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## Writing novels under the New Order: state censorship, complicity, and literary production in Indonesia, 1977-1986

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**WRITING NOVELS UNDER THE NEW ORDER**  
**State Censorship, Complicity, and Literary Production in Indonesia, 1977-1986**

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**WRITING NOVELS UNDER THE NEW ORDER**  
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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

“If it was not me, then who?”

Ahmad Tohari

### Statement of Problem

With legacies ranging from essays, poems, short stories, and novels, the Indonesian writer Ahmad Tohari (1948- ), from Central Java, is an all-round literary darling in Indonesia and has been gracing the literary scene for almost five decades now. His works were well-received and have been translated into many languages and studied by scholars across the globe. Initial recognition for Tohari first came in 1975, when he won the *Sayembara Kincir Emas* from the Radio Nederland Werelomroep in Hilversum, the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> But, it was his trilogy, *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (*The Dancer of Paruk Hamlet* — published by Gramedia in 1982, 1985, and 1986, respectively), that has brought him true fame and the reputation that he maintains until today, which is as ‘the author of the people’ for his courage in advocating for the poor and his resistance against the government for exercising arbitrary and oppressive power, and dehumanizing its own citizens.<sup>2</sup>

Tohari’s trilogy, which prior to being published as a novel ran as serial in *Kompas* daily in 1981, centers around the anti-communist purge of 1965-66 — a pogrom where hundreds of thousands to a million people died in the organized killings of suspected communist sympathizers, and tens of thousands others ‘were variously tortured and imprisoned without trial, some for over a decade, while countless others suffered exile, stigmatization, harassment, ostracism, and abrogation of civil rights that endure until the present.’<sup>3</sup> According to the dominant narrative in Indonesian historiography, the communists were the only party to blame and that the military was not involved in the aftermath — suggesting that the killings were a violent manifestation of previous local, so-called ‘horizontal’, conflicts among different groups or spontaneous chaos that took place sporadically, in unsystematic and uncoordinated attacks. This narrative was (and still is) regarded by many in Indonesia as the true version of the history of that period — a constructed history that was taught and imposed in schools from elementary levels to high schools and universities. The government closed its doors to open discussion about the matter. For foreign authors with ample access to resources in libraries outside Indonesia, this period was always open to scrutiny. By contrast, in Indonesia, ever since the

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<sup>1</sup> Chaired by A. Teeuw, the team of judges of the short story contest consisted of literary critics and authors from both the Netherlands and Indonesia, namely G. Termorshuizen, J.W. de Vries, H.B. Jassin, Umar Kayam, and Ajip Rosidi. See, Navis 1976, p. i.

<sup>2</sup> Krismantari 2011. Available at <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/11/04/ahmad-tohari-the-return-people-s-writer.html>. [accessed on August 10, 2021].

<sup>3</sup> Zurbuchen, 2002, p. 565.

government passed a Congressional Law that forbids the study and dissemination of any forms of Marxism-Leninism-Communism in 1966, in addition to the scarcity of sources and/or political implications that might arise from writing about the theme, hardly any account had ever been written. As a result, under the New Order period, no Indonesian academic studies were published unless they conformed to the state-sanctioned history.<sup>4</sup>

According to Foulcher, ‘throughout most of the 1970s, creative literature in Indonesia was almost totally silent on the background and meaning of the killings of 1965-66, the very specific topic or term that did not collocate with the values of the New Order regime (1966-1998).’<sup>5</sup> The aftermath in the lives of individuals who witnessed this tragedy was also skipped over. The traumatic nature of the experience seemed to have been expunged from the memories of witnesses, and inhibits a wider group of people from talking. Furthermore, ‘remembered history seemed to have no place in the national literature as prominent writers turned inward to highly subjective explorations of personal experience,’<sup>6</sup> since they understood that ‘the historical legacy of these events was a matter of grave contention within Indonesia.’<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, censorship was so rampant that the state turned into an omnipresent ‘regime of prohibition’, characterized by a concentration of power and the obstruction of serious political competition or scrutiny of that power.<sup>8</sup> The regime steered away from challenges while exercising widespread control over its citizens and ‘held the power to gather and use any evidence to harass and punish authors whenever the timing was appropriate.’<sup>9</sup> However, against all odds, Tohari spoke up and openly addressed this theme in his aforementioned trilogy in which he recounted his trauma and expressed the anger and torment that originated from his experience witnessing the massacre of alleged communists in his village. Already 17 years old when the tragedy took place, Tohari’s personal traumatic experience was firmly recorded in his memory.

In a public talk at the Writers Unlimited Winternachten in The Hague with Dutch journalist Michel Maas, on January 19, 2013, and in a private conversation with me in December of the same year, Tohari recalled that when he was writing his

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<sup>4</sup> There are at least three standard works that were published and supported the state sanctioned line, namely: Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh, *The Coup Attempt of the September 30 Movement in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pembimbing Masa, 1967); Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban, *Bahan-bahan Pokok G.30.S/PKI dan Penghantjurannya* (Jakarta: Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban, 1968) Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban, *Gerakan 30 September Partai Komunis Indonesia (G.30.S./PKI)* (Jakarta: Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban, 1978); Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, *Gerakan 30 September Pemberontakan Partai Komunis Indonesia: Latar Belakang, Aksi, dan Penumpasannya* (Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Foulcher 1990, p. 101.

<sup>6</sup> Foulcher 1990, p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> Bodden 2006, p. 661.

<sup>8</sup> See Farid (1997); Jaringan Kerja Budaya, (1999); Fauzan, (2003), and Yusuf, (2010).

<sup>9</sup> Yamamoto 2011, p 13.

novels in 1981 he felt as if a gun was pointed at his head.<sup>10</sup> He was brought back to the perilous political situation he had been in and reminded of the maximal risks of ever being discovered by the repressive government for bringing up the topic in a light that was different from what the state had outlined. He was well aware of the widespread state censorship and the potential repercussions that might follow, especially because he discussed in the novels some details about the communist cause, political violence, the killings, repression, random arrests, inhuman treatment, and even expressed criticism against the military, all of which had been brushed over or was omitted from the national history which was written by the New Order.

Interestingly, Tohari's novels were left untouched by state censorship.<sup>11</sup> While every other writer suffered from what Pramoedya Ananta Toer calls the 'theft of rights,' a condition in which authors suffered restrictions on their profession, restrictions on their right to state their personal opinions, restrictions on their right to vote, restrictions on their right to travel, and discrimination in the form of a special code placed on his official identity card that differentiates him from other citizens.<sup>12</sup> Tohari, however, was never robbed of his personal freedom. Moreover, he never suffered the repercussions he feared nor were his works ever banned or censored by the state, even though in his trilogy he makes clear that the killings resulted from the close cooperation between the army and paramilitary groups.<sup>13</sup> In fact, the period in which he wrote the novels was the most productive period in his life, which was evident in respectable sales of his novels, reprints, and even adaptations to other artistic media, such as motion pictures.<sup>14</sup> In addition, by both literary aficionados and national cultural institutes, the novels were praised almost universally.<sup>15</sup>

Ahmad Tohari was not the only one to have experienced such a fortunate condition. A small group of writers wrote their novels independently from each other about the same theme. Among them were two other literary authors, namely the journalist and novelist Yudhistira ANM Massardi (1954- ), from West Java, with his

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Ahmad Tohari on November 6, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas. On both occasions, Tohari said that he could have been shot dead because of his writings while making a hand gesture: a finger gun to his head. Later in 2017, when I visited him in Wangon during my fieldwork, he repeated the same story, the same hand gesture — no more, no less, which indicates consistency in his memory and story.

<sup>11</sup> This is not to diminish the fear and pressure that Tohari felt when he was escorted by soldiers to the military base, but compared to the wholesale repression faced by Pramoedya, who became *persona non grata* for life, the pressure faced by Tohari was minimal.

<sup>12</sup> Pramoedya wrote an Op-Ed in the New York Times on Thursday, December 10, 1992, demanding state rulers to let go of the unworthy mentality that leads them to use violence. He was previously robbed of his personal freedom, profession, and livelihood, the right to defend himself from libel and accusations, the right to a fair trial, land ownership, a house and its contents, during the best, most productive and most creative periods of his life.

<sup>13</sup> Hanafi 2016. Available at <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2016/09/30/can-fiction-ever-be-an-alternative-to-history.html> [accessed on 3 October 2019].

<sup>14</sup> Tohari's novel was first adapted into a film *Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng* (*Blood and the Dancer's Crown*) in 1983. In 2011, a more ambitious project to make the story into a big screen experience resulted in another adaptation directed by Ifa Ifansyah with the title *Sang Penari* (*The Dancer*).

<sup>15</sup> Riyanto 2006, pp.7-8, 21.

*Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, (*Trying Not to Surrender* 1979) formerly *Aku Bukan Komunis* (*I Am Not a Communist*) and, likewise from West Java, the famous Sundanese poet and cultural entrepreneur, Ajip Rosidi (1938-2020) with his only novel *Anak Tanahair: Secercah Kisah* (*Son of the Fatherland: a Brief Story*, 1985). In these novels, they detail the mass killings of 1965-66 in a manner similar to the way Tohari recounts *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*. *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* portrays the systematic massacre and politics of fear through the eyes of a small boy who is searching for his father after he was made to disappear due to his affiliation with the communists,<sup>16</sup> while *Anak Tanahair: Secercah Kisah* depicts the ‘unremitting conflict between the Islamic groups and the communists in Indonesia that leads to the killings.’<sup>17</sup> And just like *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, they were also first serialized by the same newspaper, *Kompas*, except for Rosidi’s novel, and later published in novel form by the same publishing house.

In this regard, I find it remarkable that the above literary works slipped through the regime’s net of censorship and even enjoyed such literary reputation. This demands serious scrutiny. Existing scholarship that has examined these literary works mainly takes this phenomenon for granted as it focuses more on the role of literary works as ‘social documents’<sup>18</sup> and reliable alternatives that ‘close the gap in the Indonesian history which was initially left open and unattended’<sup>19</sup>, or on the authors’ valor and resistance as they ‘reveal the coercion and violence exercised by the state over its citizens that have been neglected or denied in the writing of the nation’s history.’<sup>20</sup> These scholars, however, did not reflect on the question why amidst nationwide repression and pervasive censorship these literary works were not censored or banned — the very central question which this dissertation aims to answer.

## Research Questions

This thesis explores how and why the abovementioned novels of Ahmad Tohari, Yudhistira ANM Massardi, and Ajip Rosidi, even though centralizing and describing what was traumatic and forbidden, escaped censorship. This inquiry is interesting on a higher level because not only can it give insight into the ways literary censorship functioned, but also more generally, into the culture and politics of publishing under authoritarian regime. In this regard, this thesis concentrates on the period from the late 1970s to the late 1980s in which the subjects of research, namely the novels written by the three authors, were produced. A key argument is that in this period every publication was subject to a well-organized system of state censorship, and anyone who challenged it by propagating non-state-sanctioned narratives would face dire consequences.

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<sup>16</sup> Hanafi 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Hoadley 2005, p. 52.

<sup>18</sup> Riyanto 2006, p. 29.

<sup>19</sup> Hoadley 2001, p. 267.

<sup>20</sup> Hoadley 2005, p. 118; Hanafi 2016.

Within the framework of a larger debate on literary history and censorship studies, this research strives to delve deeper into the role of literature in narrating Indonesia's bleakest pages of history, namely the events of 1965-66 and the mass killings that followed. Keeping in mind that the 'historical legacy of the events was a matter of grave contention'<sup>21</sup> within Indonesia and that to speak directly and write with honesty about them could become fraught with danger, the central question that this dissertation asks is: While hundreds or even thousands of books were banned and burned like those of Pramoedya Ananta Toer, why could books by Ahmad Tohari, Yudhistira ANM Massardi, and Ajip Rosidi get away with recounting the trauma of the mass killings and the violence that surrounded them as well as being sympathetic in portraying the victims in their works of fiction which were written and published when the New Order regime was at the height of its power and exerted maximum social and political control?<sup>22</sup> While investigating these cases, I aim to address the broader question about what they tell us about the nature of censorship under the New Order.

In connection to the central question, the structure of this thesis is guided by the following interlinked questions:

1. Why and how did the writers take up the issues of the events of 1965 and recount the effects of their aftermath on those stigmatized by the New Order regime even though they knew that the degree of risks was maximal? Did the novels really pose resistance to the state narrative on the Indonesian mass killings 1965-66? What literary strategies did they use in this creative process and in their novels?
2. If their escape had anything to do with mechanisms of state censorship, how was the state censorship organized? Was there certain complicity between the censors and the publishers or authors?
3. What was the role of publishing companies and editors in this process?
4. Since authoritarian regimes are characterized, on the one hand, by censorship of all media, including literary writings, but on the other hand also harness the same media to propagate their own messages and objectives, how likely is it that the state saw the criticisms posed in the literary works but deliberately tolerated them?

### **The Study in Context of Existing Scholarship**

In the context of the development of Indonesian contemporary literature and its connection with historical theme, this study builds on the work of pioneering literary

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<sup>21</sup> Bodden 2006, p. 661.

<sup>22</sup> Excessive control may indicate that the regime is actually at its weakest points. It is unable to address issues or contestations that it resorts to banning this and that. However, according to Ricklefs, the New Order regime in that period was at its crest of power, marked by 'substantial new progress in health and education, rapid economic growth, and forcible fusion of political parties.' Ricklefs 2001, pp. 345, 366, 367.

scholars and historians who have previously discussed how '1965' is portrayed in Indonesian literature of the same period, namely Keith Foulcher (1990), Jakob Sumardjo (1991), Maman Mahayana and Oyon Sofyan (1997), Anna-Greta Nilsson Hoadley (2001 and 2005), Wijang J. Riyanto (2006), and Yoseph Yapi Taum (2014, 2015).

Foulcher discusses the portrayal of victims in contemporary Indonesian fiction that to some extent operated as a medium for making history, whereas Jakob Sumardjo, Maman Mahayana, and Oyon Sofyan highlight the idea of literature as a means for the authors to reflect their personal experiences as participants in the processes of social and historical changes. Hoadley, quoting Adorno, positions literary works as 'a negative to reality' that posits a challenging view against the accepted version of history and contradicting the regime's orthodoxy of the events of 1965-66 and their aftermath.<sup>23</sup> Riyanto focuses on Tohari's creative processes in the writing of fiction and argues that a well-researched literary product can capture historical realities and can be read as a social-cum-historical document.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, Taum elaborates on the relation of literature and politics from a Gramscian perspective and views literature in a network of power relations and as a means of humanistic resistance.<sup>25</sup>

While in agreement with the findings of Foulcher, Sumardjo, Mahayana and Sofyan, and Riyanto, this thesis finds, however, that there is a vacuum left by Hoadley and Taum. As this thesis will show, the two studies overlook the tension and narrative complexities relating to censorship that the novels under scrutiny possess. I argue that it is not merely about Indonesian literature versus New Order orthodoxy as Hoadley argues, but more about the interplay and interconnectedness between the two. Contradicting state orthodoxy is not always present in the novels. As a matter of fact, it is generally overshadowed by the novels' conformation to the state's view. In their attempts to discuss the involvement of the state in the Indonesian killings, the novels often find themselves in compliance with the state's narrative about the killings and use them as the trajectory on which the story is told. In a similar vein, this thesis also offers a rebuttal to Taum, who argues that the literary works at the heart of this study pose direct and immediate resistance against the official state view of Indonesian mass killings.<sup>26</sup> They do, but at the same time they also surrender to the dominant narrative.

Besides scholarship on contemporary Indonesian literature, this thesis finds it important that studies on the New Order Indonesia in which the literary works were produced be examined. A discussion on the nature of the state that includes both its strengths and weaknesses will explain the complexity of the Indonesian cultural scene, particularly in regard to the fact that the widespread repression in the form of

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<sup>23</sup> Hoadley 2005, p. 2-3.

<sup>24</sup> Riyanto 2006, p. 8-9.

<sup>25</sup> Taum 2015, p. 37-41, 264-269.

<sup>26</sup> Taum 2015.

control over cultural domains, i.e. censorship, was accompanied by simultaneous growth in literary production which resulted from the rise of the middle class.

In the context of censorship studies, this thesis attempts to gain a fuller understanding on the theories of censorship, especially in relation to exploring how censorship works. I engage with recent developments in censorship studies as they help to illuminate the ways that books were made, sold, and received in a repressive state. In contrast to the dominant view that censorship curbs literary growth, the increase of Indonesian literary writings was paradoxically, and partly, shaped by censorship. Recent developments in censorship studies, which I will elaborate on briefly below, provide the theoretical base for my inquiry. Literary scholars and historians, Jansen (1988), Burt (1994), Darnton (1995, 2014), Yamamoto (2011), and Bunn (2015), ‘demonstrate that censorship is rarely static, systematic, unilateral, stable, or always fruitful, but is often dynamic, circumstantial, and conducive to clashes of interest. It is marked by dispersal and displacement.’<sup>27</sup>

### **New Order Indonesia: A Setting**

The New Order was not an entirely new establishment even though from the very beginning it attempted to distance itself from the previous regime by formulating contrasting labels: New Order versus Old Order, which was formerly known as Sukarno’s Guided Democracy. In both regimes, the state had a prominent role in social, economic, political, and cultural changes.<sup>28</sup> During the New Order, however, the state had become so powerful and influential that it managed to successfully overcome political polarization and garnered greater societal loyalty.<sup>29</sup>

Within only a few years under the New Order, state bureaucracy solidified and penetrated deeply into the society as the national development program started. This process was accompanied by the de-politicization of society, one approach of which was by means of reducing the number of political parties, and limiting the power outside the bureaucracy. Subsequently, the bureaucracy became very effective in neutralizing both existing and emerging contesting forces.<sup>30</sup> The backbone of the New Order was the military, especially the army. Once the New Order came into power, the army became the major power in running the state and its bureaucracy — the main vehicle for national development.

Controlling the bureaucratic institutions allowed the central powers of the state to direct national development policies and programs. The outcome of this

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<sup>27</sup> Burt 1994, p. 17.

<sup>28</sup> There has been extensive scholarship that elaborates on the strength of the state. To name but a few: Mas’oed 1989, Robison 1982, 1986; Budiman 1991, Farchan Bulkin 1982; Mackie 1984; Santoso 1993, Mahfud M.D 1993.

<sup>29</sup> According to Ichlasul Amal, there are three determinant factors that diminish challenges, i.e. the Armed Forces, limitation of political parties, which lead to mass depolitization, which was further enhanced by state penetration into society while widening its patronage networks to maintain people’s loyalty. See Amal 1992. See also Hikam 1996, pp. 3-7.

<sup>30</sup> Amal 1992, pp. 131-138; Mas’oed 1989, pp 1-27, and pp. 197-217; Budiman 1991, pp.23, 47-72.



control was the establishment of a top-down decision-making process. The state also introduced the concept of dual function of the Armed Forces (*dwifungsi* ABRI), which allowed the military to expand its traditional defense role to become the sole arbiter of how transformation would be led and with whom to collaborate. High-ranking military officers were placed in strategic positions, serving in cabinet ministries, as governors, in the office of attorney generals, and the state secret police KOPKAMTIB (*Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban*, Law and Order Restoration Command) — resulting in a consolidation of control over local government and society.

Sustained with strong bureaucracy and military, the state comes to monopolize the means and use of coercion as the instruments for control,<sup>31</sup> over people, capital, and culture.<sup>32</sup> In Chapter 2, I discuss the role of these strong bureaucratic and militaristic state bodies in the process of cultural and literary production.

### **National Development, Culture, and Language**

The official objective of national development under the New Order state was actually human development. The guidelines of the state policies (GBHN, *Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara* – Broad Guidelines of State Policy), as formulated by the Decree of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia No. II/MPR/1983, states that

‘National development is the development of the man and the whole Indonesian society in all aspects of life. This means development is not merely the pursuit of material gains such as food, clothing, housing, health, and so on, or spiritual satisfactions like education, the sense of security, responsible freedom of expression, the sense of justice, and so on, but also as a proper and harmonious balance of both. Development shall be spread evenly throughout the country that it is not just for the benefit of a certain group or part of the society but intended for the whole society and must be really enjoyed by the whole people as improvement of their standard of living containing social justice, which is the aim and ideal of our independence.’<sup>33</sup>

In practice, however, the priority of development in Indonesia was economic growth by relying on industrialization and rural infrastructure as its driving forces to advance the ideals of justice and welfare for all Indonesian people.<sup>34</sup> Emphasis on economic growth encouraged the adoption of capitalistic development which also necessitated state involvement in the process of capital accumulation. Consequently, the state was

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<sup>31</sup> Urry 1981, p. 102.

<sup>32</sup> Krasner 1984, pp. 223-246. See also Giddens 1985, p. 201.

<sup>33</sup> Decree of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia No. II/MPR/1983 on the Guidelines of State Policy (the GBHN). Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat 1983.

<sup>34</sup> See Booth 1988.

assumed to have strong autonomy in order to be able to choose and implement its development strategy.

In this regard, Tod Jones, in his perusal of the New Order's cultural policy that was premised on increased state control, asserted that 'the justification for the cultural policy was culture's role in the national development, which became a key governmental discourse in 1969 and remained important across all portfolios of the New Order's duration.'<sup>35</sup> Within the framework of national development, the New Order period saw the rise of the new middle classes, which refer to a variety of groups between rich and poor with a shared dependent relationship with the state. They were employed by state institutions or companies close to the regime and were practically dependent on state projects, access to education, housing, etc. Accommodated, educated, and nurtured by the state, these middle classes were both the supporters and the driving force behind the enormous changes that Indonesians experienced under the New Order and became a major source of pressure for economic, social, and, most importantly in this regard, cultural change.

From a similar perspective, economic historian Hal Hill highlighted the spectacular economic recovery and expansion that Indonesia was capable of under Suharto's leadership. He noted how Indonesia had turned from a basket case in the 1960s into a fast-growing industrial economy.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, looking at the regime from a long historical perspective as an interventionist developmental state, Anne Booth concluded that under the New Order Indonesians, in general, fared 'considerably better than before, with a prolonged and broad-based improvement in living standards,' especially in terms of the betterment of infrastructure, control over population growth, the reduction of poverty, and the expansion of education, which consequently resulted in a dramatic increase in the percentage of people with higher education and, therefore, literacy.<sup>37</sup>

This trend was also marked by the exponential growth of publishing industries and press empires, from which popular new middle-class forms of literature and art developed. No less than forty newspapers – in Jakarta and other cities — allotted a special space to poetry, short stories, and serials every week. Many women's and teenagers' magazines gave special attention to literature as did other popular magazines. Boen S. Oemarjati, author-cum-literary critic, wrote that after 1966, there was a change in the socio-cultural conditions of the country which allowed rapid growth in literary writing. Ironically, so it seems, in addition to the clear censorship mechanisms discussed in this thesis, the relatively stable socio-political and socio-economic conditions of the country also allowed governmental institutions to encourage creative writing by the award of funds or yearly literary prizes. Several publishing houses were given long term support in the publication of literary works which had been quite difficult to circulate widely.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Jones 2013, p 130.

<sup>36</sup> Hill 2000, pp. 1-8.

