercerita* as the object of research material focuses on conducting studies from the side of violence and power (Korebima, 2019; Usman et al., n.d.). Taking into account the facts in the fictional prose of *Laut Bercerita* and juxtaposing it with Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, this study will focus on analyzing the efforts made by Biru Laut and his friends who are members of the Winatra organization in the *Laut Bercerita* to carry out counter-hegemony efforts. Against the power of the New Order government.

B. Research Method

The approach used in this study uses a qualitative-descriptive method.

This type of study aims to reveal a variety of qualitative information with descriptions under study to describe carefully the characteristics of a thing (individual or group), circumstances, phenomena, which include data analysis and interpretation. Ratna (2010) explains that in qualitative research, especially literary research, the source of data is the work in this case is the text. Data is a very important part in any form of research. Therefore, what is part of the overall data collection process must be thoroughly understood by every researcher. The data in this study are excerpts from words, sentences, and paragraphs contained in the prose fiction *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori, published by Popular Literature Gramedia, the third edition published in January 2018, with a thickness of 379 pages.

C. Result and Discussion

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) laid the foundation of his thinking in the gap that opened in the concept of class according to Karl Marx's view (Pozzolini, 2006). Gramsci saw that there were things that Marx did not

pay attention to, which for Gramsci was too oriented to economic relations at the "basic" level (Harjito, 2014). In '*Catatan Dari Penjara*, Gramsci does not explicitly state the efforts of counter-hegemony, but Gramsci states that awareness is the starting point for starting the fight against the hegemony of the dominant class (Patria & Arif, 2015). The cycle of storytelling and setting of events is divided into two major events in *Laut Bercerita*. In the sub-chapter with years before 1996, it tells about the track records and efforts of Biru Laut and his friends against the New Order government, which at that time was heating up. Meanwhile, the sub-chapter with a timeline of 1998, is the background of the story with the incident when Biru Laut and his friends experienced torture after the kidnapping and tells the story of their days leading to the end of their lives.

For Gramsci, the first attempt to fight against hegemony can be started by raising awareness (Patria & Arif, 2015). This opinion can be read and defined that the resistance to hegemony can be started through active ways, namely by being aware

of the existence of hegemony and then this awareness becomes the opening road to efforts to make other parties aware of the current situation. These first attempts are found in the early part, where in *Laut Bercerita* the story that their move from Pelem Kecut to Seyegan in 1991 was based on the reason that they wanted to be more free to carry out their activities as activists by opening discussions, and reading prohibited books. by the New Order government (Chudori, 2018). In this section, there are some similarities between the facts of the story and historical facts related to the ban on books imposed by the New Order government. This can be seen in the following quotes.

Kawan-kawanku masih sangat muda, aku terlempar ke masa mahasiswa ketika kami masih mencari-cari tempat untuk berdiskusi sekaligus bermalam dengan aman, jauh dari intaian intel. Peristiwa penangkapan tiga aktivis Yogyakarta tiga tahun sebelumnya masih saja terasa panas dan menghantui kami. (Chudori, 2018; (BL)-S1991/1/10)

Peristiwa penangkapan para aktivis karena memiliki sejumlah buku

terlarang termasuk karya Pramoedya Ananta Toer yang terjadi tiga tahun lalu masih menghantui kami, terutama mahasiswa yang sangat suka membaca sastra atau buku-buku pemikiran kiri. (Chudori, 2018; (BL)S-1991/3/6)

The incident referred to in the passage above is related to the intellectual domination of the New Order government which regulates things in people's lives through rules which were later agreed upon. This fact refers to the issuance of 'Surat Edaran' Number 73106/Sekjen PDK/1980 dated 27 September 1980. The circular letter was based on MPRS Decree Number XXV MPRS/1966 in conjunction with MPR Decrees Number IX/MPR/1978 concerning the Dissolution of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). (Makdori, 2019). One of the books that was banned was the '*Tetralogi Pulau Buru*' which was the work of Pramoedya Ananta Toer. The book he produced when he was exiled to Buru Island was banned because it was considered to contain information about the propaganda of Marxism-Leninism/Communism.

Biru Laut and Wirasena's friends carried out active resistance by continuing to hold discussions and reading books that were prohibited by the New Order government through its hegemonic instrument, namely the Law. This effort is included in the form of counter-hegemony with an active form of resistance because each individual has an awareness of the risks and goals of what he is doing (Chudori, 2018; (BL)S-1991/4/17; (BL)S-1991/5 /20;(BL)S-1991/6/24).

The efforts to raise awareness of the conditions that occurred as the first step of counter-hegemony were then continued by Biru Laut and his friends by conducting dissemination efforts. The dissemination effort itself is an active method taken by Biru Laut and his friends to fight against the government's hegemony. These findings can be seen in the following excerpt.

Aku mengenal Kasih Kinanti setahun lalu di kios Mas Yunus, langganan kami berbuat dosa. Di sanalah kawan-kawan sesama pers mahasiswa diam-diam menggandakan beberapa bab novel Anak Semua Bangsa dan berbagai buku terlarang lainnya.

Seingatku, Kinan sedang membuat fotokopi buku-buku karya Ernesto Laclau dan Ralph Miliband yang akan menjadi bahan diskusi[...] (Chudori, 2018; (BL)S-1991/4/17).

