

Marxism Theory in Indonesian Literatures

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to prove and explain the existence of Marxism theory in Indonesian literature, namely in one poem of anthology under the title *Nyanyian Akar Rumput* written by Wiji Thukul. Hermeneutic readings by Paul Ricoeur was done to prove the hypothesis. This study was a literary research that could be included as descriptive qualitative research using content analysis method. Content analysis method as mentioned above used four (4) readings or methodological steps which were: first, objectivation through structure; second, distortions through writing; third, distortion through the world of texts; and fourth, appropriation or self-understanding. Those four methodologies could be rendered succinctly that the first step was to determine the text using structural analysis, then the second step was to interpret symbolic codes within biography of the author or factors related to the author and last step was to relate to things outside that involve the other disciplines which is primarily relating to the doctrine or view of Marxism philosophy. After hermeneutic reading, it could be concluded that *Nyanyian Akar Rumput*, poetry written by Wiji Thukul which was collected in a book with the same title, was proved to contain Marxism theory.

Keywords: *Hermeneutic, Paul Ricoeur, Nyanyian Akar Rumput, Wiji Thukul, Marxism*

1 INTRODUCTION

Anthology of *Nyanyian Akar Rumput* that herein after abbreviated as NAR by Wiji Thukul is one of historical evidence of literature as Kuntowijoyo stated that literature can be a historical fact. What history stated here? The answer is the history of thought. Literature is a thought. Through what thoughts are present? The answer must be obviously through language. Through language, even hegemony and dominance runs in the world. The fact is based on the relation power of the one who control and the other who is controlled, including symbolic violence running (in operation).

As like other texts, poetry also provides an open space but it is not arbitrary to interpret. Text Concepts. Paul Ricoeur in his thesis is known as the popular *Hermeneutics of Suspicion* or *Critical Hermeneutics*. He stated that language could be learned not only as a sign system or

sentence form, but also as a long sequence of written discourse called text. The transition from a sentence to a text is a transition from the semantic region into the hermeneutic region; new problems arise and certain issues emerging in the semantic region are all surpassed and changed. The text is a written discourse and therefore it is a literature [1].

Text has its autonomy - the empowerment to live by interpretation. The independent reader or interpreter in interpreting the origin is inseparable from the text. According to Ricoeur, poetry as a text is very open for interpretation including the poems contained in NAR anthology, a poetry book written by Wiji Thukul.

The vocabulary and word selection (diction) of poems in NAR anthology are very simple and they even come from everyday language. Figurative language which is the element of beauty in poetry as a measurement of whether the poetry good or not is not applied in the poems contained in NAR anthology. The text of the poems in NAR anthology is clear, straightforward and easy to understand due to what it means.

Readers cannot simply understand the purpose of the poem since its metaphorical language position is not too strong and through the poems are simple, they are quite hard to understand in a clear way. The poems in NAR anthology are semantically and grammatically easy to understand due to what it means. But when it comes to the question of why the poems are open-written, it is easy to interpret. Even as if there is no need for interpretive action. The problem is not that simple. Literary texts such as prose, poetry or drama actually contain things that are not simple when they are written with a simple semantic and grammatical meaning as in the NAR anthology. Paul Ricoeur once again declared that poetry as a written discourse or text has escaped the sentence and semantic domain. When they are written in a simple way, the text in poems may not have the same interpretation as the author. The text is a new world projection according to the interpreter. However, to be able to understand the text, the context or background of the text is still required according to Ricoeur.

The hermeneutic analysis then goes beyond structural studies. Moving further from the study of structures, hermeneutical analysis involves a variety of relevant disciplines to allow for wider and deeper interpretations. However, the various symbolic elements of the structure can not be dismantled by just looking at the relation between these elements. Therefore, the interpretation in the perspective of hermeneutics also encompasses all the possible sciences that may shape it: psychology, sociology, politics, anthropology, history, etc.

The second thing that makes it interesting to examine is the figure of the poet named Wiji Thukul. Unlike other Indonesian poets who have well-established or good appearance in societies, Wiji Thukul was an Indonesian poet born in lower-class family, living in an insufficiently social state. Wiji Thukul lived in a slum area of Solo and worked as a laborer daily. Wiji Thukul was also active in labor movements. Because of his acts, he became one of the victims due to people disappearance in May 1998 under Soeharto era (the Orde Baru regime).