<sup>37</sup> Booth 1999, p. 129. Also, Hefner 2000, pp. 17-18.

<sup>38</sup> Oemarjati 1979, pp. 134-141.

Depoliticization, which was of course a deeply political process, became, as Todd Jones argues, ‘an important tool of the regime that was enforced in conjunction with national development and the related conceptualization of the relationship between state and society. It severely limited the cultural practices of all groups, although some periods within the New Order era offered particular groups more room for cultural expression than others.’<sup>39</sup> Language played an important role here, as it had done under Sukarno’s ‘Old Order’. As Anderson (1966), Latif (1996), and Saraswati (1998) have shown, during the Sukarno period political indoctrination was carried out using a variety of strong and bombastic language that centered on the vocabulary of the revolution. In this period, Indonesia was being described as carrying out a major revolution to build a New World and overturn the current world. Therefore, revolution meant rapid change. From this came ‘mobilization,’ ‘retooling,’ ‘class,’ ‘new emerging forces,’ and ‘*Umwertung aller Werte*’ (the revaluation of values). The vocabulary was almost entirely from Sukarno, the *Pemimpin Besar Revolusi* (Great Leader of the Indonesian revolution) cum ‘the biggest contributor to the ‘Old Order’ dictionary,’ — formulating the direction of political discourse and devising its vocabulary.<sup>40</sup>

Under the New Order, economic development substituted social revolution; and depoliticization and demobilization replaced political mobilization and polarization. The entire apparatus of state power had been focused to the maximum degree necessary to ensure a high level of political and social stability, for it was considered ‘the vital prerequisite to the economic development.’<sup>41</sup> Economic development jargon such as ‘stability,’ ‘acceleration,’ ‘take-off,’ ‘growth,’ ‘technology,’ ‘modernization,’ ‘efficiency,’ and the political notions of anticipation’ and ‘demobilization’, began to occupy political, social, and cultural domains.<sup>42</sup>

New Order language was ‘asserted more vigorously, particularly in the late 1970s and 1980s.’<sup>43</sup> The state encouraged the use of ‘good and correct’ language, and ‘recommended that the teaching of language and literature be upgraded through the formalization of language for education, partly through increased funding for printing and publishing books.’<sup>44</sup> By means of various instances and language standardization programs, the New Order established a Foucauldian ‘system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and functioning of official statements’<sup>45</sup> which were related in a circular fashion to the very systems of power which produced them. Under the New Order, linguistic agency became the monopoly of the regime when it came to the success of its

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<sup>39</sup> Jones 2013, p. 130.

<sup>40</sup> *Pemimpin Besar* (Great Leader) was the appellation given to Sukarno as head of the Putera in 1943 (see Hatta, *The Putera Reports*, p. 54). Sukarno himself later resurrected the title as *Pemimpin Besar Revolusi* (Great Leader of the Revolution). See Tan Malaka 1991. Also, Saraswati 1998, p. 43.

<sup>41</sup> Langenberg 1986, p. 14.

<sup>42</sup> Dick 1985, p. 88; Saraswati 1998, p. 43.

<sup>43</sup> Jones 2013, p. 130.

<sup>44</sup> Jones 2013, p. 195.

<sup>45</sup> Foucault 1980, p. 133.

development policies, whereas violent aspects of the state were represented in passive terms as society was deprived of agency of its own. This will be further investigated in Chapter 2.

In his seminal article, Michael van Langenberg (1986) introduced a framework of language and ideology to examine the New Order state through its own basic lexicon of keywords to be drawn from the domestic political language of the state-formation which identifies the major facets of the state, both as apparatus and as system. He presents a lexicon of forty keywords that, in his view, can comprehensively articulate the totality of the Indonesian state-formation and through which the interaction of the major facets of the state can be analyzed. Keywords such as *monoloyalitas* (Monoloyalty, a singular, exclusive allegiance to Pancasila, or in effect to the state — ‘intended to prevent the bureaucracy from being an arena for competing interests and to guarantee the bureaucratic base of the New Order’),<sup>46</sup> ABRI (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, Indonesian Armed Forces), floating mass (a concept that refers to the separation of the populace from the political activity except during elections), *opsus* (*Operasi Khusus*, Special Operations, intelligence organization established within the Army Strategic Command), and *ketertiban umum* (public order) are among the lexicon that Langenberg examines and are fundamental in linking power, legitimacy of the state, accumulation, and culture within a total state system.

One keyword that is missing from Langenberg’s approach is ‘*antisipasi*’ (anticipation). Based on my reading of dossiers on censorship from 1968 to 1993 and on the publishing industry in Indonesia, as well as on fieldwork in several state bodies, especially at the attorney general office, ‘*antisipasi*’ was (and still is) frequently used to indicate a prior action that assesses dissenting political and intellectual opinions. Prior to a book ban, for example, the attorney general office prepared a lengthy content analysis or report on the to-be-banned book as an ‘*antisipasi*,’ to inhibit the development of ideas that it considered would threaten *ketertiban umum*. In different settings, the development of ideas was also inhibited by sources other than formal censors. Editors often cut out passages in order to avoid more dire censorship or even a flat-out ban. In doing so, the editors have ‘*melakukan antisipasi*’ (conducted *antisipasi*) as they excised sections of the work that depicted the Indonesian military in an unflattering light, as in the case of Tohari’s *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*.<sup>47</sup>

### **Censorship: a Preliminary Reading**

Despite being rampant and having been practiced for a considerably long period of time, censorship in Indonesia remains understudied. There are only few scholars that extensively elaborate on the topic. The first to be written when the New Order was

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<sup>46</sup> Kahin 2015, p. 278.

<sup>47</sup> McGlynn 2000, p. 41; Stewart and McGlynn 2000, p. 41.

still in power is an undergraduate thesis from the Faculty of Arts, Universitas Indonesia entitled *Pelarangan Buku di Indonesia*, written by Minanuddin in 1992. Wielding a library and information science lens and looking at censorship from a historical perspective, Minanuddin in his thesis gives an overview on aspects of book bans under the authoritarian New Order regime and examines the historical continuities of censorship in pre and post-independence Indonesia. Besides Minanuddin's thesis, a dissertation written by Zubaidah Isa in 1972, *Printing and Publishing in Indonesia*, is another valuable reference that elaborates on colonial traces in the development of printing and publishing, as well as the mechanism of book banning in Indonesia. Isa's erudition on the development of publishing activities in the archipelago also helps us understand how books were produced and censorship progressed from time to time. Ajip Rosidi, whose novel is also at the heart of my study, has also written on similar topics. His book *Ichdisar Sedjarah Sastra Indonesia* (Survey of Indonesian Literary History), which was published in 1969, discusses literary repression under the Sukarno regime and early bans at the inception of the New Order.

After the step down of Suharto during the reformasi period (since 1998), Jaringan Kerja Budaya (1999), Fauzan (2003), and Yusuf (2010) wrote three different books but all are alike in both contents and analyses — *Menentang Peradaban: Pelarangan Buku di Indonesia* (Challenging Civilization: Book Bans in Indonesia, 1999); *Mengubur Peradaban: Politik Pelarangan Buku di Indonesia* (Burying Civilization: The Politics of Book Bans in Indonesia, 2003); and *Pelarangan Buku di Indonesia: Sebuah Paradoks Demokrasi dan Kebebasan Berekspresi* (Book Bans in Indonesia: A Paradox for Democracy and Freedom of Expression, 2010), respectively. Following the liberal theorizing on censorship, these three books underline the repressive nature of censorship in Indonesia and denounce it as a type of power exercise based on a monopoly of knowledge interpretation. In this regard, they put censors as external 'authoritative actors who deploy coercive force to intervene in the exchange of ideas.'<sup>48</sup>

As elaborated on in Jaringan Kerja Budaya (1999), restrictions to freedom of expression in Indonesia have also drawn responses from international human rights groups. Since the 1970s, Amnesty International has periodically published reports of people detained for their beliefs, as well as other human rights violations dealing with cases of restrictions on freedom of expression. Human Rights Watch Asia issued a number of reports on the state of human rights in Indonesia and almost always included a chapter on freedom of expression, including book bans. After the shutdown of three media in June 1994, human rights groups began to increase their attention. That November, the London-based organization Article 19 International Centre against Censorship issued a report entitled *The Press under Siege: Censorship in Indonesia* that gives a brief description on the background, sequence of events, and ending of the banning of the three media. At about the same time, the US-based

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<sup>48</sup> Bunn 2015, p. 29.

PEN International published another report on the situation of freedom of expression in Indonesia with special attention given to Indonesia's former political prisoner-cum-author, Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Indonesia's most prominent poet, Rendra. The report, called *Censorship, Silence, and Shadowplay*, examines the effect of censorship on writers, editors, and critics, as well as students, educators, and readers but, again, without complicating the liberal theorizing on censorship. The Alliance of Independent Journalists (*Aliansi Jurnalis Independen*, AJI) published a similar report on the disbandment of three national media in its journal *Independen*, which soon also suffered a ban. From in-depth interviews with various groups, it appears that various barriers to freedom of expression ranging from text censorship to prison sentences create fear and self-censorship on the one hand, but also resistance on the other.

More detailed information on how censorship mechanisms work is in fact obtained from various records from or about victims of this kind of prohibition. For instance, HB Jassin gave useful details through a collection of letters *Surat-surat 1943-1983*, published in 1984, covering mechanisms of control in three different periods in Indonesia (colonial era, Sukarno regime, and Suharto's New Order). Similarly, a volume entitled *Muchtar Lubis Wartawan Jihad*, edited by *Kompas's* senior journalist Atmakusumah, contains information on the practice of censorship and prohibition during the Sukarno and New Order periods. In 1997, Stanley Prasetyo Adi from the *Institut Studi Arus Informasi* (ISAI) wrote a report that estimates 'as many as two thousand books may have been banned during the New Order' to restrict the range of permissible ideas.<sup>49</sup>

The above scholarship examines censorship from a traditional perspective that follows 'two general tendencies in the way censorship has been studied over the last hundred years in the West,' namely, on the one hand, 'a story of the struggle between freedom of expression and the attempts to repress it by political authorities; on the other hand, an account of constraint of every kind that inhibits communication.'<sup>50</sup> Bunn calls such traditional perspectives that see censorship as external, coercive, and repressive a 'liberal conception' of censorship, which focuses 'on the actions of authoritative figures within the state or state-like institutions who deploy coercive force to intervene in the free exchange of ideas to repressive effect.'<sup>51</sup> This liberal conception risks an oversimplification of censorship, by implicitly or explicitly locating it in the realm of binary oppositions, e.g. perpetrator versus victim; censor versus subject of censorship; and state versus publishers/authors. Some of these traditional scholars of censorship overlook the complex mechanisms of censorship, particularly where literary authors react and engage, and leave out the sometimes generative effects of censorship and non-repressive relations on both censors and the censored.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Prasetyo 1996; Saunders and Human Rights Watch 1998, p. 45.

<sup>50</sup> Darnton 2014, p. 17.

<sup>51</sup> Bunn 2015, p. 29.

<sup>52</sup> Jansen 1988 in Bunn 2015, p. 25.

Building on recent theorizing in censorship in other societies that critiqued the Manichean divide between free speech and regulation (Darnton, 1984, 2015; Bunn, 2015, Burt, 1994, 1998; Yamamoto, 2011), I am convinced that the ambit of censorship studies should be expanded and ‘recast from an external repressive force, concerned only with prohibiting, silencing, and erasing, to a driving force that creates new forms of discourse and new genres of speech.’<sup>53</sup> To make this argument, I explore acts and mechanisms of censorship, machinery and institutions, alleged and underlying narratives of justification, and entanglement with political, social, cultural, and market conditions. My exhaustive fieldwork in the Attorney General Office in Jakarta and immersion in its archives have shown me that censorship was (and still is) ‘a diffuse, ubiquitous phenomenon in which an array of actors’ (personal, impersonal, the state, publishers, and authors) function both as producers and simultaneously effective co-censors of literary works.<sup>54</sup>

Through the case of censorship on literary works in Indonesia under the authoritarian New Order regime, I share insights on literary producers’ experience and their negotiations with various kinds of censorship during the creative process. I apply a nuanced analytical approach that explores the dynamic and intricate interaction between censors, publishers, and authors. In this regard, I situate this research in the non-traditional undertaking that moves away from the more hardened, traditional, liberal conception of censorship and ‘veers toward the notion that censorship is simply an inescapable feature of communication.’<sup>55</sup> This insight, drawn from the archives, historical reflection, recent theory, and the lived experience of creators under such regimes, is perhaps unexpected. But it seems particularly valuable, because the lessons from censorship in Indonesia demonstrate that the practices and ideologies of the New Order regime share much in common with those of authoritarian regimes from other eras and other places.

## Research Methodology

Trained as a literary scholar, and inspired by recent developments in censorship studies, I set up this research at three levels: a. the governmental politics of literary censorship; b. the politics and practices of publishing, and the networks between authors, publishers, and censors; and c., the strategies of writing. Principally qualitative, my research draws from a wide range of Indonesian and English-language sources obtained from archives, libraries, and research in Indonesia and the Netherlands. Among the sources that I examine are classified state documents and archives. Archival research in Indonesia was conducted at the Directorate for Supervision of Printed Matters (*Subdirektorat Pengawasan Agama, Kepercayaan Masyarakat, dan Barang Cetakan* -SUBDITPAKEMBARCET — formerly known as *Ditpolkam-Direktorat Politik dan Keamanan*, or Intelligence Bureau), a special

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<sup>53</sup> Bunn 2015, p. 26.

<sup>54</sup> Bunn 2015, p. 29.

<sup>55</sup> Bunn 2015, p. 41.

branch of Deputy Attorney General for Intelligence Service, formerly OPSUS – *Operasi Chusus*, Special Operation), Office of General Attorney in Jakarta, personal libraries of authors whose works are at the heart of this study, *Kompas* Research and Development Center in Jakarta, and Leiden University Library. The archives used in this study yield important information, but they do not provide a full picture of the topics with which this dissertation is concerned. Accordingly, I draw on additional sources. Among these are pictures, receipts, newspapers, and magazines.

For my research, I also conducted interviews in Jakarta, Bandung, Bekasi, and Banyumas. Data that I use throughout the following chapters are obtained from informants that include: literary authors of the novels discussed in this dissertation, former chief editor responsible for the publication of the novel in series format in *Kompas* newspaper as well as (former) editors in Gramedia Publishing House in Jakarta, and most importantly the officials and former officials at the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, to which the state delegated the sole authority to ban and censor printed matters. A combination of semi-structured and in-depth interviews with authors provides useful information on the creative process, the act of remembering, and recounting, as well as the ways in which they (re)constructed the past. In addition, semi-structured interviews gave me a considerable amount of leeway to probe the authors while maintaining the basic structure of questions prepared in advance. The former chief editor of *Kompas* and current editor at Gramedia revealed information on publishing mechanisms from manuscript to print, as well as the type of internal censorship that they employed such as pushing authors to follow a set of writing guidelines, which adhere to “*nilai-nilai Pancasila*” (the values of Pancasila) to immediate omissions of passages that were deemed sensitive. My approach to officials at the Attorney General Office, however, was slightly different. I resort to more in-depth interviews, which leaned towards a normal conversation carried out during breaks or lunch but with an underlying subject. In regard to consent, it was never written, but verbal. The efficacy of this approach was demonstrated when I was eventually provided access, albeit limited, to extensive dossiers that included classified documents on decrees for ban, lists of prohibited books, meeting minutes, circulars, instructions, and invitation letters that indicate (in)direct involvement of professionals and intellectuals in the process of book bans. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the dossiers, and to minimize any harm that could result from the discussion of this sensitive topic, I have given pseudonyms to some informants, especially state officials and censors, including scholars actively involved in the process of state censorship.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Initially, all informants in this research were identified by their real names and positions. However, after considering one particular incident, the cautious approach of anonymizing them seemed both prudent and necessary. Lamentably, around six months after I concluded my fieldwork in the censorship agency in Jakarta, the director of the agency was transferred/demoted to different office in completely different agency outside the Attorney General Office. By phone he informed me that he had been deemed no longer suitable to run the office responsible for intelligence affairs, supervision, and censorship. Although transfer is common in government agencies in Indonesia, I cannot help but suspect that this was due to his providing me access to classified documents vis à vis my research. As



In regard to investigating the novels central to this research, in the final chapter I use textual analysis, including narratology and discourse analysis (Genette, 1980; Stanzel, 1984; Prince, 1987; Bal, 1997). Furthermore, Gallagher and Greenblatt's New Historicist approach (2000) helps to investigate the narrative and strategies employed by the authors, in connection with their position in history and society at a given time. As the name suggests, this approach has a very firm basis in historical context. New Historicism began as a response to the divorce of literature from context and the tradition of studying literature in isolation, as a self-contained, self-referential text. In this regard, in addition to close readings of the novels, I also revisit the literature reviews on relevant analyses of the novels, as well as news articles and magazines. An investigation of accompanying written sources, such as reviews, newspaper articles, and biographies of the authors, serves to give comprehensive information related to the position of literature and the interplay between the text and the context of writing literature.

## **Chapter Overview and Organization**

This dissertation is divided into six chapters, structured according to the intertwined research questions.

Chapter 2 analyzes the context of the New Order in which economic growth, political stability, and cultural change took place (Elson, 2001; Frederick, 1997; Hill, 1994; Hooker, 1999) in order to understand the framework and circumstances under which literary production took place. Furthermore, it explores the regime's policy on cultural expression and discusses its contribution to literary development and language policy. According to Hatley (1994), by the early 1970s, a new period of growth, initiating new cultural institutions and activities, had begun as part of more general processes of economic and social development. In the field of production and marketing of literary works, the New Order saw developments favorable to the expansion of popular literature. Literacy increased dramatically, and so did the percentage of people with a high school education. From the early 1970s onward, bursts of creativity and growth of commercial publishing houses associated with major daily newspapers and magazines took place. In addition to the gradual establishment of the publishing industry, dominant trends in artistic expression began to appear with the founding of important arts centers in Jakarta, such as Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM) and Dewan Kesenian Jakarta (DKJ), as well as other literary circles, such as Yayasan Buku Utama (founded in 1973), Teater Kartupat (founded in 1976), and Taman Budaya Yogyakarta (founded in 1977). Indonesian expression abounded in creativity and talent applied to diverse topics in diverse forms and styles. However, the regime's drive to maintain stability for national development has caused a shift in the structure of cultural production: the regime evolved from providing a somewhat open and highly participatory atmosphere, where opinions

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of July 2018, he has been stationed in a department responsible for protecting public health through the control and supervision of food safety, medicines, and cosmetics.

were relatively freely expressed, into a state of increased constraints and tighter control (Mackie and MacIntyre, 1994). Under the New Order, all publications and printed materials, both literary and non-literary, could be put up for review and banned if found harmful or offensive to the interests of the state and its citizens. The regime controls, homogenizes, and polices cultural production (Hooker, 1993). The literary community chafed under restriction and censorship.

In Chapter 3 I turn to several state bodies, most importantly the Attorney General Office, to which the state has given full control and authority for supervision, surveillance, and banning. It thematizes and reflects on the difficulties of getting information on the research topic as I carried out my field research in the Attorney General Office. This chapter gives answers to the questions: What is being censored? Why? And how? What would be the accepted standards for what constitutes books that could be published or books that should be banned? This chapter also elaborates on the implementation of censorship and banning, which includes the mechanisms, legal foundation, legal standings, rationale, authority, and the criteria and procedure for bans. My first field research from July to November 2017, together with interviews and consultation of the library and archives, shows that state censorship was neat and complete: the regime believed in the idea that censorship had to be carried out through certain standard operational procedures. In addition, the Attorney General office does not only rely on internal resources but also involves numerous other censors that consist of state officials, apparatuses, community groups, and society members. For example, reports from concerned citizens on activities or publications of sensitive materials are constant. Experts from various ministries — namely, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Culture and Education, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs — participate in providing justifications, and elaborating on the reasoning behind the banned books. University professors are often asked to give their academic insights on the matter in dispute.

Chapter 4 examines the complex interplay among authors, editors, and publishers; and examines how they all three cope with the state censorship which eventually contributes to the success of production, circulation, and distribution of the novels. It looks at publishing policy, which includes editing practices as well as the mechanisms, distribution, and circulation of the book. In line with the recent turn in censorship studies, this chapter argues that Indonesian popular novels are a product of complex historical interactions that involve the writers themselves, their readers, the publishing industry, and the larger society to which they belong. They are inextricably linked with the history of the modern Indonesian censorship that shapes them. Furthermore, this chapter discusses internalized censorship and negotiation — whether it was done out of fear and whether they anticipated what was required and acted accordingly? This chapter also problematizes the political affiliations of the authors. How did the authors position themselves within Indonesian political/literary circles? Who were they friends with?

Chapter 5 describes and analyzes the language of narrative with its regularly recurring patterns and interpretive codes that are found in *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*,

*Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, and *Anak Tanahair*. It utilizes narratology, a theory of narratives, narrative texts, images, and events as cultural artifacts that tell a story (Gennete, 1980; Stanzel, 1984; Bal, 1997). As it studies the nature, form, and functioning of narrative, this theory allows me to break down the story for its overall meaning and comprehend the structure of the authors' work and see the authors' strategies in writing the story the specific way they did. Through the New Historicist approach, this chapter also looks at 'the intersections of narrative as individual, as well as shared, history.'<sup>57</sup> This approach sees literature as having historical agency and reveals connections between history and literature. The authors re-narrate events of distant past as one way of responding to or even challenging state discourse of the same theme. This chapter problematizes, for example, differing recollections of two authors, twin brothers, Yudhistira Massardi and Noorca Massardi. They give opposing accounts of the same lived experience. Noorca, on the one hand, claims that Yudhistira's novel has autobiographical episodes. On the one hand, it is 'an act of connecting the temporal levels of past, present, and future'<sup>58</sup> in a fictional representation of remembering. On the other hand, Yudhistira denies the claim and insists that names, characters, places, and incidents in his novel are products of his imagination, which might be a literary representation of historical problems.

Finally, Chapter 6 discusses the findings in the context of the relationship between the state cultural policy, literary production, and censorship during the New Order period — also in the light of theorizing in censorship studies which, as Jansen puts it, asks not whether there is censorship, but rather what kind.<sup>59</sup> In sum, this thesis contributes to theorizing in censorship studies as it completes if not challenges existing scholarship and the traditional view, which argues that censorship under the New Order regime in Indonesia was maintained by incompetent censors with overlapping responsibilities, by means of poor and unchecked machinery. This thesis demonstrates otherwise. Censorship under the New Order was both ubiquitous and obvious. It was designed to operate nation-wide and in a uniformed way, and was simultaneously systematic, unilateral, and 'dispersed among a variety of regulatory censors,'<sup>60</sup> including intellectuals and commercial publishers. It was supported by well-resourced and well-founded mechanisms and practices. In regard to the state's cultural policy, literary production was a part of a larger configuration in the framework of the regime's national development projects, which, therefore, necessitated complicity of the publisher and authors. As the 'internalization of censorship norms is a constitutive feature of the production of literature', this insight, ultimately, should put an end to the ongoing question of why the literary works under study slipped the net of censorship — because as a matter of fact, they did not.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Erll 2009, p. 213.