Through the character Kinan, it is narrated that the resistance carried out by Biru Laut and his friends was not only limited to reading and discussing prohibited books and thoughts, but more than that, through Kinan who was duplicating forbidden books was an active step in raising awareness to the oppressed class that the government's rule about banning books and discussing things that are considered communist is wrong. So through the distribution of these forbidden books, it is hoped that it will be able to raise awareness of the intellectual domination that is happening. This is not without reason, in the next section it is narrated if this awareness arises from the irregularities of manipulative official historical narratives (Chudori, 2018; (BL)S-1991/9/34).

In the Ciputat subsection, 1991, there is a dialogue between Biru Laut and his mother regarding resistance and efforts to oppose the New Order

government. At this point, there was an expression of thoughts between Biru Laut who argued that what he was doing was an effort to reveal the truth. Meanwhile, on his mother's side, he seemed worried and questioned what kind of truth Blue Laut wanted to reveal through his resistance. This shows the differences in views and roles that occur. Biru Laut as a student plays a role as an organic intellectual which in Gramsci's view, organic intellectuals are an intellectual group that has the responsibility to separate society from the snare of hegemony and build awareness of what is happening, that in fact they are being subtly dominated (Taum, 2015). The views from Biru Laut's mother represent the views of the people who have accepted that the government's hegemonic efforts are something that is commonplace and should be obeyed. Through active resistance efforts to initiate a counter-hegemony over the power of the government, Biru Laut through the way of raising awareness and providing understanding and views on the government's hegemony efforts found

results when his mother was able to accept and approve Biru Laut to continue his activism activities.

In continuing their efforts to carry out counter-hegemony to the New Order government, Biru Laut and his Winatra's friends then took the form of reactive resistance. The reactive resistance here is the response of the Biru Laut group to the dominance of the New Order government. This reactive resistance can be seen in the role of Biru Laut and the Winatra organization in the joint action of the Blangguan residents by planting corn as a response to the eviction of residents' land which will be used as a training ground for the army.

Sudah beberapa tahun terakhir Bram, Kinan, Julius, Alex dan tim Winatra Jawa Timur mempelajari dan mendata konflik petani dan tentara di kawasan ini. Lahan pertanian rakyat Desa Blangguan digusur secara paksa karena daerah kediaman dan lahan mereka akan digunakan untuk latihan gabungan tentara dengan menggunakan mortar dan senapan panjang. Lahan pertanian mereka digusur bulldoser. (Chudori, 2018).

Biru Laut and his friends from Winatra carried out the '*Aksi Tanam Jagung*' action as a response to the abuse of authority of the military apparatus as an instrument of government domination that took unilateral action against the people of Blangguan. People who have become aware of their situation have changed the form of resistance that was originally active in raising awareness into reactive resistance as a response action in responding to the domination and hegemony of the New Order government.

As a class that exercised domination and hegemony, the New Order government did not remain silent in responding to the attitude of defiance and resistance efforts made by Biru Laut and his friends. In this case, Gramsci said that this is related to the way the ruling class maintains the status quo and the stability of its power (Riza, 2020). This can be found in the fictional prose of *Laut Bercerita* in the form of repressive actions carried out by law enforcement officials, until at the end of the story where Biru Laut and other members of Winatra are kidnapped

and then forcibly removed in the closing sub-chapter in Blue Laut's perspective, '*Rumah Susun Klender, Jakarta, 1996*' (Chudori, 2018). Findings related to acts of repression and efforts to get rid of parties who are trying to destabilize the government can be seen in almost all of the sub-sections with the title '*Di Sebuah Tempat,[...], 1998*' (Chudori, 2018).

D. Conclusion

In the prose fiction Laut Bercerita, the Biru Laut character along with his friends who are members of Winatra realized the situation that was happening, then departed from this awareness they carried out counter-hegemony efforts against the power of the New Order government.

Several forms of business that Biru Laut and his friends took, among others, through active resistance in the form of refusing to comply with '*Surat Edaran*' No. 73106/Sekjen PDK/1980 dated 27 September 1980 regarding the prohibition of certain books. In addition, in this active resistance effort, Laut and his friends

also carried out dissemination by means of copying forbidden books, reading and discussing left-wing ideas even though government intelligence was always watching. The second form of resistance carried out by Biru Laut and his colleagues was reactive resistance as a form of response to the arbitrariness of the government and through its officers in their role. Reactive resistance carried out, among others, carried out the 'Aksi Tanam Jagung' with Blangguan residents to fight the forced eviction of land and residents' settlements that were to be used as joint training areas. In the end, the resistance effort met its end when Biru Laut and his friends were then arrested, tortured, interrogated, until at the end of their story they were forcibly disappeared.

Back to Gramsci's theory of hegemony, hegemony efforts are not always good nor always bad. Hegemony efforts are often found in everyday life, only the form and actors behind it are different. Unlike Biru Laut and his friends who represented the hegemonized class against the New Order government, hegemony can be found closely in the

form of providing understanding, views, perspectives, and information to influence the choices, actions, thoughts, and behavior of an individual parties in everyday life.

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