The poet's social background above is a generative aspect which is precisely related and influenced in thesis according to Lucien Golman, a literary sociology (neomarxis). The author is the collective subject whether his poems are influenced by his social background or not. It means that Wiji Thukul as a member of society with the above characteristics affect the works of literature (poetry) that he created whether the poetry he created can be a "mirror" of a society as "relations" between literature and society or not. Also, there is a "relationship" between society and literature in contrary. Based on the background of the problems stated, the focused problem that can be formulated in this study is how Marxism theory stands in NAR anthology?

There are many things that can be revealed in the study related to social elements and social realities in society, as has been done [2];[3]. Results of the studies will be more interesting because it corresponds to the theories presented [4], that stated about three aspects studying in

the approach of literary sociology, namely: First, the author's sociology that favors social status, social ideology and others that concern the author as a producer of literary works. Second, the sociology of literature works in which the literary work itself is concerned. Third, the sociology of literature that concerns the reader and the social influences of literary works.

Further development in sociology of literature is widely used by Marxist literary research [5]. Marxism assumes that literature, culture, religion, in every age, are ideologies and suprastructures that are dialectically related and formed or it can also be said that they are result of the structure and struggle of its time. Thus, economic growth can lead to class controversy. But the research of sociology of Marxist literature is less developed in Indonesia. In fact, although system in Indonesia rejects the classifying or leveling, it is also known that there is an conflict between elite and the lower class periodically. Maybe it's just a different term. If others use class terminology, Indonesia uses central-regional understanding, *wong gedhe - wong cilik*, *elit - rakyat kecil* and so on. Various dichotomous segments often attract the attention of writers. For example, Rendra, Darmanto Jatman and Wiji Thukul.

For Marx, literature and culture are a reflection of the class struggle against capitalism. In Indonesia, such a thing also exists. In Indonesia, there has been a long struggle for the small capitalist known as the conglomerate. According to Marx, man must live before he can think. How they think and what they think is closely related to how they live because of what human expresses and the means of expression depends on what and how they live as well.

Seen from Marx's perspective, a mistake to regard consciousness is something that man always possesses with various terms and man is intellectually capable of determining the conditions of his life. Thoughts and ideas develop in tandem with human activity and life. Human intellectual activity seems to emerge apart from their practical activities only when the division of labor has developed far enough. So, it is possible for people to be only a thinker because their physical needs are practically handled by others.

Marx and Engels attacked the dominant ideology held by the ruling class [3]. They argue that "The idea of a ruling class exists in every age of ruling idea: the class, which is a material power of the ruler in society, is at the same time a powerful intellectual power". In their view, classes with material means of production control mental production. People who have no material means of production are subject to the ruling class. The people representing the ruling class spread the false idea among the people. They control thinkers and historians, rewrite history and falsify the facts.

Because the productive process is not something static, but dynamic, the social relations structures above can also develop and intertwine within each other, producing tensions that can be solved simply by replacing with new tensions. For Marx, human history is primarily the result of such developments: primitive communal societies have paved the way for a society of slavery which in turn is developed into feudalism that paved the way for the rise of capitalism.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a literary research. Literary research is included in qualitative descriptive research within the analysis method which is using content analysis method. The content analysis in this study uses hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur in hermeneutical circle with these several steps: First, objectivation through structure; Second, distortion through writing; Third, distortion through the world of texts; Fourth, appropriation (self-understanding)[1]. Furthermore, the four steps are summarized into two steps which are autonomous text (Sausurian linguistics) and hermeneutical interpretations. In this hermeneutical interpretation, the hypothesis offered is the view of Karl Marx theory called Marxism in NAR anthology.