<sup>58</sup> Erll 2009, p. 213.

<sup>59</sup> Jansen 1988, p. 25.

<sup>60</sup> Burt 1998, p. 17; Yamamoto 2011, p. 8.

<sup>61</sup> Bunn 2015, p. 26.

## Chapter 2

### The New Order and Cultural/Literary Development

“Through good reading, the people will be able to advance their knowledge, broaden their views, improve their minds, and nurture their culture.”

President Suharto, 1973<sup>62</sup>

On May 2, 1973, at a luncheon in the State Palace in Bogor, before several Indonesian authors, journalists, heads of the Indonesian publishers association and owners of press and publishing industry in Indonesia, President Suharto stressed the importance of books as means of education for the people. He said that since education was inseparable from national development, it was impossible that national development could be carried out without the publication of ‘good’ books from all genres, for people of all ages, from all walks of life. He added that with good books, the people could improve their knowledge, broaden their horizons, sharpen their character, and enrich their national culture. He then requested the authors, journalists, and publishers who attended the luncheon to help the government write, print, and publish quality books in a large quantity comparable to the huge number of the population in the country in order to sustain the government development program. He concluded that on behalf of the government, he would give full support, both administrative and financial, to every author and publisher who would fight for the said national cause. Relatively shortly after that luncheon, an incredible leap in the number of publications occurred. Within less than a decade after the New Order was first established, a dramatic increase in the number of books (from 3 million in 1967 to 79.2 million in 1975) took place.<sup>63</sup>

It is interesting to note, however, when the president made the request for publications of books and promised to give support, he had actually been banning and burning hundreds of other books and reading materials under the premise that the books were not in line with the national development project, posed criticism, or were written by certain suspicious individuals or about particular undesired themes. In this regard, there was this tension in what constituted ‘good’ books. The tension also occurred within the government cultural policy which was nuanced by repression and growth at the same time. The crucial questions are then: what constitute good books in the eyes of the New Order government? Who decides? What kind of circumstances did the New Order create in order for literary production to grow and at the same time keep control over the content? How did the state

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<sup>62</sup> “Melalui bacaan yang baik, masyarakat dapat meningkatkan pengetahuannya, memperluas pandangannya, memperluas budi pekertinya, dan mematangkan kebudayaannya.” Djunaidi 1975, p. 14.

<sup>63</sup> Djunaidi 1975, pp. 8-49.

contribute to the development of cultural or literary production in Indonesia? What motivated these decisions?

In order to understand how and why books that dealt with the issues surrounding the events of 1965 were published despite broad censorship, this chapter explores the economic conditions of the New Order and cultural politics. This is essential because the waxing and waning of internal repression in the New Order regime was often connected to the rise and fall of state revenues, shifts in political and military alliances, the rise and fall of political fortunes of key regime allies, and other behind-the-scenes changes in the power structure. It is possible that the authors together with their editors and publishers benefited from — and possibly even exploited — these shifting conditions. To contextualize both New Order cultural politics and the books which are central in this thesis, I first elaborate on the event surrounding the mass killings. Then I proceed into discussing the development and changes in social and economic development as well as the power structure of the New Order in order to trace the course of the government's cultural development policy, especially concerning the production of literary works under the New Order regime.

### **Indonesian Mass Killings 1965-1966**

In the novels at the heart of this study, three elements from Indonesia's history are crucial: the rise of political tensions at the end of the Sukarno era, the anti-communist killings of 1965-1966, and their aftermath.

In an attempt to overcome political unrest and upheaval which echoed throughout the Indonesian government in the 1950s,<sup>64</sup> President Sukarno replaced the parliamentary system and introduced a new political model called 'Guided Democracy' in February 1957. According to Sukarno, Guided Democracy was a form of traditional government in which respected individual leaders played a dominant role in bringing Indonesian society to modernity. To legitimate this new governmental system, Sukarno formulated a concept called *Nasakom* (*Nasionalisme, Agama, and Komunisme* – Nationalism, Religion, and Communism), which was basically constituted by and intended to appease the three main factions in Indonesian politics at the time: the army, Islamic groups, and the communist party (PKI, *Partai Komunis Indonesia*). Sukarno voiced, as he proclaimed, the wishes of the people, united political difference, and embodied state policy. This produced effects of control to Sukarno as he grasped full authority over politics and, later, seized absolute power, especially since the Provisional People Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara*, MPRS) made him President for Life in 1964.

As president for life, Sukarno maintained a delicate balance of power, standing between the army and Muslim groups on the one hand, and communist and left-wing nationalists on the other. Sukarno's mediation could not prevent the two

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<sup>64</sup> Crouch 1988, p. 32.

extremes from increasingly facing each other because of the different interests they represented and mutual distrust. The army together with the Islamic groups had had a great distrust and grudge against communists since the communist inspired Madiun rebellion against the Indonesian Republican government in 1948.<sup>65</sup> This was exacerbated further by the disbanding of the Muslim party, Masyumi, and the implementation of basic agrarian law (*Undang-Undang Pokok Agraria*, UUPA) and basic share-tenancy law (*Undang-Undang Pokok Bagi Hasil*, UUPBH) in 1960, which resulted in forceful seizures of land from Muslim landowners by the PKI-affiliated labor union (*Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia*, SOBSI) and peasants front (*Barisan Tani Indonesia*, BTI). With backing from Sukarno, the PKI became the biggest political competitor that thrived during Guided Democracy and developed into the largest party in Indonesia.<sup>66</sup> With its large membership, the party could mobilize the masses in support of the president more effectively than any other force in the country. Sukarno looked with favor on PKI. Throughout Guided Democracy, he publicly affirmed the party's legitimacy in the Indonesian political order. He gave it occasional protection, as in 1960 when he overruled a number of regional commanders who had banned the party within jurisdictions; and from time to time he removed individuals and groups whom the PKI found troublesome.<sup>67</sup> In the cultural field, this includes the disbanding on May 8, 1964, of *Manifes Kebudayaan* (Cultural Manifesto), a cultural movement founded by a group of authors, poets, playwrights, and intellectuals in late 1963 who saw themselves as proponents of universal humanism and free intellectuals fighting communist cultural authoritarianism and politicization of arts.<sup>68</sup> Clearly, the political left, in this regard the PKI's cultural arm, the Institute for People's Culture (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*, LEKRA, founded in 1950), considered the *Manifes Kebudayaan* 'a danger to the national struggle and a threat to the course of the Revolution in the field of culture.'<sup>69</sup>

Similar to and partly reflecting the dichotomy in politics, society polarized itself into 'left' or 'right', between pro- and anti-communist.<sup>70</sup> This went as far as Indonesian politics was 'poised on the brink of cataclysm' and 'there was hardly an issue dividing Indonesians which could not be interpreted in terms of communism

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<sup>65</sup> It was also a military revolt by regional leftwing commanders against a reorganization and actual reduction of troops by then vice president cum Prime Minister Mohammad Hatta, and chief of staff of the central army leadership. As claimed by David Charles Anderson, the official American representative Cochran met Sukarno and Hatta on the morning of September 17, 1948 in Yogyakarta. It was made explicit that a republican government which contained left-wing elements would not receive American support and therefore revolt against the central army leadership. See Anderson, D.C. 1976, pp. 1-63.

<sup>66</sup> By 1965 the PKI claimed to have 3.5 million party members and another 23.5 million affiliates, making it the largest communist party in the world outside the communist countries. See van der Kroef 1971, p. 5.

<sup>67</sup> Cribb and Brown 1995, p. 93.

<sup>68</sup> See A. Teeuw 1967, p. 252; Foulcher 1969, pp. 429-465; 1986, p. 107; Miller and Meyer 2006; Jones 2013, p. 107.

<sup>69</sup> Foulcher, 1969, p. 445.

<sup>70</sup> Brown and Cribb 1995, p.93.

and anti-communism.<sup>71</sup> As a result, domestic tensions increased. Moreover, rumor circulated that a so-called Council of Generals from the army had conceived a plan to carry out a coup on October 5,<sup>72</sup> and that Sukarno's health was deteriorating in August 1965, and that he was no longer able to protect the PKI.<sup>73</sup> Both sides now began calculating their chances in the post-Sukarno era. An important aspect of the problem was whether the passing of the president would be a gradual process whereby the people concerned would be given ample time to prepare themselves for the critical hour or whether the event would come suddenly or even prematurely.

In the early hours of October 1, 1965, a group calling itself the '30 September Movement' (*Gerakan 30 September*, abbreviated as G30S), under the announced leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Untung, commander of a battalion of the Tjakrabirawa, President Sukarno's personal bodyguard, broke the deadlock. Their intention was to prevent a counter-revolutionary coup by a council of right-wing generals who had intended to make a show of force on October 5 in the wake of President Sukarno's falling ill.<sup>74</sup> They kidnapped six highest generals of the army and only narrowly missed taking Defense Minister General Abdul Haris Nasution, but instead killing his aide and daughter.<sup>75</sup> Three of the generals died during the attempted kidnapping. The others were taken to the Halim Airbase near Jakarta, where they were executed. The bodies then ended up in a pit called *Lubang Buaya* (Crocodile Pit), on a remote part of the base. Following the kidnappings, they captured the Jakarta studios of the Indonesian national radio network (*Radio Republik Indonesia*, RRI), the central telecommunications office, and other key points in the capital city. Untung then announced the formation of an Indonesian Revolutionary Council to exercise the entire authority of the state.<sup>76</sup> But the movement was actually a culmination of a clumsy power exercise, and, therefore, was short-lived.<sup>77</sup> By the end of the day, the army, under the command of Major General Suharto, then the head of strategic reserve command (*Komando Cadangan*

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<sup>71</sup> Brown and Cribb 1995, p. 95-96.

<sup>72</sup> October 5 is the national armed forces day of Indonesia, in honor of the day of foundation of the Tentara Keamanan Rakyat (People's Security Body), the predecessor of TNI (Indonesian Armed Forces) in 1945. On Indonesian Armed Forces Day, military parades as shows of force were often held.

<sup>73</sup> Sukarno's single kidney continued to be troublesome and he apparently suffered two heart seizures during that period. This led the team of Chinese specialists who had attended him since 1960 to believe that he might not live long. Their opinion was communicated to Aidit: "It is not surprising that people began to think of the time when the 'old man' is no longer around. What would happen if his omnipresence was suddenly terminated, either by paralyzing illness or by death?" Notosusanto and Saleh, p. 6. See also Crouch 1989, p. 86.

<sup>74</sup> The generals were accused of being power-crazy, neglecting the welfare of their troops, living in luxury over the sufferings of their troops, dreading women and wasting the nation's money. See Crouch, 1988, p. 97. Also 'Selected Documents' 1966, p. 134.

<sup>75</sup> Generals Yani, Harjono and Pandjaitan were already killed in their house. Nasution escaped and instead his adjutant was taken to Halim and killed there. Generals Parman, Surprapto and Sutojo were taken alive to Halim Airbase in Jakarta. van der Kroef 1971, p. 12.

<sup>76</sup> Vassil 1997, p. 50; Brown and Cribb, 1995, p. 99; Hamish McDonald 1981, p. 41; van der Kroef 1971, p. 12.

<sup>77</sup> According to Roosa (2006), the purpose of the abduction was not clear and during the preparation a number of soldiers withdrew. The plans were not well thought out and were poorly executed.

*Strategis Angkatan Darat*, KOSTRAD), had mounted a successful counterattack. Before midnight, RRI had fallen to the army and by the next morning the plotters were in full flight. Now in complete command in Jakarta, the army announced that a revolt had been crushed and declared martial law throughout the country.

Although it was not clear which party represented the 30 September Movement, it did give rise to new developments in politics that would have major consequences. The failed coup marked the power shift from Sukarno to Suharto and ignited what became the tragedy in Indonesian modern history. The possibility for Suharto's takeover of power was created because the army declared that the communists were the mastermind behind the 30 September Movement. On the basis of this accusation, the military, as personified by Suharto, was determined to annihilate politically, once and for all, its arch-enemy, the communists, the PKI.

Between October 1965 and March 1966, the army together with civilians from various anti-communist and religious groups slaughtered thousands of PKI supporters around the country, especially in North Sumatra, Central and East Java, and Bali. Men, women, and children (accused of being) affiliated with the communist party were shot, strangled, clubbed, buried alive, or butchered with *parangs*, sickles, shovels, rakes, and other agricultural tools. The killing usually started only after the army arrived on the spot. In North Sumatra, for example, the killings began only after the special troops led by Colonel Sarwo Edhie Wibowo had arrived from Jakarta. In East Java, the commandos worked closely with the youth organization of the Nahdlatul Ulama, the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia. In addition, there were many people who wanted to show that they were not communists by participating in the killings. Similarly, mass killings in Bali took place through the initiative and orchestration of local and Java-based military authorities and the arrival of special troops led by Colonel Sarwo Edhie, making the island, along with Central Java and East Java, the site of the greatest carnage in 1965-1966 by situating local conditions within a broader pattern of national-level politics.<sup>78</sup>

To assess the severity of the post-coup violence, a nine-man committee officially appointed by the government in December 1965 came up with an estimate of 78,000 victims in January 1966; Sukarno exchanged the first two digits and the officially announced number of murdered persons amounted to 87,000. The Indonesian Ambassador to Washington, L.N. Palar, estimated the number of victims of mass murders at about 100,000. His chief, the foreign minister Adam Malik, accused the foreign press of having the number of murdered people grossly exaggerated. According to his own information, only between 100,000 and 200,000 people would have been killed. A few days later he called a somewhat more exact figure: 160,000.<sup>79</sup> The foreign press had given far and much higher figures — *The London Economist*: one million, *The Washington Post*: half a million, *Life*: 400,000

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<sup>78</sup> See Geoffrey Robinson 2018, p. 272. See also Iwan Gardono Sudjatmiko 1992.

<sup>79</sup> Hughes 1967, p. 186; Sulistiyo 2000, p. 38.



and *The New York Times*: ‘Best information estimate 150,000 to 400,000 but that could not be far more than 500,000.’<sup>80</sup> A moderate estimate counts 500,000 people killed during that period.<sup>81</sup>

The killings were seen or presented as ‘the West’s best news for years in Asia’ and a victory over communism at the peak period of the Cold War, which had culminated in Southeast Asia in the Vietnam War, and were ranked ‘as one of the twentieth century’s most extensive mass murders.’<sup>82</sup> They were so massive that ‘often there was neither time, opportunity, nor inclination to bury the dead.’<sup>83</sup> The dead bodies were then tossed into rivers. So many hundreds of them floated down the rivers that villagers downstream stopped eating fish for fear some might contain a human finger or some other portion of a decomposing body. Under bridges, or where rivers curved, corpses piled up in dozens. To keep the bodies from accumulating in irrigation channels leading off the river, the executioners protected the mouths of the channels with crude bamboo gates that let the water through, but deflected the corpses. In the *Saturday Review* of February 4, 1967, Horace Sutton reported that mutilated bodies, some missing heads and hands, and some already decomposing, came floating down the 375-mile-long Brantas River, the longest in East Java. In Probolinggo, where the river is lower than sea level, the bodies jammed like logs and stayed like that for days, decaying. On the outskirts of Surabaya the marines forced the citizens at bayonet point to clean the river.<sup>84</sup>

In addition to the killings, more than one hundred thousand others, including intellectuals, playwrights, authors, and artists directly and indirectly linked to PKI were kept in camps for years without any form of trial. Families, members of various organizations which had openly affiliated with the PKI and ordinary people who were accused of being supporters or sympathizers of PKI for merely attending socio-cultural events organized by the PKI or its affiliated organizations were disappeared.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, the Indonesian Chinese community was also specifically targeted by the military-backed mob due to the supposed relationship between the PKI and the Chinese communist regime, and also in the context of long term anti-Chinese discrimination that went back to colonial times.<sup>86</sup> They suffered exile, ostracism, and abrogation of civil rights. Suharto’s regime believed it was socially and politically justified in killing and imprisoning these victims without due process,

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<sup>80</sup> Hughes 1967, p. 184.

<sup>81</sup> Cribb, R. (ed) 1990, p. 143.

<sup>82</sup> See “Vengeance..”(1966), p. 34. See also Robert Cribb, (ed) 1990, p. 143 “In a report by the CIA, the massacre was described as one of the worst mass murders of the twentieth century, along with the Soviet purges of the 1930s, the Nazi mass murders during the Second World War, and the Maoist bloodbath of the early 1950’s. In this regard, the Indonesian coup is certainly one of the most significant events of the twentieth century, far more significant than many other events that have received much greater publicity.” See also Blumenthal and McCormack, pp. 80-81.

<sup>83</sup> Hughes 1967, pp. 158-159.

<sup>84</sup> *Saturday Review*, February 4, 1967, p. 29.

<sup>85</sup> SOBSI (the Indonesian Workers Union), BTI (Indonesian Farmers Union), Gerwani (Indonesian Women Movement), PR (People’s Youth), and LEKRA (Institute for People’s Culture).

<sup>86</sup> Sulistyono 2000, pp. 145, 206.

and in stigmatizing them and their families by denying them numerous rights, including access to education, identity cards, and official employment.<sup>87</sup>

They, too, were prohibited from expressing their thoughts or developing their own narratives of what happened due to bans, censorship, and the persecution of creative works within genres of writing, including academic papers, fiction, and poetry. In 1966, 'Wiratmo Soekito, the key force behind the *Manifes Kebudayaan*, wrote in newspaper *Merdeka* in 1966 supporting the banning of communist books.'<sup>88</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer's (1925-2006) novels and all of his non-fiction works, unpublished works, and historical archives stored in his library 'were destroyed in the anti-communist frenzy.'<sup>89</sup> Pramoedya was not alone. Other prominent communist authors and poets, to name but a few A.S. Dharta, Bakri Siregar, Boejoeng Saleh Iskandar Poeradisastra, Utuy Tatang Sontani, Hr. Bandaharo, Sobron Aidit, Hersat Sudijono, Dharmawati, T. Iskandar A.S., Virga Belan, Nusananta, Setiawan Hs. and Agam Wispi, were not only deprived of their civil rights but also had all of their creative works burned. Equally tragic was the fate of S. Rukiah, a prolific feminist prose writer, poet, and editor of the literary supplement *Lentera* (Lantern) in the communist newspaper, *Bintang Timur* (Eastern Star). After the coup, she was sent to prison and forced to abandon writing upon release. Her books were not talked about anymore and her poems and short stories were removed from anthologies, including H.B. Jassin's *Gema Tanah Air: Prosa dan Puisi*.<sup>90</sup> This massive literary killing of leftist creative works has created a gap in Indonesian literary history and affected both its trajectory and richness.

The aborted coup, together with events leading up to and following it, subsequently became the subject of considerable investigation by Western scholars. Two book length, journalistic treatments of the attempted coup in Indonesia were already in print. These were John Hughes' *Indonesian Upheaval* (1967) and Tarzie Vittachi's *The Fall of Sukarno* (1967). In addition, articles were also written on the subject. In their articles, Dommen, Kroef and Sutter argued that the PKI was deeply involved in the planning for the attempted coup, as did Hughes and Vittachi in their books. However, following Burnell, Lev, and Rey, researchers at Cornell University in the United States, Ben Anderson and Ruth T. McVey, claimed that the coup was the result of internal conflict within the Indonesian armed forces and that the PKI had little or nothing to do with it.<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile, the Dutch professor, W. F. Wertheim, claimed that Suharto was aware of the plans beforehand, that he not only knew Untung but was also friends with him and could have prevented this massacre, but instead wholeheartedly supported it.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> They were also excluded from professions in which they could influence public opinion: military, civil service, journalism, and teaching. See Orentlicher 1989, pp. 63-74.

<sup>88</sup> See Miller and Meyer 2006.

<sup>89</sup> See Miller and Meyer 2006.

<sup>90</sup> See Miller and Meyer 2006; Sarahtika 2018; See also Moeljanto and Ismail 1995, pp. 38, 40, 277, 278.

<sup>91</sup> Anderson and McVey 1971.

<sup>92</sup> W.F. Wertheim 1966, pp. 115-127.

The more recent study by John Roosa (2006) shows that the initiative for the seizure of power was taken by the leadership of the communist party. The chairman of PKI feared that the military would take his party as soon as Sukarno had disappeared from the scene. To stay ahead of them he planned a putsch against the army command with a small group of left-wing soldiers. Most recently, Robinson (2018) in *Killing Season* argues that the killings were the product of a deliberate campaign, led by the Indonesian army, without whom the mass killings could not have happened. He also details the role played particularly by the United States and British governments in facilitating the mass murder for reasons of cold war politics.

Under the New Order, however, almost nothing was ever written by Indonesian scholars and published in Indonesia, except for the *buku putih* (white paper) *40 Hari Kegagalan G30S 1 Oktober -10 November 1965 (40 Days after the Failure of G30S October 1 – November 10, 1965)*<sup>93</sup> and *Tragedi Nasional: Percobaan Kup G 30 S/PKI di Indonesia (National Tragedy: The Coup Attempt of September 30 Movement in Indonesia)* in 1968 written by Colonel Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh, a military lawyer, who published the accounts of the events as a rebuttal against criticism of the anticommunist interpretation of the coup.<sup>94</sup> The book later became the state's official account of the events. In this book, Notosusanto started his argument with the Madiun episode. He then extensively examined the events before and during the September 30 coup, leaving no doubt that the PKI had planned the coup. By framing it as such, Notosusanto did not mention a word about the involvement of the army in the mass killings and gave only subordinate role in the history of the New Order. He defined the killings simply as 'communal clashes' and 'horizontal' conflicts between societal groups originating from a spontaneous campaign by the people against communist treason. This implied that the PKI and, indirectly, the 'Old Order' of Sukarno were responsible for the chaos.

Notosusanto's version was enhanced further by a widespread narrative which was strongly at odds with the analyses of Western historians. Printed in army-affiliated newspapers, *Angkatan Bersendjata* and *Berita Yudha*, and also echoed by

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<sup>93</sup> The first "*buku putih*" (white paper) was written by the staff of Defense and History Institute (*Staf Pertahanan Keamanan dan Lembaga Sedjarah*). It was published on December 27, 1965 and reprinted in 1996.

<sup>94</sup> In the sixties, Nugroho Notosusanto (1931-1985) became most important military historian, after which he developed into a highly influential person in his career as an interpreter of the official historical vision of the New Order. He could take on this role because he held various positions in which he could exert influence. Examples include: head of the Center for History of the Armed Forces (*Kepala Pusat Sejarah ABRI*) after 1964, professor of contemporary Indonesian history at the Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta (1980) and then in the first half of the years eighty minister of Education and Culture in the Development Cabinet IV. In addition, he was chairman of the editorial office of an office, *Badan Pembina Pahlawan Pusat*, central institute for the development of heroes, which wrote a series of biographies about national heroes, commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs. In general, his career spanned from military affairs, education, and literary movement of the *Angkatan 66* (Generation 66). Katharine McGregor sees the privileged position of Notosusanto as a civilian among scientists who helped the New Order military create histories of interest as a base of knowledge for the public as well as the military corps so that the spirit of the military corps (in military education) can be maintained. See, McGregor 2007, Chapter 2.