Sources of data of this research is a collection of poetry in NAR anthology written by Wiji Thukul. The publisher is Gramedia and the book has been published in 2017. NAR anthology consists of 7 (seven) books. Book I entitled "Lingkungan Kita Si Mulut Besar" consists of 48 poems; Book II entitled "Ketika Rakyat Pergi" consists of 18 poems; Book III entitled "Darman dan Lain-Lain" consists of 16 poems; Book IV entitled "Puisi Pelo" consists of 29 poems; Book V entitled "Baju Loak Sobek Pundaknya" consists of 28 poems; Book VI entitled "Yang Tersisih" consists of 9 poems; and Book VII entitled "Para Jenderal Marah-Marah" consists of 5 pieces of poetry. Thus, the total number of poems in NAR anthology written by Wiji Thukul are 153 poems. They are all written from 1980 to 1998.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this discussion, it will be analyzed one poem which is the title of anthology, entitled *Nyanyian Akar Rumput*. This poem is a kind of red thread that links a poem with another poem in the whole book of poetry. This poem signifies the chants and / or resistance of a "little man" against - fighting his way through poetry in the streets by reciting it.

Wiji Thukul was born from a poor family, a labor family (read biography of Wiji Thukul). The social background affected his views in writing poetry or in art as well as in addressing the circumstances of his life. Poems written by him depicted the actual reality that happened. Wiji Thukul was also a "photographer" and even he was photographed for his environment.

Wiji is a proletarian. Wiji is a labor who is always uncomfortable because he is afraid that there will be a dismissal since it is possible to reduce the workers by a company or a factory because there is no cost for the number of too many workers. It may also be that the company has a reason for the division of skilled labor and unskilled labor such as Joseph Choonara's research in the title "*Compounding, Values and Reducing Problems*". Choonara stated that generalizing the concept of skilled labor into complex labor needed to seek solutions along the lines, see the work process, consider under capitalist conditions, as it is inherent collective [6].

Speaking of workers is all the same with speaking about capitalism. The connection is in the binary opposition and always in contention. The question of capitalism has been written into English and American literary themes. For example, Peter A. Stanwick's writings on the Evolution of Capitalism: *Comparison of English and American Literature, about the evolution of capitalism in English and American literature*. The impact of capitalism in lives of individuals has been well-represented in American and English literature throughout the century. It can be seen in how British seminal writers such as Thomas More, William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens and George Orwell used capitalism as a central theme in their journals. In addition, it also discusses how American writers such as Benjamin Franklin, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck and Ayn Rand used capitalism in development characters and themes in their writings. One dominant theme of both streams of literature is how capitalism affects lower-class citizens in society. Another dominant theme to be presented is how rich capitalists are portrayed in both American and English literature.

To be able to understand how capitalism has evolved over time, it is necessary to understand the origins of modern capitalism. The establishment of trading systems and the making of financial records of the system are very important in the formation of modern capitalism. The origins of Modern Capitalism occurred in Italy in the 15th century. The Venetian merchant was considered to be the creators of the first mercantil system and Venice was considered as the birthplace of capitalism [7]. Because of its location, the seaport in Venice was used to facilitate trading between Europe and the Middle East, Africa and Asia. As a result, the Venetians were able to become global merchants. In addition to the ability to freely transport goods around the

world, another major component of the creation in modern capitalism was the financial systems that record transactions. Luca Pacioli, born in 1445, was considered as the father of accounting and bookkeeping. Pacioli developed a double entry accounting system based on the recording of financial transactions between parties. Pacioli was also the author of the first accounting textbook published in 1494 which included a process for developing financial statements [8].

Like William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens wrote many works focusing on capitalism and industrial revolution that took place during his lifetime. Two novels re-presented different messages related to capitalism were *Hard Times* and *A Christmas Carol* (1854). In *Hard Times* novel, Charles Dickens explained working and living conditions of the city's industry called Coketown. He described how the physical industrial revolution had affected cities and townspeople as well.

"It was a red brick city or a brick that would be red if smoke and ashes were allowed: but because the things that stood were red and black, the city was not natural like a savage face pie. The city was a city of machines and high chimneys, where smoke-serpents ceaselessly shifted themselves forever, and never alienated. It has a black canal inside it and the river runs purple because of sickness - a smelly dye, a huge pile of buildings full of windows where there was rattling and shaking all day long and where the steam piston - the machine works monotonically and dropped like tin elephant in a state of melancholy madness. The contents of some of the streets were very similar to each other and many of the paths were still more similar to each other, inhabited by people equally like each other. All of which go in and out at the same hour, in the same voice on the same sidewalk to do the work. He works together and to whom every day as it is the same day as yesterday and the same day for tomorrow. Every year partners from the last and the next. Workers in factories are considered to be only one hand capable of production and thus can be easily replaced with new workers." - *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens

Therefore, Dickens focused on negative consequences of the industrial revolution. He clearly described work and lives in the terrible conditions of the workers at Coketown. In addition, he described the repetition of the worker's monotonous tasks and also highlighted the negative impact on workers in somewhat process that they were considered to be equivalent to machines in the name of production. Factory owner, Mr. Josiah Bounderby, was described as being hated by the capitalist industry in this novel. Father. Bounderby's action suggested that he only cares about protecting himself as gaining self-interest [9]. It was also told that the factory owner did not have sympathy for his workers and "managed" his factory by ignoring the needs of the workers in having safe working conditions. Factory owners were not worried about fulfilling their ethical and moral obligations to the workers. Dickens concluded that the government should be responsible for monitoring and controlling how workers were treated in factories [10]. It was better to highlight the differences between the working class and the rich people. While the two classes live in the same city because of their wealth accumulated from the exploitation of workers, the rich people were cut off from the misery and working conditions of the working class [11] [12].

The first verse of *Nyanyian Akar Rumput* poetry describes a society that can not access public facilities because this society seems to be a community or "second class citizen". The first verse has questioned the location or territory as it is a community houses that is always evicted because of the highway widening and modern building plan. As is common in developing countries, any development will cause two sides of the coins. There must be victims. This verse also explains how the disadvantaged people become marginalized due to the construction of the highway. Not enough to stop there, when they set up the village again, they

are again evicted. It is like they are stuck to the walls, very marginalized, worthless. Then, when they are worthless, they are still set aside and thrown away.

The second verse illustrates that they are a kind of grass that needs soil. That's the only thing, but why only "that" they do not have. For that matter, the only way is to raise the conspiracy among those in the same boat to protest the president. The supreme leader of a state, responsible for the implementation of development. Protest and dispute of them can relatively be a nightmare for the president.

The poetry of *Nyanyian Akar Rumput* is a social reality in the poet's self, that is family, neighbors, friends and the environment as well as social criticism of the situation and circumstances that afflict those who are marginalized. Furthermore, the social reality can be a social critique. Only problem is the choice in conducting social criticism. Logically, when a poet writes about the social condition of his society, where he lives, he has indirectly made social criticism through his writings.[13] the obligation of a poet is to criticize all operations in society, both secular and spiritual that cause breakdown in the life of consciousness. The breakdown of consciousness is breakdown of creativity, breakdown of life power and breakdown in weakening the power of development.

The first verse is clearly a critique addressed to the state as a manager who can not be fair to the community he manages. The highway is widened only for the benefit of certain people. The second verse illustrates the consciousness of the marginalized community to hold a protest to the head of state. Clearly, this is a criticism not even to social field but also political issue. Indeed, this poetry is written as social criticism.

Marx explains that the character of a formal abstract moral idea does not lead to the formation of an autonomous idea [14]. Ideologies that generate ideas are still part of the ruling class that characterizes their ideas. In this way the division of labor explains why such ideas should be accepted by them, the dominated classes, whose interests they are opposed to. They are accepted because they do not seem interested. Ideologists, according to this view, like a bribed umpire: can influence the outcome of a game more effectively because of the fact that he is considered impartial. His ideology is not involved in fraud.

When discussing Marx's attitude to morality, it is important to remember that three different things may be at stake. *First*, his attitude toward moral principles and ethical beliefs really works in a particular society, the value of his ethical life [15]. *Second*, there is always a moral doctrine advocated by elders that may or may not be directly compatible with their ethical life [15]. *Third*, there is a view not only about the content of moral doctrine but also the status of society itself, that is, in its meta-ethical view [14]. Most of Marx's remarks paid attention to the first and second topics and he practically did not say anything on the third subject as it should. This is one of Marx's most distinct positions of issues concerning the characteristics of pure philosophy which fall into the general study of the field of ontology and epistemology. Not so much a problem has to be solved as a symptom of the weakening of the detachment due to ideas from a life.

This is similar to Marx's view of the criticism of capitalist ethics that bourgeois society has reduced humanitarian value to economic value and they uniformed the differences that should characterize everyday life. Our labor drowns into things, which then overwhelm us, becomes more important than us, and is like idolatry, we fall into the cult of this pseudo-world [16].