*Kompas* daily, Notosusanto's narrative detailed the involvement of the members of the communist women's organization, Gerwani (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* or Indonesian Women's Movement, founded in 1950), one of the biggest women's political organizations at the time, in the killings of the generals. Between October and December 1965, all of the newspapers above propagated reports about orgies, torture, brutality, and genital mutilation. *Berita Yudha* quoted an eyewitness who claimed that Gerwani women had cut the generals' genitals, while *Angkatan Bersendjata* wrote that the women had scorned the generals before they executed them 'by playing with and fondling the genitals of the victims while at the same time displaying their own.'<sup>95</sup> Such graphic allegations also appeared in *Kompas* as it wrote in salacious detail that the Pemuda Rakyat (People's Youth, the youth wing of the PKI) and Gerwani members who underwent training in Lubang Buaya enjoyed wanton freedom during their stay in the barracks.<sup>96</sup> These reports were circulated widely and successfully heightened society's emotional and political dislike towards the communists.

The critical publications of the aftermath were never made available in Indonesia throughout Suharto's reign, even until today.<sup>97</sup> What happened beyond October 1, 1965 was cast in the dark, and the anti-communist interpretation of the events on September 30, 1965 remains the official view that is anchored in the collective memory of Indonesians. The authorized national history presents a thesis that the coup attempt was the work of the Indonesian communist party that 'had infiltrated the army and suborned a number of malcontent officers.'<sup>98</sup> This official narrative 'became omnipresent in Indonesia, not least in the country's school textbooks.'<sup>99</sup> The killings that followed were 'passed in silence as was the great number of persons who were arrested and subsequently transported to the notorious concentration camp on Buru Island in eastern Indonesia.'<sup>100</sup> For the rest of the population, in the remaining years of the Suharto New Order government, accusations of being a communist or of communist affiliation became a virtual equivalent of a political execution — which explains the gravity of fear that may have overwhelmed Tohari when writing *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* that was regarded to provide a possible alternative reading apart from the state's official narrative. In the first half of his literary career, Tohari claimed that he had been dubbed as

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<sup>95</sup> *Angkatan Bersendjata*, October 11, 1965; Drakeley 2007, p. 15.

<sup>96</sup> *Kompas*, November 30, 1965. See also Drakeley 2007, p. 10-29.

<sup>97</sup> The official version of the aborted coup of 1965 is found in the authorized national history *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia* (National History of Indonesia, 1975, 1976, 1982, 1983, 1992, and 2008). This series was prescribed by the New Order and written by the regime's interlocutor who was also regarded as its official historian (except for the first edition that was edited by among others Sartono Kartodirdjo). It was (and still is) used as a standard source for the writing of textbooks for Indonesian students and scholars alike — a showcase of how the New Order regime had used history for its purpose. In it, the military was showered with panegyric commentaries, while the communists and Sukarno were demonized.

<sup>98</sup> Hoadley 2005, p. 10.

<sup>99</sup> Hoadley 2005, p. 10.

<sup>100</sup> Hoadley 2005, p. 11.

*semangka* (watermelon — green on the outside, red on the inside), a formerly-popular derogatory term attributed to any Muslim man who was affiliated with or sympathetic towards the communists.<sup>101</sup>

Still today, fear and trauma still silence the unheard voices of the political exiles, and the education system was (and still is) (re-)shaped to indoctrinate the younger generations of the latent danger of communism. I personally experienced this during my fieldwork. On October 16, 2017, I was taken to a local precinct in Bandung for an hour long interrogation. The event that preceded the incident was the scanning process of the original manuscript that was written by Yudhistira ANM Massardi, whose novel is at the heart of this study. Written in 1977, the manuscript consisted of 100 folio pages and was placed in an old black plastic folder. On the cover of the folder, three letters were in vertical typeface, A, B, and K, which refer to the original title of the novel, *Aku Bukan Komunis* (I Am Not a Communist). Under the letters, there was a trace of a hammer-sickle insignia in typeface — only half of the symbol was visible.

When I had the manuscript scanned and copied at the local photocopy café in Jatinangor, Sumedang, a customer had a look at it and then left. A few minutes afterward, a young police officer came to the café and immediately asked me to come with him to the precinct that was only 50 meters away from the café. Prior to this, I had had some interrogations at several police precincts in Bandung for juvenile felonies and misdemeanors, but being questioned by the police on a serious ideological matter was completely unprecedented and rather unpleasant.

The police questioning centered around the origin of the documents and on the motive that a communist insignia appeared on the folder of the manuscript, along with the word *Komunis*. Furthermore, I was required to give an explanation on the purpose of copying the manuscript, as the interrogator suspected that it might have been used to promote the teaching of Marxism, communism, and Leninism. Scanning and copying the manuscript 40 years after it was written were still considered unacceptable, let alone writing it under a social and political situation where anti-communist sentiment was still powerful and ubiquitous. This experience lends some insight to the difficult framework and circumstances under which literary production took place, as well as doing research on this topic in Indonesia today.

### **New Order, New Beginning**

A year after succeeding in suppressing the G30S coup, Suharto was conferred full authority to restore stability and security by a letter of order from Sukarno known as Supersemar, a contraction of *Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret* (The Letter of Order of March 11, 1966), one of the basic texts which Suharto used to legitimize his New Order regime and marked the break from Sukarno's politics which was now referred to as the Old Order. The military established the New Order with a promise to end

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<sup>101</sup> Interview with Ahmad Tohari on November 6, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas. Also in Riyanto 2006, p. 42.

the ideological strife in the political, and cultural, arena, to safeguard the unity of the country, and to put the country back on the road of economic development. In the effort to reach these goals, the New Order government liquidated the Indonesian communist party and disempowered the majority of Indonesians while establishing the Suharto's government monopoly by creating and developing its political engine, Golkar (*Golongan Karya*, Functional Group) the government political party.

As Suharto became a full president, and with the support of the Indonesian military (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, ABRI), he started building his power structure that would continue for thirty-two years after Sukarno's overthrow in 1965-1967. Jamie Mackie and Andrew MacIntyre have characterized the three decades that Suharto's regime endured in the following periods: 1966-1974, which was characterized by highly participatory society and weak government at the beginning but becoming stronger as economic growth increased revenue and control over resources; 1974-1984, where political participation was popular and the state became stronger due to abundant oil revenues and increasingly autonomous; and 1984-1990, which was indicated by exclusionary regime with little participation from the society in politics, although the state was strong and highly autonomous.<sup>102</sup>

An elaboration on these phases will help us understand the regime's economic achievements and concomitant social changes that would eventually lead to the creation of a setting and cultural politics that were favorable to the development of specific trends of cultural and literary production in Indonesia, characterized by aesthetic experimentation, sometimes surreal absurdist mode of expression, and reference to indigenous, regional cultural traditions.<sup>103</sup> But at the same time, tensions occurred. As the state became stronger, it forced society to embrace its authoritarian developmentalist discourse and penetrated every section of society, committing what Dhaniel Dhakidae called 'systemic totalization' that entails high concentration of political control and increasing constraint on political activity, the press, and public statements.<sup>104</sup>

### **Phase One: Recovery (1966-1974)**

When power passed from Sukarno to Suharto in 1966, Suharto inherited economic turbulence as Indonesia had been put under international isolation. Politics, too, had been seriously weakened because left-wing political parties had been permanently disabled since 1965 and other parties had barely functioned since the introduction of Guided Democracy. 'Economic growth was practically -0.4 percent while inflation reached an extremely high point, exceeding 500 percent' while the population living

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<sup>102</sup> These three phases which indicate the evolution of the New Order's power structure were first formulated by Jamie Mackie and Andrew MacIntyre in their overview of the growing strength of the New Order state and the immense personal authority of President Suharto. See Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.4.

<sup>103</sup> Hatley 1994, p.223.

<sup>104</sup> Dhakidae 2003, pp. 288-289.

under the poverty line was 65 percent.<sup>105</sup> Bureaucracy was weak and ineffective after it had been discredited by the economic and administrative chaos of the mid-1960s. In short, the economy had virtually come to a standstill. To address this, Suharto allied with ABRI, which was the key factor in how power was effectively wielded. Together, they rallied broad support, especially from groups that were marginalized under Sukarno or by the PKI, such as the Muslim party Masyumi and its followers, which had been banned in 1960 and other anti-communist alliances, student action fronts, and intellectuals. Development became the keyword of the New Order. The spread of development ideas in Indonesia began from a group of economists of the Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta led by Widjojo Nitisastro, Indonesia's foremost economic policymaker.<sup>106</sup>

Following his inauguration as acting president, Suharto immediately named Nitisastro and his colleagues the Team of Experts for Economic and Financial Affairs with the mission of restoring the economy. This marks the journey of these leading economists as the New Order's technocrats. Having been marginalized during Sukarno's era and now grasping full political support from Suharto, Nitisastro's group immediately abandoned all economic orientations of the Old Order and implemented market economy policy. They argued that the economy was a domain of neutral ideology and politics, and economic policies should follow rational, technocratic calculations. In this regard, they opted for 'a set of economic policies that included balancing the state budget, controlling the money supply, reorganizing financial institutions, and opening widely the gate to foreign investors'<sup>107</sup> — except China, as Suharto decided to break the link with the communist country. Consistent with these decisions was an attempt to work out the relationship with international finance groups, most notably the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. All of these policies were stated in a 1966 MPRS decree known as Regulation of October 3. In 1967, a consortium of donors, called the IGGI (intergovernmental group on Indonesia), was formed to help coordinate the flow of foreign aid to Indonesia and provide strong international support for Indonesia's economic recovery. Bolstered by political stability, these policies performed so well that Indonesian economy unprecedentedly experienced economic growth of 10.9 percent marking the beginning of the recovery phase.<sup>108</sup>

Entering the 1970s, the economic growth picked up pace 'when international petroleum prices quadrupled due to the Israel-Arab war, which conferred a massive

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<sup>105</sup> See Indicators of Indonesian economic development, 1965-90 in Hal Hill (ed.).1994, p. 57. See also Yuliar 2008, p. 116.

<sup>106</sup> Most of these economists were trained as economists at the Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta and earned their post-graduate education at the University of California at Berkeley during 1950s and 1960s. They were often consulted by Suharto and responsible for various liberal economic policies, which were often considered to be on the side of the people, such as privatization, deregulation, abolishment of subsidy, tight budgeting. Their domination over policy led them to be known as 'Berkeley Mafia' (Salim 2003, p.197).

<sup>107</sup> Amir 2010, p. 317.

<sup>108</sup> Hill (ed.) 1994, p. 62.

windfall in revenue for the Indonesian economy.<sup>109</sup> In addition, significant development also became evident in agriculture, especially after the Suharto regime revisited Green Revolution policy. Sukarno had left Indonesia increasingly dependent on imports of rice, with more than one million tons imported annually during the early 1960s. In 1968, conscious of the implications of inadequate supplies of the basic food staple, the New Order established a large scale program of extension services in agriculture known as Bimas (*Bimbingan Massal* or mass guidance) in order to instruct and inform farmers in new methods of agriculture. The New Order government also founded a rural banking system to channel credit to farmers. Due to this, within less than a decade, Indonesia had achieved self-sufficiency in rice and reserved stocks of 3 million tons and was involved in lending rice to Vietnam and the Philippines. By the mid-1980s, it had more than doubled to over 25 million tons,<sup>110</sup> eventually creating new middle-class groups. The windfall gains in oil revenue and agricultural success were channeled into the development of primary education. Universal primary education was almost attained, which means that illiteracy almost disappeared, especially among the younger population.<sup>111</sup> The biggest changes were in the proportions of Indonesians without primary education, which dropped to only 16 percent from an astounding 70 percent, and in the numbers of Indonesians who completed secondary education which rose to 22 percent.<sup>112</sup>

This phase also marked the period of a wide degree of press freedom and production in literature. Under Sukarno's Guided Democracy, journalists and editors had been subject to arrest and detention, especially if they lost commitment to the revolutionary struggle and did not adhere to the regime's policy of revolutionary press and guided press. Wiratraman writes that 'any criticism of Sukarno and his leadership would be punished, with the military playing a central role in both regulation and enforcement, without judicial control. Accordingly, many newspapers were closed down.'<sup>113</sup> In contrast to the Soekarno regime, the New Order 'raised hopes about a freer press, especially after the adoption of Indonesia's Press Law in 1966,'<sup>114</sup> which, surprisingly, promised to guarantee press freedom and prohibition of all forms of censorship and banning.

In this regard, the first decade of the New Order era saw the birth and rise of, for example, the weekly magazine *Tempo*, which played a large role in shaping the intellectual landscape and offered literary journalism — blending journalistic and literary ways of writing.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, from the early 1970s onward, the New Order saw developments favorable to the expansion of popular literature. An explosion in commercial publishing houses associated with major newspapers and magazines took place. The proprietors of the national daily *Kompas* founded

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<sup>109</sup> Yuliar 2008, p. 116.

<sup>110</sup> Hardjono 1994, p. 191 .

<sup>111</sup> See Hull and Jones 1994, pp. 123-178.

<sup>112</sup> Hull and Jones 1994, p. 161.

<sup>113</sup> Wiratraman 2014, p. 266.

<sup>114</sup> Wiratraman 2014, p. 266.

<sup>115</sup> Djunaidi 2011, pp. 173-174.



*Gramedia* publishing in 1970. Producers of the *Sinar Harapan* launched their publishing arm *Sinar Kasih*. *Pustaka Jaya*, *Cypress*, and *Grafitipers* set up to publish light, popular fiction in the early 1970s.<sup>116</sup> Writers such as Marga T., Ashadi Siregar, Marianne Katopo, Yati Maaryati Wiharja, Titiek W.S., and, one of the authors under study here, Yudhistira Massardi, could now write without having to worry anymore that their romantic novels could be categorized as counter-revolutionary due to the absence of direct engagement in social and political processes. As a matter of fact, as I will discuss further in Chapter 4, Massardi enjoyed national recognition for his ‘unserious’ popular works and play, most of which won awards on a regular basis.<sup>117</sup>



Ajip Rosidi (left) and Ali Sadikin, Governor of Jakarta and initiator of Taman Ismail Marzuki, opening art exhibition at Taman Ismail Marzuki.  
(Photo collection of Ajip Rosidi)

In addition to the gradual establishment of publishing industry, dominant trends in artistic expression began to appear with the founding of arts centers such as Ismail Marzuki Park (*Taman Ismail Marzuki*, TIM), in 1968, and the Jakarta Art Council (*Dewan Kesenian Jakarta*, DKJ), in Jakarta, as well as other literary circles Theater Kartupat (*Teater Kartupat*, founded in Medan in 1976), and Yogyakarta Arts Center (*Taman Budaya Yogyakarta*, founded Yogyakarta in 1977). The New Order’s mandate to promote a national culture was seen in the unveiling of Taman Ismail Marzuki in November 1968, a forum to showcase traditional and modern experimental art in the field of literature, painting, and the performing arts. Not only could artists experiment with new forms, but also with content. This resulted in an outburst of creativity and talent applied to diverse topics in diverse forms and styles.

<sup>116</sup> Sumardjo 1979, pp. 10-11.

<sup>117</sup> ‘Massardi’ 1981, p. 370.

As the economy began to recover and growth started to take shape, the New Order policy began to spark criticism. Under the leadership of Suharto's most important adviser, General Ali Murtopo, the political arena was reorganized. A central place in this was occupied by the Golkar, a semi-official party representing the New Order and to encourage supporters of the government, particularly ABRI and the regional bureaucracy, to join it or vote for it in the elections.<sup>118</sup> It received strong backing from civil servants who came under pressure thenceforth to join their professional body, KORPRI (*Korps Pegawai Republik Indonesia*, Indonesian Civil Servant Corps) and to dissociate from other political parties in the name of 'monoloyalitas' (exclusive allegiance). In the 1971 elections, Golkar gained 62 percent of the vote. The initial optimism among intellectuals that the New Order would become an open democracy soon came to an end. In 1973 the political field was further streamlined. The Islamic parties were merged into the PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, Party for Unity and Development), while the nationalists and the Christian parties were housed in the PDI (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*, Indonesian Democratic Party).<sup>119</sup> The control of Golkar was yet another mechanism used to defeat political dissent as well as to project a sense of democratic ideals which in practice were not realized.

Moreover, dissatisfaction with corruption scandals and the emergence of Japan's dominant role in the Indonesian economy, which created severe competition for indigenous businessmen, led to large groups of student protesters when Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka visited Jakarta in January 1974. The demonstration got completely out of control and quickly developed into an anti-Chinese riot, and a march on the presidential palace. The incident was soon known as Malari (*Malapetaka 15 Januari*, the disaster of January 15). Behind this, there was a conflict within the army in the background. General Sumitro, head of KOPKAMTIB, was accused by Lieutenant-General Ali Moertopo, the main strategist of the New Order and former political advisor to the president, of using the demonstration to strengthen his own position in relation to Suharto. Malari disclosed 'a decisive shift from the relatively open, pluralistic phase of political life under the New Order toward one in which society-based forces'<sup>120</sup> — which include student activists, muslim groups, intellectuals, professional middle classes, and even a number of retired senior military officers who had been prominent in the founding of the New Order — 'were to be largely excluded and rendered almost powerless to influence state policies or the distribution power at the top.'<sup>121</sup> In sum, the first phase of Suharto regime is characterized by initial freedom of the press and literary production that evolves towards repression, by the end.

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<sup>118</sup> Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.12.

<sup>119</sup> Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p. 13.

<sup>120</sup> Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.14.

<sup>121</sup> Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.14.

## Phase Two: Steady Growth (1974-1983)

With the increased tightening of freedom of expression and the imposition of the state ideology, Pancasila, the Malari riot was seen (in retrospect) as ‘a watershed moment in the development of the New Order political system.’<sup>122</sup> The focus on political and social stability was seen as imperative for economic growth and development. In order to ensure its stability, the military-backed New Order regime began to adopt an authoritarian *modus operandi* to exercise control by oppressive means. Student protests on January 15, 1974 ended violently and resulted in the arrest of students and the banning of newspapers.<sup>123</sup> Prior to 1974, several minor cases of press permit bans occurred but these were insignificant compared to the government ban on 12 publications which had given the Malari demonstrators sympathetic coverage.<sup>124</sup>

In addition to oppressive measures, the New Order also exercised control by means of monopolizing the state ideology, Pancasila, and the continued participation of the military in all aspects of society. The New Order now made clear that preventing such public demonstrations and student protests was a priority, and in 1978 Suharto had the MPR (the People’s Consultative Assembly) propose that Pancasila should be the only guiding principle in society, shaping both social and political spheres.<sup>125</sup> The main means of spreading the five principles of the Pancasila was the P4 program, which stands for the ‘*Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila*’, or the Upgrading Course on the Directives for the Realization and Implementation of Pancasila. Pancasila itself consists of five broad principles: a. belief in one Supreme Being; b. a just and civilized humanitarianism; c. the unity of Indonesia; d. a people led by wise policies through a process of consultation and consensus; and, e. social justice. The five principles were first introduced by Sukarno in June 1945, prior to the declaration of Independence, and have generally served as a unifying national ideology. The P4 curriculum was, however, sheer indoctrination instituted to create ideological conformity around the official state philosophy and a direct attempt to convince the people that there was no better alternative than the reigning government. ‘The core of the curriculum consisted of thirty-six precepts (*butir*). The sessions, which were required to include at least forty hours of classroom instructions, stressed rote memorization and regurgitation of the precepts. The sessions were first required of civil servants in late 1970s and were extended to campuses in 1980’ in order to prevent the emergence of renewed criticism.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.14.

<sup>123</sup> Liddle, 1978, p. 126.

<sup>124</sup> ‘*Himpunan Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung RI tentang Larangan Beredar Barang Cetak Buku 1963-1991*’ (The Compilation of Attorney General Decrees of the Republic of Indonesia on the Prohibition of Printed Matters, 1963-1991). Arsip Subdirektorat Pengawasan Agama, Kepercayaan Masyarakat, dan Barang Cetakan (SUBDITPAKEMBARCET), Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>125</sup> Brown and Cribb 1995, p. 136.

<sup>126</sup> All state officials were required to be members of *Korpri*, the Indonesian Civil Servants Corps, which constantly reinforced their adherence to Pancasila and their exclusive allegiance, which inculcated an ethos of unquestioning obedience and acceptance of hierarchy and discouraged

The strongest measure against further protest came in a package of policies called the *Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus/Badan Koordinasi Kemahasiswaan* (NKK/BKK or the Normalization of Campus Life/Students Coordinating Body), drawn up by the New Minister of Education and Culture Daoed Joesoef through a decree of April 1978. The NKK/BKK imposed more stringent course requirements, placed student life under a campus bureaucracy with ABRI oversight, barred student organizations from political activities, limited 'student autonomy, and effectively made university administrators answerable to military authorities and to the central government for violence of restrictions.'<sup>127</sup> The government normalized campus life and directed universities to focus only on academic rather than in political pursuit.<sup>128</sup>

The next step in propagating the Pancasila was the introduction of the law of the '*Azas Tunggal*' (sole philosophical foundation), in 1985. This new law stipulated that from then on, all socio-political organizations were obliged to use Pancasila as the only principle (*Azas Tunggal*).<sup>129</sup> The official idea behind the principle, according to Suharto, was that the political parties in the past had not made a connection between their own ideology and the state's Pancasila. As a result, there had been a struggle to change the foundations of the state, 'through seemingly peaceful and democratic [changes] to armed uprisings.'<sup>130</sup> The result of this, according to Suharto, was a constant mutual mistrust: 'In order to lay the political and ideological basis, we had to put a definitive end to these problems, in order to prevent repetition. And on the other hand, in order to achieve the goal of our national independence, we had to continue to do our best to build a Pancasila society.'<sup>131</sup> Pancasila was transformed from a unifying nationalist ideology into a hegemonic state doctrine which could not be questioned through public debate.<sup>132</sup> This compulsion of ideological conformity has ever since been highly effective in curbing dissenting views and maintaining political stability.

After its political stability was ensured, the New Order could now concentrate on its role as the engine of economic growth. As an oil-producing country, the Indonesian economic situation was improved as the international oil prices hiked in the early 1970s after a series of energy crises caused by problems in the Middle East and Arab oil producers imposed an embargo.<sup>133</sup> Because of this favorable condition and because the oil industry was in the hands of the state, Indonesia was able to pay almost three-quarters of the second five-year plan, 1974-1979, from its oil revenues. Gains from increasing oil revenue were also allocated to finance various infrastructure and industrial projects. The private sector was invited to partake in

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independent thinking on political or social issues. See Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.27. See also Saunders 1998, p. 84.

<sup>127</sup> Saunders 1998, p. 6.

<sup>128</sup> Hill 1994, pp. 37-40.

<sup>129</sup> Brown and Cribb, *Modern Indonesia*, p. 136.

<sup>130</sup> With seemingly democratic [changes] Suharto probably meant both the attempt to transform Indonesia into an Islamic state and the overall functioning of the PKI as a party until 1965.

<sup>131</sup> Soeharto, Karta Hadimadja, and Dwipayana 1989, p. 268.

<sup>132</sup> Vatikiotis 1993, p. 107.