Acquisition of the image can be seen from the ideology or utopia contained in the poem. Ideology and utopia in poem are two forms of imaginative practice, two expressions called social imagination by Ricoeur. By imagination, someone will not perceive a mere reflection or a shadow of the illusions toward some pre-existing reality. Imagination is a productive, creative dimension of language, action and social life [17]. It is not simply a reflection of reality, but it

plays a role as a medium for generating new realities and for critiquing what is accepted as "reality" [18].

The following is a brief overview of Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutical readings on *Nyanyian Akar Rumput* poetry written by Wiji Thukul that illustrates how Karl Marx (Marxism) theory became the basis in the writing of this poem.

Table 1: Hermeneutical Readings of Paul Ricoeur on *Nyanyian Akar Rumput* poetry written by Wiji Thukul

Objectivation Through Structure	Distortion	Appropriation
NYANYIAN AKAR RUMPUT	Title: <i>Nyanyian Akar Rumput</i> This poem is a metaphor of the hymn from poor society. Grass indicates that community is not a person-person. The first line is a metaphor of how insignificant the small community is. The highway is widened is not for the small community. The small community is expelled. On the third row when small communities set up new houses to live, they were also evicted. They were finally discarded.	The use of term “ <i>akar rumput</i> ” in the poem “ <i>Nyanyian Akar Rumput</i> ” contains a metaphor for replacing people with social status and social standing below. For example, the workers (laborers) and so forth. The term also contains a conception of civil society as an arena and system of interaction among state institutions, markets and societies with strategic roles. The potential role that civil society possesses is as a catalyst for dialogue, maintaining a balance of interests, signaling and mobilizing for joint action.
Jalan raya dilebarkan Kami terusir Mendirikan kampung Digusur	In the second verse, the first line is the repeated metaphor done by the small and poor society.	In this poem, the movement of civil society is dominated by two forms of activity which are 1) lobbying by a small number of civilians who tend to be close or have access to power and 2) grassroots society who are massive and plural.
Kami pindah-pindah Menempel di tembok-tembok Dicabut Terbuang	The third verse shows anger. The fourth line after the word “Dengar!”, there is an invitation to do some sort of resistance to the ruler. The ruler in this case is the president. There are speech acts perlocution in the statement.	
Kami rumput Butuh tanah Dengar! Ayo gabung ke kami Biar jadi mimpi buruk Presiden!		
Juli 1988		

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the Paul Ricoeur hermeneutic readings of the poetry texts entitled *Nyanyian Akar Rumput*, it can be concluded that the hypothesis which expresses the existence of Marxist theory or views in the *Nyanyian Akar Rumput* has been answered. The doctrine or view of Marxist

exists both as a thought and as a movement in the poetry. As a thought, it means that the views or theories arise in the dialogue within the self or the subject of the author. Then it appears as a literary work: Poetry that tends to appear in vocabulary and simple (diction) choices even though it is actually not simple because there is a great idea in it.

In addition, it will also be noted how capitalism continues to grow as in the following statement illustrates the election of Trump as president of the United States. In this article, Malott challenged the conclusion that the main factor led to Trump's victory in the 2016 US presidential election was poor and white racism case. Rejecting this position because of its capitulation of the bourgeois caricature of the working class segment, Malott pointed to the fall of communism for a more historically contextual understanding on how we got where we were. It also means that he noted the rise of the socialist bloc after World War II had greatly inspired the oppressed and colonized world. So, it slowed the tendency of capitalism to a widespread level of exploitation. After the fall of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc and the aggressive anti-communist campaign, the capitalists unleashed a more aggressive capitalism called neoliberalism. After nearly five decades of redistribution of neoliberal wealth and the destruction of the communist movement, right-wing demagogues had increased in the European countries after the European countries. Meanwhile, the white middle class - like other segments of the workers - had experienced significant downward mobility and they were in desperate need of economic assistance. Since the white middle class attempted to see their interests as the capitalist class as opposed to the white working class, the more privileged and pampered working groups - as historically - would be increasingly vulnerable to racism and fascist ideology. In this context, Trump and the so-called alt-right (ie neofascist and neo-Nazi) are being influenced through marginal impact which is rapidly eroding as evidenced by the declining Trump approval rating. In response to Trump, neofascism and capitalism more generally, this essay argues for communist and organizational education of the party.

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