<sup>133</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/mar/03/1970s-oil-price-shock>.

constructing basic and import-substituting industries, including publishing houses. State-owned enterprises were directed to make large investments with support from the national budget. Such large-scale projects benefited from a heavy influx of oil revenue due to increasing oil prices and many successful oil exploration projects.<sup>134</sup>

In this second phase of the New Order, the government, with its authoritarian development model, recorded rapid growth. Between 1971 and 1981, 'real GDP increased at an annual average rate of 7.7 percent and in all years it grew by at least 5 percent.'<sup>135</sup> However, this progress was accompanied by setbacks, which included a high concentration of political control and increasing constraint on political activity, the press, and public statements. Jamie Mackie and Andrew McIntyre observed that the invocation of Pancasila 'has had the effect of constraining the public expression of dissentient ideas and opinions within the limits of what is safe and uncontroversial.'<sup>136</sup>

It has thereby induced a strong inclination towards conformity and self-censorship in public utterance because of the risks involved in straying beyond the limits, intentionally or otherwise. The editor of the fiction department of Gramedia, for example, admitted that the publishing house has never had any other option but to print creative works while adhering to the values of Pancasila.<sup>137</sup> In 1981, accused of being affiliated with the former the Institute for People's Culture (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*, LEKRA), Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, Pramoedya Ananta Toer's brother, was dismissed from his position as the translator of Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *Musashi* that appeared as a serial in *Kompas* daily. According to him, the chief editor of cultural desk of the said newspaper phoned him and claimed that due to his affiliation with the disbanded communist organization, his name could no longer appear as the translator of the serial. The chief editor had to ensure a high degree of outward conformity towards the wishes of the authorities.<sup>138</sup> The publishing industry in Indonesia understood it so well that they resorted to self-censorship on sensitive issues in order to stay well inside the limits of what was permissible.

### **Phase Three: Thrust in Economic Policy (1983-1990)**

In the years between 1982 and 1986 world oil prices fell dramatically, with the worst decline between January 1986 and August 1986. In one stroke, Indonesia faced the worst economic crisis since the New Order came to power. There were only two possible routes to restore the economy: 'oil prices would have to rise again, and quickly, or else the economy would have to be rapidly and drastically restructured

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<sup>134</sup> Boediono 2016, p. 131-135; van Zanden 2012, p. 347.

<sup>135</sup> Hill 1994, p. 63.

<sup>136</sup> Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p. 27.

<sup>137</sup> Interview on September 11, 2017 with the chief editor for fiction department in a room called 'secret' on the fifth floor of Gedung Kompas Gramedia Palmerah Barat.

<sup>138</sup> Interview with former chief editor of cultural desk of Kompas. Also see Sidharta 2014. Available at [https://kbr.id/nusantara/10-2014/novel\\_musashi\\_dan\\_cerita\\_eks\\_tapol\\_65/51533.html](https://kbr.id/nusantara/10-2014/novel_musashi_dan_cerita_eks_tapol_65/51533.html) [accessed on August 10, 2021].

away from its heavy dependence on oil.<sup>139</sup> The restructuring of the Indonesian economy began with the goal of replacing lost foreign exchange earnings from oil. The government canceled or postponed many major industrial and infrastructure projects and tried to increase domestic sources of revenue. Furthermore, it encouraged foreign investment by removing many of the restrictive regulations concerning foreign investment set up during the oil boom years. Suharto was forced to turn towards a more export-oriented industrialization strategy as suggested by the Bappenas (the national development planning agency). As Robison noted, the Bappenas technocrats were able to introduce policies and regulations that deregulated the economy,<sup>140</sup> which proved remarkably successful in coping with the decline in oil revenues, promoting a dramatic increase in non-oil exports.

Another important change was the marked increase in the personal authority of Suharto after his re-election in 1983. This altered the character of the political system as power became more concentrated at the apex of political pyramid than ever before.<sup>141</sup> By the mid-1980s Suharto was much more than just commander in chief of the army and president by virtue of that fact. In 1983, he would be officially conferred the title of Father of National Development by the MPR. In the eyes of millions of Indonesians, Suharto's regime seemed to have satisfied people's expectations on economic development. Suharto had created better social and economic conditions that allowed the Indonesian people to taste material welfare and modernity unprecedented in Sukarno's era. From this perspective, the New Order's success in economic development became a political commodity for Suharto to perpetuate his power.

## Cultural Development

Besides affecting the economy, society, and politics, the dramatic changes after the attempted coup in 1965 also directly impacted culture, particularly Indonesian literature. The New Order, however, had never always been steady from the start. Its early years were full of uncertainties as Suharto had to cautiously increase his power base and therefore needed support from the emerging middle-classes and the *Manifes Kebudayaan* camp which was an ideological contrast to the leftist leaning LEKRA. He also looked for support from other groups that were marginalized under Sukarno, such as intellectuals who had turned against PKI, and supporters of the muslim political party, Masjumi, as well as the liberals who were affiliated to the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI), including Achdiat K. Mihadja, Mochtar Lubis, Rosihan Anwar, Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana, and Y.B. Mangunwijaya, all of whom were intellectuals-cum-literary authors.

Literary historian Boen S. Oemarjati, who was one of the initiators and signatories of *Manifes Kebudayaan*, recalled in 1979 the transition to New Order

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<sup>139</sup> Prawiro 1998, p. 221.

<sup>140</sup> Robison 1992, p. 73.

<sup>141</sup> Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.17.

period as a catalyst for growth in cultural expression as in other fields of activities. She noted that rapid growth in literary writing after 1966 was encouraged by at least five extrinsic elements, namely ‘freedom of expression (both in practice and self-legitimation), sponsorship, education, mass media, and readership.’<sup>142</sup> According to her, the socio-political situation in Indonesia during the early years of the New Order allowed a greater opportunity for creative freedom than in the preceding era, which was inclined to favor the communists. Throughout the first half of the 1960s, during the so-called guided democracy era, ideological and political interests were forcibly pushed by the cultural movement of the communist party, c.q. LEKRA. The term experimentation in arts and literature, for instance, was one-sidedly interpreted as imperialistic and counter-revolutionary, and, therefore, became the target of terror and repression from the cultural left, and eventually from the Sukarno government, via Presidential decree dated May 8, 1964.

Under the new regime, the ideological and political interests that had been forcibly pushed by the cultural movement of the PKI collapsed while experimental forms that had previously been under constant offense went to such an extent that improvisation became the last cry in the Indonesian literary movement. Aesthetic experimentation, a non-realistic, sometimes surreal and absurdist mode of expression, and a concentration on philosophical themes was a dominant trend observable amid the individual variation of the Indonesian literary movement in this period, in addition to the reference to indigenous, regional cultural traditions.<sup>143</sup> Writers and modern theatre performers talk of liberation from the dominant political issues, from constant confrontation with artists of opposing political affiliation, and of freedom to pursue personal creativity.<sup>144</sup>

Since the liquidation of the communists that included immediate bans of books by 87 LEKRA writers together with the eradication of their newspapers and magazines, namely *Kebudayaan Baru* (New Culture), *Zaman Baru* (New Age), *Harian Rakjat* (The People’s Daily), *Bintang Timur* (Eastern Star), *Sulindo*, *Warta Bhakti* (formerly *Sin Po*) and *Berita Minggu* (Weekly News),<sup>145</sup> the first movement carried out in the field of culture was the convening of the cultural symposium called *Kebangkitan Semangat ’66: Mendjeladjah Tracee Baru*<sup>146</sup> (The Awakening of Spirit 66<sup>147</sup>: Exploring a New Trace). This symposium was initiated and organized by the

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<sup>142</sup> Oemarjati 1979, p. 134.

<sup>143</sup> Sumardjo 1984, quoted in Foulcher 1987, pp. 6-28.

<sup>144</sup> “Writers and modern theater performers talked of liberation from the domination of political issues, from constant confrontation with artists of opposing political affiliation, and of freedom to pursue personal creativity.” Hatley 1994, pp.219-220.

<sup>145</sup> See Lukman Ali, “Pelarangan Karya Sastra Manifes dan Lekra,” in *Kompas*, October 10, 1993; See also, Rosidi 1973. “Larangan Buku, Dangan Pengarang,” *Masalah Angkatan dan Periodisasi Sedjarah Sastra Indonesia*. Djakarta: Pustaka Jaya, p. 67.

<sup>146</sup> Wardhana 1966.

<sup>147</sup> This number indicates the year of establishment, generally known as Angkatan 66 (Generation of 66). This refers to students, intellectuals, and activists who helped topple Sukarno after 1965. Later, it was used to indicate literary groups in Indonesia who began writing or had been active in the said period or ‘young artists associated with the student movement.’ See Jones 2013, p. 132.

Indonesian Student Action Forum (KAMI) and Indonesian Scholars Action Forum (KASI) in Universitas Indonesia Jakarta on May 6-9, 1966 with the support from the signatories of the newly reinstated *Manifes Kebudayaan*, the main rival of the then disbanded LEKRA. In this regard, even though it also focused on economic and political problems and on Indonesian foreign policy, this symposium was seen as a direct offense against the left cultural movement, which had already been suffering from the anticommunist purge during that period. This is evident in the precepts formulated by the participants of the symposium, which read:

1. The philosophy of Pancasila manifests in arts
2. In fostering and promoting our national culture, we must avoid the interest that goes on for the benefit of one group
3. The power of a nation is supported by the masses, laborers and the middle-class, but the development of a nation determined by the collective potentials of the people
4. *Angkatan 66* yearns for freedom, not only political freedom but also individual freedom as basic human rights
5. *Angkatan 66* rejects 'Lekraisme' and Neo-Lekraisme in culture, namely the political domination of the works of art

The relatively stable socio-political and socio-economic conditions of the country allowed both governmental and non-governmental institutions to encourage creative writings, which in turn began as part of a more general process of economic and social development.

In addition to the precepts, the aforementioned symposium manifested in the foundation of the monthly magazine *Horison* in July 1966. In its first edition, *Horison* professed itself as 'monthly magazine of literature in the broadest sense, which was committed to stimulating ideas and experiments in the field of literature specifically, and culture generally, and striving to present the works of artists and intellectuals from outside Indonesia, especially works that articulate new thoughts and experiments in the field of culture.'<sup>148</sup> In his introductory editorial, Mochtar Lubis, one of the founders of the magazine, charted the new magazine's course towards freedom and constructive values, constituting a clear break with the monolithic power of the past — a clear dig at the previous influence of LEKRA. He called upon readers to 'leave the narrow space which till now has imprisoned our spirit and thoughts and let us free ourselves from the shackles and traps of slogans of a chauvinistic and xenophobic nature.'<sup>149</sup>

As the first New Order literary magazine, *Horison* was almost as strong in its anticommunism as in its opposition to Sukarnoist populism. As it gained a greater

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<sup>148</sup> Hill 2010, p. 112.

<sup>149</sup> Mochtar Lubis headed an editorial board that included HB Jassin, Zaini, Taufiq Ismail, Arief Budiman, and D.S. Moeljanto, all of whom had been signatories of the *Manifes Kebudayaan*. See *Horison*, July, 1966, p. 1.



audience, *Horison* became the major outlet for those writers constrained by the closure of *Sastra*, its predecessor, which was forced to close in 1964. Since its first publication, *Horison* magazine continued to develop its mission as a literary and cultural magazine by opening space for the birth of various experimental works and by its publication policies it eventually came to set the standards ‘for serious literature, providing models which writers all over Indonesia attempted to emulate’ by which New Order fiction was evaluated and in time *Horison* played an important role as ‘gatekeeper’ strongly influencing literary production in the New Order Indonesia.<sup>150</sup>

Several new publishing houses were given long term support in the publication of literary works. No less than forty newspapers in Jakarta and other cities gave special attention to literature as they allotted special space to poetry, short stories, and serials every week. A greater part of the population, estimated 63 million strong, belonged to the consumer group and formed the potential readership of literature in Indonesia.<sup>151</sup>

Newspapers that had accommodated literary expression in special rubrics began to (re)appear. The newspaper *Merdeka*, which had been banned by Sukarno since February 1965, made its comeback and was then followed by Catholic newspaper *Kompas* and *Harian KAMI*, and *Indonesia Raya*.

Balai Pustaka as a government publisher that had played an important role in the development of Indonesian literature since the colonial 1920s, and well into the 1950s reprinted a number of literary works published before the war of independence. A number of literary works that have been long enough not to circulate in the community, re-emerged, such as romantic and didactic novels *Sukreni Gadis Bali* (Sukreni: A Girl from Bali) by Panji Tisna, *Azab dan Sengsara* (Pain and Suffering) by Merari Siregar, *Siti Nurbaya* by Marah Rusli and *Di Bawah Lindungan Ka’bah* (Under the Protection of Ka’bah) by HAMKA. Some private publishers who were initially interested in printing non-fiction books, especially textbooks, were now beginning to publish novels. Moreover, almost all the newspapers and entertainment and family magazines printed short stories or serialized novels and organized regular creative writing contests.<sup>152</sup> This was made possible, mainly, by rapid economic growth, increases in overall prosperity, and strengthening of the state apparatus, as well as the defanging of alternate political structures, which resulted in enormous changes in the facilities for and conditions of cultural expression.<sup>153</sup>

Economic growth fostered a boom in the publishing industry and made books, once rare and limited, a familiar and accessible commodity.<sup>154</sup> The availability of books went hand in hand with increasing interest in reading. With

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<sup>150</sup> Hill 1984 and Foulcher 1987 as quoted in Hatley 1994, p. 222.

<sup>151</sup> Oemarjati 1979, p. 135.

<sup>152</sup> Damono 1979a, p. 3.

<sup>153</sup> Hatley 1994, p.222.

<sup>154</sup> Hatley 1994, p. 217.

government support, in early December 1980, *Yayasan Gemar Membaca* (The Foundation for Reading Interest) was established in Jakarta. According to the head of the foundation who was also the chair of the Indonesian Publishers Association (Ikatan Penerbit Indonesia – IKAPI, founded in 1950) Jakarta Branch, the intention of launching the foundation was to stimulate interest in reading among the Indonesian society. He was concerned that there was only about two percent of Indonesian people who could enjoy books (the population of Indonesia at that time was 140 million). Among Asian countries, reading interests in Indonesia ranked the lowest. The practical purpose of this group was to facilitate the circulation of books among the wider community.<sup>155</sup> Reading interest was also encouraged by community-based organizations, such as the *Himpunan Masyarakat Pecinta Buku* (Himapbu - Book Lovers Community) that was first established in Jakarta on February 12, 1980. The group is affiliated with the National Development Supporting Body (Leppenas), whose main aim was to support the national goal of economic development. Himapbu claimed 2300 members across the country, all of whom were determined to increase literacy through participatory actions and community involvement.<sup>156</sup>

In addition to state recognition of the important role that publishers played, IKAPI received sponsorship from the government and raised substantial funds which were used to establish the Yayasan Buku Utama, a non-profit foundation that rewards the best books every year, including literary books, and aims to encourage and develop the writing of books in the field of literature and science, especially of a popular nature. Ahmad Tohari was one of the many writers who had won awards. As a matter of fact, Tohari won two awards from Yayasan Buku Utama for his first novel *Kubah* in 1980 and, remarkably, as I will discuss in Chapter 5, for *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* in 1986.

To further promote the book industry as well as to implement supervision, control, and simultaneously, censorship, the government issued a Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 0399/0/1977 dated September 6, 1977, through the Ministry of Education and Culture. It stated that IKAPI and other publishers would exist under the guidance, regulation, and supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture. In the following year, on March 31, 1978, a Presidential Decree No. RI. 5/1978, which stipulated the establishment of the National Book Development Advisory Board (BPPBN), was issued and followed by the Decree of the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia No. 512 / KMK.04 / 1979 on November 28, 1978, which abolished sales tax and implemented special rates for book delivery. In addition to this, the government drafted the Deposit Act, which required book publishers to submit a copy of every book they published to the *Perpustakaan Nasional* (National Library, officially founded in

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<sup>155</sup> *Antara*, January 7, 1981.

<sup>156</sup> IKAPI 1976, p. 15.

1980).<sup>157</sup> Given this obligation, not only could book publishing be documented but also be multiplied.<sup>158</sup>

When publishers stalled production due to a paper price hike in the early 1980s, the government interfered by instructing the Ministry of Industry, Ir. Hartarto, and the Minister of Trade, Rachmat Saleh, to set paper price guidelines in order to maintain the stability of paper prices. In addition to the guidelines, the government also implemented the reduction of the paper import duty. The reduction was massive, from 60 percent to only 10 percent, allowing the publishing industry to continue to thrive.<sup>159</sup>

By the fiscal year 1979/1980, the government had provided 107 titles of books, and 13,375,000 copies, or 7 percent bigger than the targeted number. For the fiscal year 1980/1981, the government purchased 100 titles of books, totaling 14,000,000 copies worth Rp. 4.5 billion.<sup>160</sup> In the fourth five-year development plan (Repelita IV 1984-1988), the government planned to improve the quality of education by providing about 200 million books.<sup>161</sup> School textbooks were printed in greater number, totaling 263.3 million copies — an incredible leap since the New Order was first established.<sup>162</sup>

It is interesting to note, however, that while the state was showing a kind gesture to ensure that literary books could be evenly distributed and read by Indonesian people across the country, the above policies were issued after Suharto had consolidated his power, as the Army remained the dominant force and bureaucracy gained in influence and efficacy. The New Order had just entered its second phase, in which constraints on political activities, the press, and public statements were increasing.

Besides massive increases in printing occurred, this second phase also saw a significant increase in women's novels written by female authors who belonged to both the intellectual middle and upper classes (mostly housewives).<sup>163</sup> No fewer than 40 female authors wrote short stories in magazines and in novel form. The emergence of these women writers coincided with the publication of women's magazines in these decades, and most importantly, the rise of the literate middle-class resulted from economic growth. *Isteri* (Wife, 1977) by La Rose, for example, was first published as a serial in the weekly popular magazine *Selecta* during the second half of 1976. It depicts problems and settings that are familiar to Indonesian women readers and conforms to the regime's state of *ibuism*, in which women were not taken into account in formal politics and were defined simply as wives and

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<sup>157</sup> *Kompas*, October 23, 1981.

<sup>158</sup> *Kompas*, October 26, 1981.

<sup>159</sup> *Antara*, January 7, 1981.

<sup>160</sup> *Antara*, September 23, 1981.

<sup>161</sup> This is symbolic of the state as a scientific, economic-planning and rational administration and stresses the centrality of the state to the attainment of a prosperous modern future. See Langenberg 1986, pp. 20.

<sup>162</sup> *Suara Karya*, January 31, 1984.

<sup>163</sup> Oemarjati 1979, p. 138.

mothers who serve their men, children, family, community, and state.<sup>164</sup> Tellingly, La Rose's *Istri* was immediately followed by *Janda* (Widow, 1977), in which "suspense and tensions were built alternately by carefully balancing sentimentality with the spontaneous responses of a woman's instincts that were sometimes innocent, sometimes cunning, yet in all [*sic*] subtle and quite credible."<sup>165</sup> In no time, La Rose's name was regarded as a guarantee for commercial success in the book business. As the trend became dominant, other women writers joined La Rose's example of writing novels on problems that appeal to their mostly women readers.

According to Sapardi Djoko Damono, one of the driving forces that increased the publication of the works of fiction was more and more housewives who had a lot of free time that required some sort of medium to spend their leisure and channel their creative urge. Such medium came in the form of various women's magazines. The habit of reading an article in women's magazines increased the pleasure of reading fiction. The number of young women who loved light reading also increased. More and more women who worked in offices found themselves in need of entertainment. This number was coupled with girls from well-off families who shared similar interests, which was evident in the high record of sales of women's magazines such as *Femina*, *Sarinah*, *Gadis*, *Putri*, and *Hai*. Damono added that some of the women who contributed their stories to the magazine had turned writing for pleasure into writing for additional financial gain.<sup>166</sup> While it is true that the growth of an increasingly affluent, educated middle-class aspiring to modern knowledge and skills facilitated the publishing boom of the 1970s and 1980s, this situation also created tension and ambivalence in the life of Indonesian literature.

The increase in the number of literary writers and their works shows that Indonesian literature became more viable as it encompassed a wider public. But literary observers were anxious that this phenomenon might disrupt the quality of Indonesian literary writing. Sapardi Djoko Damono, a prominent poet-cum-literary critic, juxtaposed the popular literary writings in the 1970s and 1980s with the erratic '*batjaan liar*' (wild books) printed and published during the colonial era which did not adhere to literary aesthetics and standard language at the time.<sup>167</sup> Jakob Sumardjo was concerned about the fact that the novels of the 1970s were uniform, written hastily and without attention to literary intrinsic values, cheap, and always market-oriented.<sup>168</sup> Obviously, their views easily fall under the category of cultural elitism against a very different and distinct category, i.e. commercial popular mass culture. Lastly, Ajip Rosidi, one of the authors central in this study, made a quip about the contemporary literature aficionados who had a poor taste for literature, as they had become accustomed to reading what he considered to be poor quality literature.<sup>169</sup> At the same time, stories with weighty literary values were housed in the literary

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<sup>164</sup> Suryakusuma 1996, p.102.

<sup>165</sup> Oemarjati 1979, p. 138.

<sup>166</sup> Damono 1979a, p. 9.

<sup>167</sup> Damono 1979a p. 10.

<sup>168</sup> Sumardjo 1979e.

<sup>169</sup> Rosidi 1977, p. 22.

magazine *Horison*, which according to one of the founders himself was rather intellectual, felt foreign, and was not about Indonesia's own problems. In addition, the editors received criticism from authors who could not get their works published in the magazine because of what they claimed as its resistance to styles of writing outside the personal tastes of its editors. With *Horison*, literature seemed to have lost its viability and therefore could not be categorized as good since they only had a limited medium of expression and maintained only a low level of readership. In contrast to the success of the so-called 'cheap' literature mostly written and read by women, publishers of weighty and serious literary works struggled to promote and sell their publications.<sup>170</sup>



Ajip Rosidi, head of IKAPI, author, publisher, (left), meeting President Suharto in 1972.  
(Photo collection of Ajip Rosidi)

Equally ambivalent was President Suharto's endeavor to get authors and publishers to assist national development by producing his definition of 'good books'. Riddled with vagueness, the phrase 'good books' that he used was dictated at the final stage of Phase One, i.e. 1973, when Suharto began to gain greater strength and was no longer in need of broad support from the liberals and its untiring advocates. This resulted in more control and surveillance over content. Under the authoritarian regime characterized by tightening of government control, one could never be sure what was meant by 'good'. The president's appeal to have authors and publishers produce 'good' books while at the same time other 'good' books were being banned left authors and publishers in constant alert in producing literature that always had to be politically safe. In this light, the ambiguity in Suharto's speech on May 2, 1973, at a luncheon in the State Palace in Bogor, before several Indonesian

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<sup>170</sup> Hill 1993, p. 251.

authors, journalists and heads of the Indonesian publishers association and owners of press and publishing industry in Indonesia presented a justification to establish a political atmosphere which was hostile to all non-conformist literary expression.

## Conclusion

It is under this tension between economic growth and political repression that the production of the literary works at the heart of this study took place. The regime initially saw developments favorable to the expansion of literature, including the outpouring of creativity and talent applied to diverse topics in diverse forms and styles. But at the same time, the regime's drive to maintain stability for national development caused a shift in the structure of cultural production. From its inception, the New Order promised to restore order. This was formulated as early as August 1966 in the second Army Congress in Bandung.

‘The New Order is a more realistic and pragmatic way of thinking. It wants the national interests to come first and strives to achieve [...] subsequent period of development, good work of economic and democratic ideals, and the realization of a cultural, economic, political, and social system that is inspired by the Pancasila mentality.’<sup>171</sup>

The pragmatism in the above formula meant in practice a strong concentration of power in the hands of Suharto whose policy emphasized social and in particular economic development. The regime responded to the need of the population to put an end to the economic malaise and hyperinflation as quickly as possible, as well as to the political bickering during the parliamentary democracy and the polarization during the Guided Democracy.<sup>172</sup>

With great emphasis on economic development, the New Order regime made great efforts to stabilize national politics and to boost the economy, which had collapsed under Sukarno's Guided Democracy. Under the logic of political stability came the organizational structure of the New Order, as well as the explanation of and justification for Suharto's rise to power. The legitimization strategy was as follows. Firstly, its formal establishment consisted of several official documents: the Constitution of 1945, Pancasila, and Supersemar. On the basis of these documents, the New Order claimed its legality and argued that it was the best representative of the state. Secondly, there was the category that was closely related to the defense of the norms and values of the Pancasila. To preserve Pancasila, the New Order propagated a strong anti-communist ideology.

The interpretation of political legitimacy changed in the 1970s as a result of increasing criticism of the regime. The criticism focused, among other things, on the low level of democracy, economic policy that benefited only a small group, foreign economic influence in Indonesia, and the Westernization and secularization of

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<sup>171</sup> Karta Hadimadja and Dwipayana 1989, pp. 131-132.

<sup>172</sup> Vatikiotis 1993, p. 6.

society, marking the beginning of a change in Suharto's politics as it strengthened its legitimacy. The five principles became the linchpin of political legitimacy through their transformation into a rigid state ideology. Central to this was the presidency of Suharto. He had a very strong position as a result of the authority of the presidency granted in the Constitution of 1945, and the decree of the MPR in 1968, which allowed the president to dominate the executive, legislative, and judiciary.<sup>173</sup> In addition, Suharto also possessed great power being the supreme commander of the military. Not only did the army guarantee its own security by repressing the opposition, it also occupied a strong position as a result of self-appointed political function. Thus, Suharto was able to exert influence on the political level through military and gave his position the opportunity to oversee security and information services.

The New Order evolved from a relatively open and participatory atmosphere with the free expression of opinions into a state of increased constraints and tighter control. Under the regime, all publications and printed materials, both literary and non-literary, could be put up for review and banned if found harmful or offensive to the interests of the state and its citizens. The regime controlled, homogenized, policed cultural production, and chafed it under restriction.

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<sup>173</sup> Jenkins 1984, p. 13.

## Chapter 3

### Inside the Panopticon: Censorship under the New Order

“My work has been nothing other than to monitor closely my own people for the sake of the security and perpetuity of the government. All natives...who so disturbed the peace and serenity of the government — yes, I have and will continue to put them into a house of glass which I will place on my desk.”<sup>174</sup>

Pangemanann<sup>175</sup> in *House of Glass*

A widely shared notion about censorship in Indonesia under the New Order is that it merely followed a pattern of authoritarian governance inherited from the Dutch colonial ruler and Sukarno’s Guided Democracy, and was erratically carried out by understaffed, unskilled, and uncritical censors.<sup>176</sup> But the scholarly literature on censorship in Indonesia and archives from the Attorney General Office, together with my interviews, tell a different story. I argue that the New Order did not only follow censorship mechanisms that were operated under the colonial rule and Sukarno’s regime, but it also perfected the machinery by employing numerous agencies and stakeholders — turning them all into effective censors. The history of the creation, reception, and sudden banning of Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s *Bumi Manusia*, as described by Farid (2010) and Maier (1999), for example, refutes the notion and actually is against the common perception that has for a long time been assumed.<sup>177</sup>

Shortly after their release from the New Order’s internment camp on Buru Island in Maluku in 1979, Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Hasjim Rachman, former

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<sup>174</sup> Excerpt from Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s *Rumah Kaca*, p. 56. The novel itself was taken out of circulation only a few months after its publication. On June 8, 1988, Sukarton Mamosudjono, the then Attorney General, banned the novel with a decree, SK Jaksa Agung Nomor: KEP - 061/J.A./6/1988, which mentions that ‘after careful analysis, we find that the author with his outstanding skills and by means of historical data has written the novel in such subtle and overt way that it is laden with the teachings of Communism/Marxism – Leninism.’ When Pramoedya published and edited two other novels, namely *Gadis Pantai* (*The Girl from the Coast*) and *Siti Mariah* (*Siti Mariah*), immediately after the decree to ban *Rumah Kaca* was issued, the Attorney General signed another decree on August 3, 1988 that banned *Gadis Pantai* and *Siti Mariah*. Almost every publication that he had written and published was immediately banned.

<sup>175</sup> Pangemanann is police commissioner-cum-main character, narrator of *House of Glass*. He was given the task by the colonial government to oversee the natives, especially Minke, for the sake of security of the government. While conducting the surveillance, he is very keen in gathering information and taking notes of all activities conducted by Minke and the natives at large.

<sup>176</sup> Yusuf 2010, pp. vii, 38, 74, and 176. See also Sen and Hill 2007, pp. 37, 39.

<sup>177</sup> The discussion in the NEXT two paragraphs about the creative processes of Pramoedya’s *Bumi Manusia*, its production and circulation that involved Hasta Mitra, Hasjim Rachman, and Joesoef Isak, draws on Maier 1999, pp. 231-258 and Farid 2010. Hilmar Farid’s blog entitled ‘*Tentang Kelahiran Bumi Manusia*’ (2010b). See [http://hilmarfarid.id/tentang-kelahiran-bumi-manusia/#\\_ftn5](http://hilmarfarid.id/tentang-kelahiran-bumi-manusia/#_ftn5). This blog was written based on a series of interviews; most importantly the interview Farid had with Toer’s publisher of the 1970s Joesoef Isak in Jakarta on July 28, 2007.



editor in chief of the *Harian Bintang Timur*,<sup>178</sup> met Joesoef Isak, a publisher who had also been jailed due to his affiliation to the Indonesian communist party. In the meeting, they discussed the possibility of publishing works by left-wing intellectuals, former political prisoners, and literary authors, and ventured to establish a book publishing company. And in April 1980, they launched *Hasta Mitra*, Javanese words for 'friendly hand'. The three agreed that the first text they chose to publish was *This Earth of Mankind* (*Bumi Manusia*), the first volume of the story of the Indonesian National Movement between 1898 and 1918 written by Pramoedya. Pramoedya began revising the manuscripts that he actually had written in the prison camp in 1975, while Joesoef acted as editor, and Hasjim handled the business and financial affairs. Within three months, the manuscript was ready for print. The first print came out on August 15, 1980. The Jakarta-based national daily *Kompas* was among the first to show support and welcome the publication of the novel. On August 22, it dedicated a whole page to advertise the novel, calling it a pleasant surprise for the nation's 35<sup>th</sup> commemoration of Independence. Within just 12 days, about 5,000 copies were sold, and 50,000 more copies were sold until its fifth printing.<sup>179</sup> In addition to *Kompas*, warm welcomes also came from various literary scholars and journalists. Jakob Sumardjo, among many other Indonesian literary critics, wrote a review in the Bandung-based newspaper *Pikiran Rakyat* on September 10, 1980 and called *This Earth of Mankind* the work of Indonesia's greatest novelist. Even the anti-communist military-owned newspaper *Angkatan Bersendjata*, which had previously campaigned for anti-communist propaganda and against leftist authors, wrote a lengthy complimentary review, calling the book a positive contribution to the Indonesian literary world.<sup>180</sup> The then vice president of the Republic of Indonesia, Adam Malik, gave an equally positive response and endorsement.<sup>181</sup>

But then the tables were suddenly turned. The popularity of *This Earth of Mankind* together with the growing reading public was now seen as a challenge and threat to the authoritarian government.<sup>182</sup> The Attorney General formed a *Panitia Kerja Tetap* (Permanent Working Committee) and had it meet with the Coordinating Minister for the People's Welfare on September 9, 1980.<sup>183</sup> The outcome of the meeting was a conclusive finding that the book contained issues of class conflict, something that the New Order regime was highly allergic to. As a follow-up, *Kadit*

<sup>178</sup> A daily newspaper of the Indonesian Party (Partindo). It first appeared in 1926. It ceased publishing in 1965 due to the said affiliation to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

<sup>179</sup> Suryowardono 1982, p. 77.

<sup>180</sup> Angkatan Bersenjata, September 23, 1980.

<sup>181</sup> Maier 1999, p. 241. An indication of the vice president's positive response and endorsement to the publication of Pramoedya's *Bumi Manusia*, according to Maier, was evident in pictures him with Pramoedya, Joesoef Isak, and Hasjim Rachman in some of the leading newspapers in Jakarta and beyond.

<sup>182</sup> Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung Republik Indonesia nomor KEP-052/JA/5/1981 tentang Larangan Peredaran Barang Cetakan Berjudul Bumi Manusia dan Anak Semua Bangsa, in 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta

<sup>183</sup> The decree issued by the Attorney General indicates that the Attorney General formed the *Panitia Kerja Tetap* after considering inputs from the KOPKAMTIB.

*Polkam* (Head of the Intelligence Bureau) of the Attorney General Office made a phone call to Hasjim as the director of Hasta Mitra, warning him not to distribute the book until the censor's clearance.<sup>184</sup> A few days afterward, on September 19, the *Kadit Polkam* summoned Hasjim and interrogated him for three consecutive days in relation to the publication of the book and the other three novels that would follow, i.e. *Child of All Nations*, *Footsteps*, and *House of Glass*.<sup>185</sup> After the interrogation, the examiners at the bureau concluded that the book and the other three that had yet to be printed were code books that encrypted communist doctrines, namely class struggle, internationalism, the Communist Manifesto, and communist society.

This conclusion was soon echoed by government officials, community leaders, literary scholars, and journalists. In their own ways, they reasoned that the book did contain Marxist teachings even though they never seemed to offer valid analyses on the content of the book. The Attorney General Office pushed forward and began to shift the issue to Pramoedya's status as an ex-political prisoner. Ampat Lima, the printing house, was targeted. The owner was telephoned and warned not to continue to print the novel. Agents and bookstores were raided by officials from the Attorney General Office and security apparatuses. Some other vendors voluntarily handed over the books to the Attorney General Office. Pressure was also put on the press. Around October 10, 1980, newspapers and magazine editors were also telephoned to not publish praising reviews for Pramoedya's work.<sup>186</sup> Rosihan Anwar, the liberal-minded author-cum-senior journalist and supporter of the *Manifest Kebudayaan*, accused the press of playing with fire when writing sympathetically about the novel,<sup>187</sup> while H.B. Jassin, reputedly the custodian of Modern Indonesian literature, said that he could not blame the government for their action.<sup>188</sup> Furthermore, government-backed newspapers such as *Suara Karya*, *Pelita*, and *Karya Dharma* began to publish condemnation of *This Earth of Mankind* and the author. IKAPI, which initially had shown support for the publication and asked Hasta Mitra to take part in the association's annual book exhibition, lost interest and sent a letter of cancelation to Hasta Mitra.

Furthermore, Kodam Jaya (the Greater Jakarta Military Regional Command) invited a group of literary authors and intellectuals to a meeting in order to provide the military officials with a scientific and cultural foundation that could be made as reference to reject the book. In mid-April 1981, several youth groups organized a

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<sup>184</sup> Farid 2010b. Also Maier 1999, p. 77. According to Maier, this was a common method in modern Indonesia since the message remains anonymous and unrecorded, the source cannot be traced, because the message is clear in its covertness.

<sup>185</sup> 'Surat Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, No. Pang. 038/D.1/9/1980, 11 September 1980.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>186</sup> Maier 1999, p. 77.

<sup>187</sup> *Pos Kota*, September 23, 1980, quoted in Farid 2010b.

<sup>188</sup> Responding to the banning of Pramoedya's novel, HB Jassin stated that in principle he did not approve the banning of books but also could not blame the government for their action. Keen to secure favor with the state, Jassin tended to leave everything to the authorities. Interestingly, Jassin was jailed after his magazine published a short story that was considered to be disrupting public order. See. 'Buku Pram' 1981, and *Komentar* 1989.

discussion denouncing Pramoedya's work, which was followed by a letter to the editor from a concerned citizen stating that the novel had caused unrest and that Pramoedya should be forbidden to write.<sup>189</sup> All these gave the needed justification for the Attorney General to set a ban. Finally, on May 29, 1981, the Attorney General decreed that *This Earth of Mankind* and *Child of All Nations* were banned because they 'disturbed the peace and serenity [of the government]'<sup>190</sup> — the book had to be withdrawn from the market, and stock was recalled, confiscated, and destroyed by the police. In this context, Indonesia had, and still has, an uncanny resemblance to Pramoedya's *House of Glass* in which both Pangemanann and the state c.q. Attorney General were always concerned about the security and perpetuity of the government and, therefore, were committed to surveilling and putting those who so disturbed the peace and public order into a house of glass.

As I indicated in Chapter 1, much has been said about censorship and its important role in defining New Order orthodoxy — a colonial inheritance that stemmed from anxiety and fear of the political consequences that could undermine its authoritarian regime (Farid 1996; Maier 1999; Haryanto 1999; Sen&Hill 2007; Yusuf 2010; van Heeren 2012). The case of Pramoedya's *This Earth of Mankind*, therefore, was primarily viewed as a typical case of powerless victim and an overwhelmingly repressive state authority that acted in a sudden and seemingly erratic way. It follows the two general tendencies in the way censorship has been studied predominantly in the West, as characterized as such by Darnton (1995, 2014), Bunn (2015), and Burt (1994) — namely, on the one hand, as 'a story of the struggle between freedom of expression and the attempts to repress it by political authorities,' and on the other hand, as 'an account of constraint of every kind that inhibit[s] communication.'<sup>191</sup> The systematic nature of this mechanism and its management of censorship, however, remained overlooked and underexplored. Based on my research, the case of Pramoedya actually demonstrates that the Attorney General, to which the state delegated the sole authority of censorship, possessed a wide range of abilities in managing and utilizing its overwhelming control in order to get all state organs, as well as the general public to turn against a publication that they initially supported.<sup>192</sup> Indeed, suggestions for censorship or bans might have originated from various other state bodies or civil groups; nonetheless, as this thesis will show, it was the Attorney General who remained the key coordinating actor and, against the common assumption at the time, the Attorney General acted in most cases autonomously. Similarly, in the case of *Bumi Manusia*,

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<sup>189</sup> 'Buku Pram' 1989.

<sup>190</sup> In Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *House of Glass* (1988), the fourth volume of his Buru Quartet, Pangemanann illustrates in details how censorship works, especially with his nitpicking habit of writing down information, events, and names of people, which he believed would bring or maintain public order.

<sup>191</sup> Darnton 2014, p. 17; Bunn, 2015, pp. 25-44; and Burt. 1997. pp. 19-43.

<sup>192</sup> This is not to place Pramoedya outside the dynamics, but to say that he was not part of the state censorship management. He was the one under pursuit, targeted for attack; hence, the game, as implied by Maier (1999).

the Attorney General set the ban in a very deliberate and effective manner, although in the beginning he vacillated.

Under the New Order regime, the state, c.q. the Attorney General developed clear procedures and employed a mechanism of censorship in which both the censors and its subjects (writers, journalists, newspapers, and publishers) were interlinked in a complex interdependent relation. Research material that I collected – through interviews and consultation of the library and archives – in the Office of the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET reveals that censorship was not simply about repression by the state in its effort to maintain national stability and social order, which complicates the definition of censorship, but also about the ability to foster more resources. While the Attorney General controlled the literary field as completely as possible, by disciplining authors, publishers, and literary critics, the Attorney General also allowed publishers, editors, and literary authors to react and engage with the productive dimensions of censorship to increase the production of literature as a pillar of national development.

Furthermore, according to the Deputy for Supervision and the Deputy for Intelligence Service, the Attorney General, with which authority to ban publications rested, was always equipped with three political resources, namely: coercive, coordinative, and material resources, including financial abundance allotted by the central government.<sup>193</sup> In two closed meetings of the *Panitia Kerja Tetap* at the Attorney General Office that I attended during my fieldwork, for example, attendees from various departments, publishing houses, and community groups were handed out envelopes filled with Rupiahs as extra official honoraria for censorship-serving tasks. Based on further investigation which I will substantiate later in this chapter in more detail, this practice was not recent. It has been performed by the said office in many previous *Panitia Kerja Tetap* meetings dating back to the 1980s.<sup>194</sup> Especially in the 1980s, when the New Order regime was at its crest of power and experiencing steady economic growth, the Attorney General resorted more to persuasion, using symbolic and ideological approaches, in order to get the public to voluntarily accept the presence of the state and its policies.<sup>195</sup>

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that the Attorney General coordinated an interlaced system of state institutions, together with editors, publishers, and, not least, readers, and worked with authors as much as against them, and helped to improve literary works to conform to the state views or standards. Similar to Darnton's finding on censorship in France during the years before the revolution of 1789, where books 'existed by virtue of the king's pleasure, product[s] of the royal grace,' censorship under the New Order also began from the top and 'drove

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<sup>193</sup> Interview with Dra. Sri Moeljarti (pseudonym) on August 15, 2017 in Jakarta.

<sup>194</sup> Interview with Dra. Sri Moeljarti (pseudonym) on August 15, 2017 in Jakarta.

<sup>195</sup> This decade was the period of success of the New Order rulers who established themselves after in the previous decade it had succeeded in suppressing /taming students, political parties, and dissenting generals. See Liddle 1992, pp. 90-104, and 113.

authors/editors/publishers and censors together rather than apart.’<sup>196</sup> In addition, with abundant material resources, just like Pangemanann in Pramoedya’s *House of Glass*, the Attorney General was intent on gathering information and refining the methodology of censorship into a standard operating procedure. With all these resources, virtually all publications that were printed in the period were surveyed, classified, and analyzed by the state, c.q. Attorney General, and its helpers using panoptic techniques of surveillance through various agencies and hierarchical observation.

Censorship under the New Order Indonesia became pervasive, sophisticated, massive, and more than other scholars presume, effective. To show how, this chapter explores the following questions. What type of machinery did the state operate in exerting its power, especially in relation to supervision and banning of printed materials? What forms of censorship were put into practice? And what role did the Attorney General play? What was his position vis-à-vis other institutions and powerholders? The purpose of these questions is to identify the institutional framework undergirding the management of surveillance and control utilized and coopted by the state in relation to book banning.

### **Censorship in ‘New Order’: Historical Continuities**

Under the New Order Indonesia, criticisms against the government were regarded as criminal acts, equivalent to thefts.<sup>197</sup> Dozens of people who actively voiced their political views were imprisoned as the government officials ‘invoked the provisions of the Indonesian Criminal Code that former Dutch colonial administrators had used to suppress opposition to colonial rule.’<sup>198</sup> Two of the most notorious legal weapons harkened back to colonial-era laws: the vaguely worded *Haatzaai Artikelen* (hate sowing articles), which basically ‘prohibited expression of feelings of hostility, hatred, or contempt toward the government;’<sup>199</sup> and the *lèse majesté* (criminal code articles 134, 137(1), 207, 208), which criminalized the dissemination, display or posting of material offensive to the state or government officials.<sup>200</sup> Both *Haatzaai Artikelen* and *lese majeste* restricted journalists and targeted the movements that opposed colonial rule.

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<sup>196</sup> Darnton 2014, pp. 28 and. 47.

<sup>197</sup> See Jaringan Kerja Budaya 1999, p. 11.

<sup>198</sup> Broecker 2010, p. 10.

<sup>199</sup> Broecker 2010, p. 10.

<sup>200</sup> See Yamamoto 2011, pp 141 Section 1. Section (1): Any person who disseminates, openly demonstrates or puts up a writing or portrait containing an insult against an authority or public body set up in the Netherlands Indies with the intent to give publicity to the insulting content or to enhance the publicity thereof, shall be punished by a maximum imprisonment of four months or a maximum fine of three hundred guilders at maximum; Section (2): If the offender commits the crime in his profession and during the commission of the crime two years have not yet elapsed since an earlier conviction of the person on account of a similar crime has become final, he may be deprived of said profession. See. Wiratraman 2014. See also, Fauzan 2003, pp. 96-97; Human Rights Watch 1998, p. 53 Broecker 2010, p. 10.

Prior to the introduction of the *Haatzaai Artikelen*, in 1856 the colonial rule introduced the *Reglement of de drukwerken in Nederlandsch-Indie* (Regulation on Printed Matter in the Netherlands Indies, a regulation that aimed at stifling criticism of the colonial government.<sup>201</sup> It introduced a pre-censorship system for the press that made it compulsory for the printing houses or publishers to submit a signed copy to the head of the local administration, public prosecutor, and general secretariat (*Algemene Secretarie*). Violation against this provision was liable to a fine, confiscation, or dissolution of the publisher and printing house.<sup>202</sup> This was then followed by the *Persbreidelordonnantie* 1931 (Press Banning Ordinance) which in its day manifested as a dreaded repressive tool used against writers and newspapers owners.<sup>203</sup> This ordinance gave the right to the Governor-General to ‘ban publications for a maximum of eight days in the interest of public order. If he found that the newspaper concerned was violating public order, he could ban the publication for a longer period, without the involvement of the judiciary.’<sup>204</sup>

After the Proclamation of Independence, leaders of the Republic decided to take over all colonial legal products, and only made necessary and noticeable improvements in order to make the regulations fit the newly independent state. The term ‘king’, for example, was replaced with ‘president,’ and several articles that had been used to tackle the fight for independence were revoked in 1946. However, the entire structure which tended to curb society was maintained.<sup>205</sup> In responding to political crises and increasing tensions and hostilities among military and civil leaders that were often amplified through mass media, pamphlets, and other printed materials, Nasution, the Chief Staff of the Indonesian Army, under the auspices of Sukarno, issued a military ordinance that regulated publication. Article 1 of this ordinance stipulated that:

‘It is prohibited to print, publish, offer statements, broadcast, post, provoke, or possess writings, pictures, clichés, and paintings that contain or portray criticism, insinuations (*insinuatie*) or insults against the President and the Vice President, or against an authority or general assembly, or a civil servant

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<sup>201</sup> The Printing Press Regulation of 1856 obliged all printers and publishers to send a copy of newspapers and periodicals to the chief local authority. The local authority was given the task of exercising pre-publication censorship. It had the power to check the content, change it, and even suspend distribution of the issue. It also had the power to withdraw the license of printers and publishers at any time. See Jaringan Kerja Budaya 1999, p. 21; Yamamoto 2011, pp 30-34. Adam 2018; Maters 2003, p. 51.

<sup>202</sup> Surjomiharjo 1980, p. 171-172.

<sup>203</sup> Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indie 1931 No. 394 jo. Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indie 1932 No. 44. The original title is ‘*Drukwerken, Bescherming van de openbare orde tegen ongewenste periodiek verschijnende drukwerken*’ (Printed matters: Protection of public order against undesirable periodical printings).

<sup>204</sup> Mirjam Maters mentioned that the rationale behind this ordinance was a follow up response to the communist uprising in East Java in 1927/1927 which signaled an increasing critical movement against the Dutch colonial government. The government was in favor of a regulated freedom and found that the colonial situation justified the taking of repressive and administrative measures. See Maters 2003, p. 220. See also Wiratraman 2014, p. 55.

<sup>205</sup> Jaringan Kerja Budaya 1999, p. 15.

when acting on the basis of an official mandate; writings which contain hostility, hatred, and insulting statements against community groups; or writings which contain news or announcements which provoke chaos in society.<sup>206</sup>

This rule did not only apply to writers and publishers, but also to printing houses, distributors and vendors. What was meant by insult and ‘provoke chaos’ was not clearly defined, as if it intentionally sought to leave room for the government, especially the Army, to apply whatever definition they wished. It was the Army themselves that played an important role in banning Pramoedya’s book *Hoakiau di Indonesia (The Chinese in Indonesia)* in 1959. After the book was declared prohibited, the author was sent to prison. A year later, Muhammad Hatta’s *Demokrasi Kita (Our Democracy)*, an article in which he called Sukarno’s Guided Democracy a disguised form of totalitarianism and described Sukarno as a Mephistopheles in reverse, a man who wished to do well but caused evil, was banned.<sup>207</sup> Hamka, the owner and publisher of the Islamic weekly magazine, *Pandji Masjarakat* (Banner of Society), where the article appeared, was arrested and imprisoned for alleged subversive activities, while his magazine was banned.

In addition to the ordinance, another equally important legal product of the Sukarno era is the Presidential Order No. 4 of 1963, which was designed to safeguard the path of the Indonesian Revolution by means of preventing and prohibiting printed matters that could disturb public order. This order came into force on April 23, 1963 with the backdrop of a split between Nasution and Sukarno, and an increasing opposition between the Army and the Sukarno government which received strong support from the communists (PKI) and the nationalists (PNI and Partindo). In this period, a cultural campaign was launched against the influence of imperialism in the lives of the Indonesian people and called for art to promote social progress and reflect social reality, rather than exploring the human psyche and emotions.<sup>208</sup>

One of the targets of the campaign was the *Manifes Kebudayaan*, a military-sanctioned cultural movement signed on August 17, 1963 by non-left intellectuals, poets, and literary writers, including H.B. Jassin, in an effort to promote freedom in creativity and combat the theories of social realism pressed by the members of LEKRA, the cultural arm of the Indonesian communist party, ‘founded on August 17, 1950, with Njoto as the Party’s guiding hand in the central secretariat.’<sup>209</sup> According to Jassin, LEKRA was a tool of the PKI, alongside other organizations that were affiliated with the party. It was, according to him, the tool for dominating the area of literature and culture within the PKI’s wider endeavor to conquer power in Indonesia. LEKRA’s slogan ‘*Politik adalah Panglima*’ (Politics in Command)

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<sup>206</sup> *Peraturan Kepala Staf Angkatan Darat selaku penguasa militer* No. PKM/001/9/1956 on September 14, 1956, quoted in Wiratraman 2014, p. 66; Jaringan Kerja Budaya 1999, pp. 16-17.

<sup>207</sup> See Hatta 2000.

<sup>208</sup> See Foulcher 1986.

<sup>209</sup> Hindley 1966, p. 184.

was felt by independent artists and intellectuals to be a threat to ‘freedom of thought and creativity.’<sup>210</sup>

Many prohibitions in the series of this cultural campaign took place, especially on the books that were believed to spread liberal views and hinder the course of the revolution. LEKRA was also vocal ‘against those it deemed to be at odds with the movement and against writers and artists alleged to be the promoters of literature and arts for the bourgeois class, capitalists, and imperialists.’<sup>211</sup> LEKRA ‘argued that art and literature should be dedicated to the ‘*rakyat*’ (ordinary people) rather than to the bourgeoisie.’<sup>212</sup> Socialist realism, therefore, was interpreted to ‘represent the real life of the people through the framework of socialist morals’ and contrasted with the ‘universal humanism which was considered a false slogan taken from Western imperialists to conceal their real interests’ via the *Manifes Kebudayaan* camp.<sup>213</sup> Since its ban on May 8, 1964, the writers who were associated with the *Manifes Kebudayaan* were marginalized in social and literary life. They were faced with extreme difficulties as almost all publishers refused to publish their works. *Sastra* magazine, run by Jassin, had to close down due to management and financial problems after the ban. Furthermore, as part of the ‘retooling’ campaign to rid state enterprises and universities of bureaucratic capitalists and people in authority seen to be sympathetic to Western imperialism, Jassin was pressured by Left-wing student organizations to leave his teaching position in the Faculty of Arts, Universitas Indonesia because of his association with the *Manifes Kebudayaan* as early as April 1964.<sup>214</sup> A year later, the Department of Education and Culture instructed that the works of *Manifes Kebudayaan* supporters should no longer be used as teaching materials at schools.

When the New Order came to power, the government set ‘a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, and circulation’<sup>215</sup> of books by using Law No. 4/PNPS/1963 which mimicked the 1856 colonial regulation on the prohibition of printed matters.<sup>216</sup> The 1963 law regulated the preventive and repressive measures on printed matters whose content could disturb public order, including the authority, mechanism of book banning, implementation, as well punishment in the event of violation. It stipulated that the authority to ban rested with the Attorney General who had the coordinating authority to assess and ban books that could disturb public order. It also stipulated that publishers were obliged to

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<sup>210</sup> Ismail 1972, p.ix. This book was initially a thesis published by University Indonesia, written by Ismail, who was at the time supervised by Jassin, Indonesia’s foremost literary critic and a staunch anti-communist. In the early 1970s, this thesis was published as a book, with a foreword by Jassin, which summarized a lopsided account of the cultural element of pre-1965 politics and even became the continued trope of Suharto era.

<sup>211</sup> Mujiburrahman 2006, p. 212.

<sup>212</sup> Mujiburrahman 2006, p. 212.

<sup>213</sup> Mujiburrahman 2006, pp. 212-213.

<sup>214</sup> Foulcher 1987, p. 92.

<sup>215</sup> Foucault 1980, p. 133.

<sup>216</sup> ‘Himpunan Peraturan.’ Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.



submit copies of the book within two days after publication and that the authorities were given the rights to confiscate or withdraw the books from the publishers, bookstores, or individuals. It also stipulated that individuals who owned forbidden books were obliged to submit the books to local police or prosecutor offices. Lastly, it also stipulated that each printed matter must be labeled with the name of the printer or publishers and their address. Failure to comply would be faced with penal consequences.

As the title suggests, Law number 4/PNPS/1963 was not entirely a new product of the New Order government. It was an adaptation of the presidential order that was issued by Sukarno in 1963. While the presidential order issued by Sukarno favored all printed materials that were in accordance with the spirit of revolution, this newly adopted law worked in reverse. Major changes occurred in the omission of Sukarnoist traces and terminologies such as the *Nasakom*, *Pemimpin Besar Revolusi*, *Sosialisme*, *Realisme Sosialis*, and *Politics as commander*. As this law was used as the main legal foundation for book ban under the New Order, this law was always referred to in the consideration section of the Attorney General decrees that were issued in the New Order period, even until it was eventually revoked in 2010.<sup>217</sup> In addition to the presidential order, the Attorney General also relied on several other Sukarno-era laws, i.e. Law number 15 of 1961 which regulated the authority of Attorney General; the presidential order number 11/PNPS of 1963 on subversive acts; and the presidential order number 1/PNPS 1965 on defamation of religion.<sup>218</sup>

Furthermore, a colonial anti-communist ideology was shared by the New Order. Legal sources were used to specifically ban publications that supposedly contained or propagated communism, or Marxism-Leninism. In March 1966, the MPRS declared the Indonesian Communist Party illegal by a decree known as *Ketetapan MPRS No. XXV/1966*. With this decree, the tables were turned. Every cultural initiative and creativity produced by members of LEKRA was short-lived, if not immediately banned. This decree was further enhanced by the introduction of Ministerial Instruction Number 32 of 1981 on the Re-education and Supervision of Former Political Prisoners linked with the communist party.<sup>219</sup> As if used to avenge Jassin's forced dismissal from the University of Indonesia, the instruction urged that

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<sup>217</sup> *Lembaran Negara RI Nomor 23 Tahun 1963. Penetapan Presiden Republik Indonesia No. 4 Tahun 1963 tentang Pengamanan terhadap Barang-Barang Cetak yang Isinya Dapat Mengganggu Ketertiban Umum. And, Penjelasan atas Penetapan Presiden Republik Indonesia No. 4 Tahun 1963 tentang Pengamanan terhadap Barang-Barang Cetak yang Isinya Dapat Mengganggu Ketertiban Umum.* 'Himpunan Peraturan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>218</sup> 'Himpunan Petunjuk.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>219</sup> *Lampiran Instruksi Menteri Dalam Negeri, Departemen Dalam Negeri Nomor: 32 Tahun 1981 tentang Pembinaan dan Pengawasan terhadap Bekas Tahanan dan Bekas Narapidana G.30.S/PKI, and, Instruksi Menteri Pendidikan Dasar dan Kebudayaan RI Nomor: 1381 Tahun 1965 Tanggal 30 Nopember 1965 tentang Larangan Menggunakan Buku-buku Pelajaran, Perpustakaan, dan Kebudayaan yang Dikarang oleh Oknum-oknum dan Anggota-anggota Ormas/Orpol yang Dibekukan untuk Sementara Waktu Kegiatannya.* Both in 'Himpunan Peraturan.' Arsip. SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

the former political prisoners should be prohibited from holding strategic professions that included civil servants, military personnel, teachers, and priests, as well as writers, editors, and translators. When the government found out that Hersri Setiawan, Boejoeng Saleh, and Joebaar Ajoeb, all of whom were former political prisoners in Buru Island, wrote articles in *Prisma* magazine, the Department of Information reprimanded the chief editor and threatened to revoke its printing permit. On March 2, 1983, the Ministry of Information Republic of Indonesia sent a letter directly addressed to the managing director of *Prisma* Magazine. The letter reads:

‘After careful investigations on several issues of *Prisma* Magazine, we found several elements that in our opinion deserve serious attention from you. The special section in your magazine, called ‘*TOKOH*’ (PEOPLE), repeatedly features [problematic] individuals, among others: Mr. Amir Syarifuddin, Aidit, and Cornel Simanjuntak. Based on our assessment, these features were as if an attempt by the communists via *Prisma* Magazine to regain strength and garner sympathy from the society in order for them to be welcomed again in our society, or a campaign to revive the Communist Party in Indonesia. The features appeared in:

1. *Prisma* No.2, February 1982 pp. 73-87, ‘Cornel Simanjuntak Cahaya, Datanglah’ written by Hersri S.
2. *Prisma* No.5, May 1982 pp. 79-96, ‘S.M. Kartosuwiryo, Orang Seiring Bertukar Jalan’ written by Hersri S. and Joebar Ajoeb.
3. *Prisma* No.7, July 1982 pp. 61-79, ‘Aidit dan Partai Pada Tahun 1950’ written by Jacques Leclerc.
4. *Prisma* No.9, September 1982, pp. 68-89, ‘Oerip Soemohardjo Kebungkaman Yang Ampuh’ written by S.I. Poeradisastira.
5. *Prisma* No. 12, December 1982, pp. 53-73 written by Jacques Leclerc.’<sup>220</sup>

The letter that was signed by the Director of Journalism Services Ministry of Information Republic of Indonesia, Drs. Daan S. Sashusilawane concludes with a paragraph that reads:

‘the publications of these articles are against the *Ketetapan MPRS No. XXV/1966* that dictates the disbandment of the PKI and the prohibition of any activities to spread or promote the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and Communism.... In pursuance to this decree, the articles could lead to the closing of your magazine.’<sup>221</sup>

A few weeks later, on April 11, 1983, Dawam Rahardjo, the Managing Director of *Prisma*, Ismid Hadad, Managing Editor, and Daniel Dhakidae, Editor in Chief, were

<sup>220</sup> <http://prismajurnal.com>. See also, Shofiyanti 2016, p. 73.

<sup>221</sup> Shofiyanti 2016, p. 73. See also Daniel Dhakidae. 2003.

summoned by the State's Attorney in Jakarta in connection with the aforementioned publications.

Furthermore, the state ideology was also referred to by the Attorney General in several decrees issued in late 1960s and early 1970s. *Pancasila* and the Constitution of 1945, which Sukarno once attributed to the efforts of the communist party, were detached from its leftist values and used against them. Article 1 of Law Number 21 year 1982 that replaces Sukarno-era Law Number 11 year 1966 clearly shows the immediate ideological alterations in order to fit the New Order agenda. Point a of the article lists 'Old Order' jargons that were replaced by the New Order into more euphemistic yet dogmatic terminologies.

1. 'Alat revolusi' (revolutionary tools) was replaced by 'alat Perjuangan Nasional' (instruments for National Struggle)
2. 'Alat penggerak massa' (people mobilization tools) was replaced by 'alat penggerak pembangunan bangsa' (instruments for national development)
3. 'Pengawal revolusi' (revolutionary guards) was replaced by 'pengawal ideologi Pancasila' (the guardian of Pancasila Ideology)
4. 'Pers Sosialis Pancasila' (the Pancasila Socialist Press) was replaced by 'Pers Pancasila' (the Press of Pancasila)
5. 'Tiga kerangka revolusi' (the three framework of revolution, inspired by Marxist's concept of *Révolution mondiale*) was replaced by *Tujuan Nasional* (National Goal)
6. 'Progresif' (progressive) was replaced by 'konstruktif-progresif' (constructive-progressive)
7. 'Kontra revolusi' (counter revolution) was replaced by 'menentang Pancasila' (against Pancasila)
8. 'Berkhianat terhadap revolusi' (betraying the revolution) was replaced by 'berkhianat terhadap Perjuangan Nasional' (betraying the national struggle)
9. 'Gotong royong kekeluargaan terpimpin' (mutual aid and guided society) was replaced by 'secara bersama berdasar atas kekeluargaan' (collective collaboration based on family values)
10. 'Revolusi' (revolution) was replaced by 'Perjuangan Nasional' (National Struggle).<sup>222</sup>

Since the Law specifically connects to the press and print industry, point 'b' of the same article states that the equal position between the government and the press was replaced into a hierarchical scheme. Law Number 11 of 1966 that invited the press to work together with the government (*Pemerintah bersama-sama Dewan Pers*) was

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<sup>222</sup> Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 21 Tahun 1982 tentang Perubahan atas Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 1966 tentang Ketentuan-Ketentuan Pokok Pers sebagaimana diubah dengan Undang-Undang Nomor 4 Tahun 1967. 'Himpunan Peraturan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

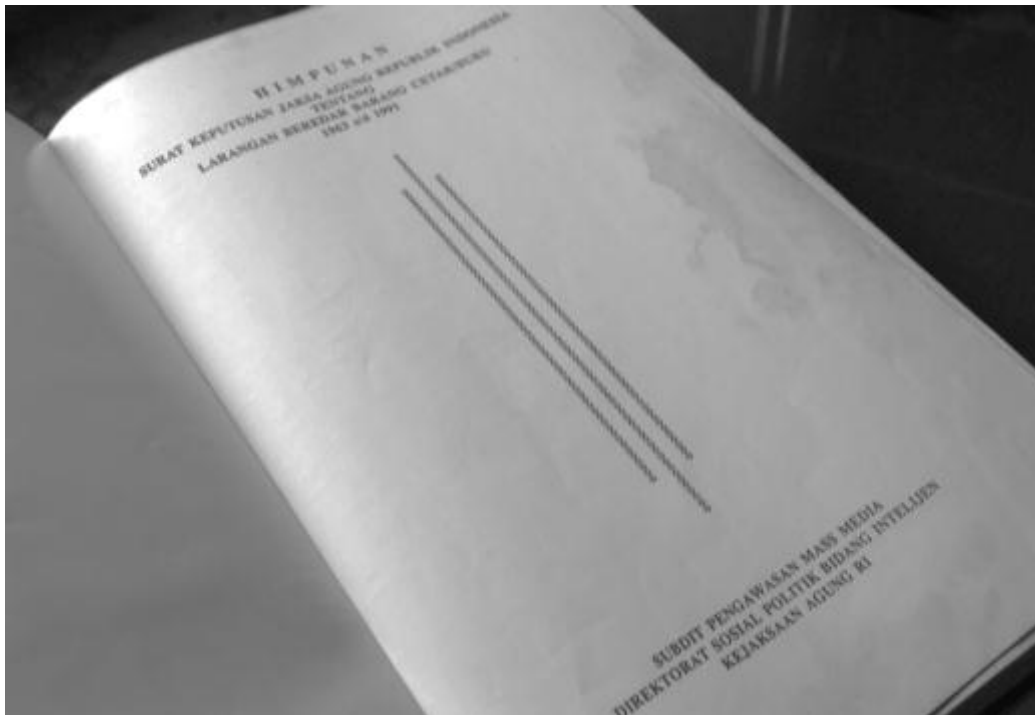
replaced by this new law that positions the press only as state body that gives recommendations (*Pemerintah setelah mendengar pertimbangan Dewan Pers*). As this new ideological language was imposed on society, especially on the press and print industry, the list became a formal ideological guideline for censorship politics in Indonesia under the New Order. Books that propagated communist teachings or that referred to Sukarno's revolutionary jargon and ideas were equivalent to books that undermined or even attacked *Pancasila* and the Constitution of 1945. The ban under the New Order against anything that was communist, socialist, or revolutionary mirrored the ban that the communists under Sukarno directed against intellectuals, poets, and writers of the *Manifes Kebudayaan*.

Understanding the long tradition of censorship in Indonesia, the New Order regime knew what censorship could bring for – in the regime's eyes – the betterment of the state. Immediately after the attempted coup on September 30, 1965 that was solely blamed on the communist party, no less than 60 books were banned and 46 publishers who were accused of being affiliated with communists, making it the first massive censorship action. In addition, 87 names of left intellectuals and writers were targeted for surveillance. This repressive measure, however, was not the scariest of the New Order regime. Whatever the motivation was, whether it was fear or a desire to maintain power, this regime had this self-awareness and understood really well the importance of censorship and the commitment to keep improving it. Within studies on censorship in Indonesia, little or hardly any serious study has been made of how this government worked on the improvement of its censorship because the focus was always given to censored subjects instead of the censors themselves.

An examination of five volumes of the Attorney General's dossiers on banned books and printed matters offers insight into the nature of book banning under the New Order. The five volumes are (a). *Himpunan Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung RI tentang Larangan Beredar Barang Cetak Buku 1963-1991* (Compilation of Attorney General Decrees of the Republic of Indonesia on the Prohibition of Printed Matters, 1963-1991), hereafter referred to as *Himpunan Surat Keputusan*, (b). *Himpunan Peraturan-Peraturan tentang Barang Cetakan* (Compilation of Laws and Regulations on Printed Matters), hereafter referred to as *Himpunan Peraturan*, (c). *Himpunan Petunjuk-Petunjuk, Instruksi-Instruksi, Surat Edaran, Dan Lain-Lain dari Bidang Operasi Kejaksaan Agung RI, 1947-1978* (Compilation of Guidelines, Instructions, Circulars, etc. from the Operation Department Attorney General Office, 1947-1978), hereafter referred to as *Himpunan Petunjuk*, (d). *Kewenangan Kejaksaan dalam Pengawasan Barang Cetakan* (The Authority of Prosecutors Office in Supervising Printed Matters), hereafter referred to as *Kewenangan*, and (e). *Undangan Rapat Buku* (Invitation Letters for Book Supervision), hereafter referred to as *Undangan*.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> These dossiers are kept at the Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.



*Himpunan Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung RI tentang Larangan Beredar Barang Cetak/Buku 1963-1991 shelved in the mini library of the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET in Jakarta.  
(Photo collection of Taufiq Hanafi)*

These unpublished documents are semi-confidential, and for internal use only and – still today – used at the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Attorney General Office as reference for censorship or bans. Different from the Attorney General’s decree that appeared in national newspapers after a ban was issued, each of these decrees was equipped with a lengthy report and academic analysis of the book that was banned. These reports/analyses were printed separately, all of which are shelved in a storage room which is referred to as a ‘*perpustakaan mini*’ (mini library). Not living up to its name, this library serves as a spacious one-floor working-library at the Attorney General Office in Jakarta and collects extensive dossiers, incoming and outgoing mail, invitations, manuscripts, copies of banned books, and scholarly analyses on the banned books. I obtained these documents and access to the library as a return of favor after I assisted the chief of the directorate for the supervision of printed matters with the editing and scanning of books, documents, and dossiers in the said office.

The *Himpunan Surat Keputusan* shows that the first massive censorship against the works of left-wing intellectuals that was always attributed to the New Order regime was actually carried out by Sukarno’s officials and state apparatus, i.e. the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, which under Sukarno was directed by Leiden-University-trained Javanologist Prijono (whose career, because of his leftist

inclinations career, would end violently after 1965).<sup>224</sup> The instruction for the ban, however, was signed and issued by Colonel Infantry M. Setiadi Kartohadikusumo, who was active personnel of the Indonesian Army stationed at the Ministry as deputy to the minister, and a strong supporter of the New Order.<sup>225</sup>

As evident in the *Himpunan Surat Keputusan*, the first official step the New Order government took in 1966 in relation to printed matters was actually censorship in reverse. The government, via the first Attorney General of the New Order, Major General TNI Soegiharto, revoked decrees on the banning of printed matters that were issued by Sukarno's Attorney Generals, M. Kadarusman, S.H. and A. Soetardhio. On December 12, 1966, Soegiharto revoked the Decree of the Minister/Attorney General No. 007/KPTS/PERS/1964 issued on May 19, 1964, on the banning of the *US News & World Report* magazine. This, according to Soegiharto, was done in an effort to restore the good relations between the United States and the Republic of Indonesia. On the same date, Soegiharto also decreed a revocation of a ban on the *Commonwealth Today*. This revocation was based on the consideration that the Sukarno-era confrontation campaign with Malaysia had to be ended and that Indonesia should now treat Malaysia as an equal partner. In the following month, Soegiharto also revoked the ban on *Harian Operasi* on the basis that the New Order government was determined to justice, truth, and democracy based on Pancasila and the Constitution of 1945. The revocation of the decree also mentioned that the Press should be given space and proper discretion in order for it to be able to perform its function as a means of social control and social participation — an indication that the New Order regime wanted to give the impression that it had a democratic side to it and promoted freedom of expression.<sup>226</sup>

Official banning only began in January 1967, when Attorney General Soegiharto issued a decree for the left-leaning or Chinese-affiliated magazine, *Tiongkok Rakjat*, which was published by the *Pustaka Bahasa Asing Peking*. In the months that followed, several other publications were also banned. But unlike the rationale that Sukarno's attorneys general would simply use, i.e. disrupting public order, Soegiharto stated a more elaborate rationale behind the ban. In the decrees, for example, he mentioned that these publications were prohibited because they based their publications on half-truth in reporting current security and state situation so that

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<sup>224</sup> Prijono, the then Minister of Basic Education and Culture, himself did not issue nor sign the ministerial instruction as he was linked to the left-leaning PKI-affiliated Murba Party and was considered a strong supporter of President Sukarno's ideas. He was later kidnapped by a group of anti-Sukarno students and died in 1969. See Lee 1995, pp. 182–185; Poeze 2007, p. 1716; Bloembergen 2018, pp. 391–413; Jones 2013, p. 98.

<sup>225</sup> The term 'New Order' in this discussion covers two understandings; first, it concerns the New Order as an aspirational group together with its vast supporters. In this sense, the New Order as a collective body has appeared as soon as the September 30 Movement of the PKI broke out. The second understanding concerns the New Order as a formal establishment and order of life of the nation and state, with its government as executor responsible for the implementation of the state.

<sup>226</sup> 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

the government feared it would cause misinformation among the general public.<sup>227</sup> Within the first five year period, 1967-1971, 18 publications were banned.

In comparison M. Kadarusman, Sukarno's Attorney General, banned 15 publications only in a single day in November 1963 by a single decree. These publications were *Newsweek* issues 2, 9, and September 30, 1963, *Newsweek* issues October 7, and November 11 and 25, 1963; *US News & World Report* 18 March 18, April 8 and 15, July 1 and 29; *Reader's Digest* British Edition July 1963; *Far Eastern Economic Review* October 24, 1963; *Konsepsi Negara Demokrasi* by Abdul Qohhar Mudzakkar; and *Petjahnya Revolusi Hongaria (The Revolt of the Mind)* by Tamas Aczel and Tibor Meray. The logic behind the one day ban as evident in the Attorney General's decree Number 066/KPTS/PERS/1963 was that "*madjalah mingguan, bulanan dan buku-buku tersebut...dapat dianggap mengganggu ketertiban umum, djika beredar dalam masyarakat*" (that the said weekly and monthly magazines and the books could disrupt public order, if they were to be circulated in the community). To make matters worse, this was done under Sukarno's regime almost on a daily basis and was followed immediately by revocations of the decree on the following day.<sup>228</sup>

As for the New Order Regime, from 1971 to 1978, prohibition on printed matters practically did not occur. One reason for this was that censorship on printed matters in this period was not on the main agenda of the New Order government. In this period, the government was engrossed with the second government five-year plan that focused on achieving economic stability and 'restoring order by eradicating the remnants of the G30S/PKI and every threat, abuse, and betrayal of Pancasila and the Constitution of 1945.'<sup>229</sup> As I mentioned in the previous chapter, this is the first phase of the New Order's evolution in which the regime still required support from the liberal-minded middle classes and also Islamic groups. Therefore, there was less censorship and relatively more liberalism.

However, in the late 1970s through the 1980s, when the New Order grew stronger and supports from the aforementioned groups were no longer needed, censorship entered its super-active mode. This may be explained by a more stable

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<sup>227</sup> 'Surat Keputusan Djaksa Agung Republik Indonesia No. Kep-002/D.A/1/67 tentang Larangan Peredaran Madjalah "*Tiongkok Rakjat*' in 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>228</sup> On June 12, 1963, M. Kadarusman, S.H., the Attorney General, issued prohibition decree number 02/KPTS/PERS/1963 stating that *Harian Bintang Timur*, of which Hasjim Rachman was the founder and chief-editor, was banned because the newspaper might cause turmoil and disturb public order. On June 16, 1963, Kadarusman issued another decree, number 03/KPTS/PERS/1963 that revoked the decree that he published four days earlier regarding the prohibition of *Harian Bintang Timur*. See 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>229</sup> 'Mengembalikan ketertiban dan keamanan masyarakat dengan mengikis habis sisa-sisa G30S/PKI dan setiap perongrongan, penyelewengan serta pengkhianatan terhadap Pancasila dan Undang-Undang Dasar 1945.' The fourth program in *Panca Krida* (Five Creeds) of the First Development Cabinet of the New Order. Ketetapan MPRS Nomor XLI/MPRS/1968 tahun 1968. Available at [https://www.hukumonline.com/pusatdata/detail/lt507649089a6a3/node/657/tap-mprs-no-xli\\_mprs\\_1968-tahun-1968-tugas-pokok-kabinet-pembangunan](https://www.hukumonline.com/pusatdata/detail/lt507649089a6a3/node/657/tap-mprs-no-xli_mprs_1968-tahun-1968-tugas-pokok-kabinet-pembangunan) [accessed on August 10, 2021].

economic growth, which led to increasing number of publications as one of the outcomes of mushrooming publishing houses; the availability of imported books and magazines which offered new information and perspectives; a growing public awareness of social/political activism; and the release of political prisoners from 1977 onwards, some of whom began voicing their thoughts through printing. From 1979 to 1989, almost two hundred decrees were issued by four Attorneys General, prohibiting books and printed matters that contained direct criticism against the government or that were said to propagate the communist Marxist-Leninist teachings. During my research in the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET of the Attorney General Office, I was informed that each decree was supplemented with a lengthy academic report which contained content analysis of publication that was banned. These reports were written by a team of experts consisting of state officials from several ministries/departments, intelligence services, and academia (i.e. university professors).<sup>230</sup> This shows that there was a major change in both methods and consideration in censorship. The neat *modus operandi* in censoring printed matters was both harrowing and impressive because the New Order approached censorship in a careful manner and actually possessed a very serious commitment to repression. In this regard, to call censorship erratic would be suitable or relevant if it was directed at the censorship mechanism in the late years of Sukarno era.

### **Surveillance Society: Censors and Agencies**

On August 16, 2017, I was invited to attend a closed meeting of a so-called focus group to discuss a plan on possible bans of *The Final Report of the International People's Tribunal on Crimes against Humanities in Indonesia 1965*, *Sejarah Gerakan Kiri untuk Pemula* (The History of the Left Movement for Beginners), and several other printed matters on radical Islam. Present in the meeting were representatives from various ministries and state bodies,<sup>231</sup> most importantly the State Intelligence Agency, which promoted the recommendation to supervise and ban the books and printed matters. Participants were given a three-page Pangemanann-like paper containing points for discussion, addresses, and list of names of activists and publishers under state surveillance due to their activities or involvement in the writing, publishing, editing, and distribution of the books to be banned. The list was provided by the intelligence service of the Attorney General with the assistance of the State Intelligence Agency (BIN). A special guest in the meeting was the Head of the History Department of Universitas Indonesia, Dr.

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<sup>230</sup> Information provided by S.H. Pasaribu (pseudonym), the head of the subditpakembarcet and D.J. Tampubolon (pseudonym), section chair of the printed matters affairs on August 15 and 25, and October 5 and 25, 2017. These reports, according to them, were destroyed regularly together with the books that were banned by the Attorney General. I insisted that I read at least one report; first, they refused and gave me a copy of similar report on the prohibition of religious sect, instead. Unrelated, but this document might shed light on the operation or at least the template of the reports.

<sup>231</sup> BIN (State Intelligence Agency), Bais TNI (The Armed Forces Intelligence Agency), Polri (Indonesian Police), Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Communication and Information, Ministry of Religious Affairs.



Abdurakhman. He was invited by the Attorney General to give a lengthy presentation about the history of the communist rebellious traits in Indonesia.<sup>232</sup> The first slide of his presentation reads: *Belajar dari Sejarah: Peristiwa Pemberontakan Partai Komunis Indonesia* (Learning from History: Rebellions by the Communist Party in Indonesia), while the following slides were filled with lopsided analyses of the history of the Indonesian left. The presentation was arranged in such direction that participants would get a uniform understanding about the latent dangers of communism, which then would justify the banning of the books. After the meeting, under the coordination of the Deputy Attorney General for Intelligence, the participants were asked to return to their respective offices and assigned to re-read the books and write analytical reports on the content or aspects that would meet the criteria for a ban.

I had the understanding that the meetings that I attended were a recent procedure, and I was also aware that there was a considerable time gap between the case of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Bumi Manusia* in 1980, and my experience during fieldwork in 2017 and 2018. To see whether my research experience in the Attorney General Office proves that the same procedure was followed especially in the 1980s, I began to look for more information through interviews and informal conversations with censors at the Attorney General Office, S.H. Pasaribu and D.J. Tampubolon, as well as from Ridwan Darmansyah, S.H., the first Director of the Office of Intelligence of the Attorney General, and Dra. Sri Moelijarti, Deputy Attorney General for Surveillance, to see whether the procedure was recent and had never been used before, especially in the process of banning books during the New Order period. On separate occasions, while referring to dossiers stored in the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET office, S.H. Pasaribu, D.J. Tampubolon, and Ridwan Darmansyah, S.H. informed me that the procedure was not new at all. According to them, there have been some changes, but these were insignificant. The meetings were formerly known as *Rapat Panitia Kerja Tetap* (Meeting of the Permanent Working Committee) chaired by the special operation unit of the Attorney General Office and later it was renamed into *Forum Rapat Koordinasi Polkam* (Coordinating Security Meeting) organized regularly by the Clearing House, which was first assembled and coordinated by the Minister of Information in 1989.<sup>233</sup>

The Clearing House itself had similar members to previous bodies, consisting of 19 analysts from offices of the Attorney General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Intelligence Coordinating Body (BAKIN), the Coordinating Agency for the

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<sup>232</sup> Archived invitation letters from the 1980s to 2017 stored in the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Attorney General Office, in Jakarta mentioned a list of historians and scholars who were asked for their insight and expertise for censorial tasks. Interesting to note, Asvi Marwan Adam and Anhar Gonggong were printed in the list of invitation. However, they were replaced by historians-cum-academics after both Adam and Gonggong, according to S.H. Pasaribu declined the request of the Attorney General. Conversation with S.H. Pasaribu (pseudonym), on October 5, 2017. This information implies that printed names on letters do not necessarily mean that historians would want to collaborate, and moreover that they could decline. Also see Adam 2007.

<sup>233</sup> Interview with Dra. Sri Moelijarti (pseudonym) on August 15, 2017 in Jakarta.

Maintenance of National Stability (BAKORSTANAS), and the Armed Forces Intelligence Agency, together with academics and representatives from the Department of Information, the Department of Education and Culture, and the Department of Religious Affairs — to decide what copy to censor and which journalists to ban.<sup>234</sup> In addition, D.J. Tampubolon claimed that Gramedia and IKAPI had been regular attendees in the aforementioned meetings and worked together to carry out the tasks of censorship and provide an inventory of their property and submit it to the authorities. This conforms to Darnton's finding of surveillance practice under the British Raj where every publication was 'surveyed, mapped, classified, and counted.'<sup>235</sup> The Indian Civil Service kept a record of every book that appeared in every province of the Raj. Furthermore, just like what was ordered to IKAPI, Gramedia, and other publishers in New Order Indonesia, all Indian publishers were instructed to submit to the ICS 'copies of every book they produced together with the information on the title of the work, its author, language, subject, place of printing, names of printer and publisher, date of publication, number of pages, size, format, pressrun, whether printed or lithographed, and price.'<sup>236</sup> As a matter of fact, prior to the order, Ajip Rosidi, who chaired the IKAPI, had his own initiative to print and publish for internal use a booklet that lists publishers across the country, together with their addresses and the authors whose books were printed by the publishers included in the list. The booklet came in handy for the Attorney General and was used as a preliminary reference as well as an inspiration to order every publisher to submit similar information.<sup>237</sup>

Besides verbal confirmation from my sources in the Attorney General Office, the Compilation and invitation letters as well as meeting materials that were stored in the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET office and the so-called mini library supported their claim. The reading and consideration sections of several decrees issued in the 1970s and 1980s often mentioned the state agencies that recommended bans for certain books or printed materials. These agencies were BAKIN (*Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara*, State Intelligence Coordinating Body), KOPKAMTIB (*Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban*, Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order), Bakorstanas (the Coordinating Agency for the Maintenance of National Stability), BAIS ABRI (*Badan Intelijen Strategis*, The Armed Forces

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<sup>234</sup> On December 30, 1993, an Indonesian language text written by Prof. E who is also a prominent literary scholar was addressed to the Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi. In her view, Pramoedya's book should be banned because it propagated communism. The document can be found in the mini library, also at Special Collection at Leiden University with call numbers DS H 1327 1071 and DS H 1327 1117 - *Indonesischtalige circulaire van de uitgeverij Hasta Mitra te Jakarta met aankondiging van de verschijning van de roman Bumi Manusia van Pramoedya Ananta Toer. 1980. Fotokopie. 1 stuk 19--* Leclerc, J. Collectie J. Leclerc.

<sup>235</sup> Darnton 2014, p. 103.

<sup>236</sup> Darnton 2014, p. 104.

<sup>237</sup> In 1987, the Ministry of Information published a complete list of names and addresses of prints and publishers. This document was used by the ministry as well as as a source of reference for censors at the Attorney General Office. See Departemen Penerangan Republik Indonesia 1988. Information provided by S.H. Pasaribu on October 25, 2017.

Intelligence Agency), Polri (*Polisi Republik Indonesia*, Indonesian Police), Department of Education, Department of Information, and Department of Religious Affairs. In the case of Pramoedya's *This Earth of Mankind* and *Child of All Nations*, for instance, the decree stated that the Attorney General, prior to issue the ban, had read the *Surat PANKOPKAMTIB Nomor: K-22/KOPKAM/1981 tanggal 22 Mei 1981 perihal larangan beredarnya buku "Bumi Manusia" dan "Anak Semua Bangsa"* (Letter from PANKOPKAMTIB Number: K-22/KOPKAM/1981 dated May 22, 1981 on the prohibition for the distribution of *Bumi Manusia* and *Anak Semua Bangsa*).<sup>238</sup> In another decree, 21 books were banned after the Attorney General considered the insights, letter, and report from the Ministry of Religious Affairs No. P/TL/ 0/1186/1985 of December 4, 1985.<sup>239</sup> These formal letters suggest that these institutions played roles in the overall process of censorship.

A less formal relationship between the Attorney General Office and these agencies or concerned citizens could be traced from the position of Deputy Attorney General for Intelligence, which had always been filled by high ranking military officers with a background in the intelligence services.<sup>240</sup> The Deputy Attorney General for Intelligence was responsible for conducting judicial intelligence activities in the fields of ideology, politics, economics, finance, socio-cultural matters, and defense and security to support repressive law enforcement and justice policies; carry out and or organize public order and peace; and safeguard national development based on legislation and policies established by the Attorney General. With such broad authority, the Deputy Attorney General of Intelligence was given unlimited access to every law enforcement body or state apparatus, including the Regional Leadership Council (*Musyawarah Pimpinan Daerah*, MUSPIDA), which brought together local heads of the military, *pamong praja*, police, and the prosecutor's office on a regular basis to discuss security issues and coordinate strategies. At the provincial level, this institution involved the head of Public Prosecutor Office (*Jaksa Tinggi*), Governor, Military Region Commander (*Pangdam*), and Regional Police Chief (*Kapolda*), while at the district level it consisted of the Head of the District Prosecutor's Office, the District Head or Mayor, the District Military Commander (*Dandim*) and the Resort Police Chief (*Polres*). 'Security disturbances' such as the circulation of 'dangerous' books were often

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<sup>238</sup> 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta. This letter was sent by the Commander of KOPKAMTIB, a secret police operation in the New Order, on May 22, 1981. In just four working days, i.e. May 29, 1981, an official ban was issued and signed by the Attorney General Ismail Saleh, S.H., which is indicative of the decisive role the KOPKAMTIB had in the overall state censorship mechanism. In 1988, Suharto closed down the organization and replaced it with the Badan Koordinasi Bantuan Pemantapan Stabilitas Nasional/Bakorstanas (The Agency for Coordination of Assistance for the Consolidation of National Security).

<sup>239</sup> 'Himpunan Surat Keputusan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>240</sup> The Deputy Attorney General for Intelligence headed five directorates responsible for maintaining political, security, social, and cultural affairs. See Jaringan Kerja Budaya 1999, p. 33; Fauzan 2003, p. 135.

discussed in this institution, which then led the local Prosecutor's Offices to consider taking action, sometimes preceding the Attorney General's decision.

Initially, 'most censorship decisions were initiated by one of New Order security and intelligence bodies,' generally involving the military with immense authority.<sup>241</sup> The most important institution was the KOPKAMTIB, the regime's secret police formed on October 10, 1965. The authority to supervise and prohibit publication was centralized in the hands of KOPKAMTIB, while other control institutions would submit to the authority or provide assistance. KOPKAMTIB could also exert its authority to give instructions to the Attorney General Office to impose a ban. It also controlled all media channels and required publishing and printing businesses to get permission from this institution. If deemed necessary, the KOPKAMTIB revoked the permit without giving prior notice. This was evident in the event of the first massive book ban in November 1965, mentioned above, with the issuance of the instruction from the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. As indicated earlier, the banning was local but had a national effect. With the direct order from the KOPKAMTIB, personnel from the Regional Military Authority (*Pelperada*) across the country referred to this ministerial instruction in order to start confiscating banned books from publishing houses, bookstores, vendors, public and private libraries, and schools. A special team, *Tim Pelaksana dan Pengawas Muda Wira Jaksa* (Surveillance Team of the Prosecutors Office) which was especially formed to supervise and eradicate the teaching of communism-Marxism/Leninism, did likewise. They made impromptu visits to villages and instructed regents, village heads, and community leaders to start neighborhood watches and collect 'suspicious' printed materials and hand them in to local authorities.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Saunders 1998, p. 46.

<sup>242</sup> See Buku Marxisme, 1966.



‘*CETAKAN TERLARANG*’ (PROHIBITED PUBLICATION) – labeled, catalogued, and shelved in the mini library of the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET in Jakarta. (Photo collection of Taufiq Hanafi)

From the 1970s onward, the power to assess and prohibit books rested only with the Attorney General as coordinating body; and any ban that it issued was valid in all jurisdictions in the Republic of Indonesia. The shift in the management of control, however, did not mean that KOPKAMTIB and other intelligence bodies lost the authority to take part in activities related to book banning. In fact, they were now involved in participatory supervision<sup>243</sup> that elevates the ubiquitous surveillance that symbolizes modern authoritarianism<sup>244</sup> of the New Order regime — to the point that it seemed to turn into totalitarianism. They still could take the initiative to examine ‘books and make censorship recommendations directly to the attorney general.’<sup>245</sup>

### **Building a Panopticon**

As this case demonstrates, the Attorney General Office was hardly understaffed, and as a matter of fact, it had access to abundant institutional resources. The Attorney General Office benefited from their resources and broad authorities, as they could have total control and surveillance of book publication and authors with little effort.

<sup>243</sup> Within the KOPKAMTIB, for example, a special research team (*Tim Penelitian Karya Tulis-Publication Investigation Unit*) was specifically formed and tasked to provide analysis on printed materials and give input to the Attorney General in the case of prohibition. I first heard about this research team in one of those meetings in the Attorney General Office. Some literatures have also mentioned this team. See Honna 1999, pp. 77-126. See also Anderson 2000, p. 72.

<sup>244</sup> Foucault 1995, p. 57.

<sup>245</sup> Saunders 1998, p. 46.

In Foucault's work, such ubiquitous surveillance under the authority of the state is the definitive emblem of modern power. Panoptic institutions multiplied through the society, wielding power at the very foundation of society, and disciplining the population as people internalized the views of, and being viewed by, the state.<sup>246</sup>

In addition to coercive policies coordinated through multiple institutions with vast resources, the Attorney General's budget grew continuously. Since the implementation of the first five-year development plan on March 31, 1968, the Attorney General Office had grown considerably, adding 436 offices and occupational houses for prosecutors throughout the country. The funding also enabled the Attorney General Office to establish the Center for Training and Education (*Pusat Pendidikan dan Pelatihan*, PUSDIKLAT), which had 1,561 newly-trained personnel, and 3,100 recent law graduates (*sarjana hukum*), an increase of more than 80 percent of the total prosecutors that Indonesia then had. Individual salaries increased by 250 percent, as stipulated in Presidential Decree No. 44/1983.<sup>247</sup>

With these financial resources, in March 1981 the Attorney General launched a new program called *Jaksa Masuk Desa* (JMD, Prosecutor Enters the Village), similar to that of *ABRI Masuk Desa* (AMD, ABRI Enters the Village), a civic mission initiated in 1980 by the Armed Forces Commander-cum-Minister of Defense, General Yusuf, which was intended to assist community development in various fields. The university students and teachers who took part in the programs were turned into immediate censors without them knowing it. Officially, the program aimed to give equal opportunity to obtain justice through activities of providing legal assistance and legal consultation, especially for the underprivileged. President Suharto himself gave a positive response to this project and stated that the program could be used to increase the political awareness of the public and provide a platform for political education, especially in relation to the values of Pancasila, the state ideology. The program also invited public and private universities to collaborate and conduct a one-year community service program, which was divided into four sections, namely observation and data collection (April to June), identification (July-September), legal assistance and counseling program (October-December), and, lastly, report (January-March).<sup>248</sup>

In every village, there were at least 6 or 7 prosecutors providing legal assistance to community members, in addition to the surveillance team *Tim Pelaksana dan Pengawas Muda Wira Jaksa*. They approached the public through a method they called PEKA, which stands for persuasive, educational, communicative, and accommodative. The word PEKA itself is an Indonesian term for sensitive or considerate, which signifies that the program was intended to attract and guarantee the widespread participation of the community members in the program.

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<sup>246</sup> Foucault 1995, p. 57.

<sup>247</sup> Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia 1985, p. 209.

<sup>248</sup> Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung Nomor. B-075 /A-6A/1981 tanggal April 23, 1981. See. Departemen Penerangan 1984, p. 8.

The JMD was also sustained by a supporting program called *Koran Masuk Desa* (KMD, Newspapers Enter the Village), initiated by the Department of Information.<sup>249</sup> The program aimed to overcome the imbalance in the flow of information to rural areas since the circulation of newspapers was focused on or limited to urban areas only, and to stimulate community participation in national development.

In 1985, a similar program was launched in addition to the JMD. The program was called *Jaksa Masuk Laut* (JML, Prosecutors Enters the Sea) and aimed to supervise the enforcement of law in ports and custom offices in case of illegal imports of commodities, especially printed materials. Its targets were ship captains, crews, customs officers, and water police units. Three years later, the new Attorney General added several other programs called *Pos Penyuluhan/Penerangan Terpadu* (Poskumdu, Post for Integrated Counseling and Information) in collaboration with the *Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa* (LKMD, Institute for Rural Community Sustainability) and the Office of Religious Affairs.

All of these programs, however, were easily transformed into grassroots surveillance tools to monitor citizens, gather data, keep civil society under check, prevent an increase in the bargaining power of any other sector of society, spy on any form of resistance to the state's rule, and to increase political leverage to remain in power. Interestingly, the state was not shy in admitting that. This was evident in the statement that Harmoko, the Minister of Information, made on October 13, 1983 in Karangmulya, Cirebon, where he stated that the JMD and KMD aimed at disseminating proper information so that the villagers could augment social awareness and understand their rights and obligations as citizens. He added that the program necessitated that the villagers know which information products were in accordance with Pancasila, and which products were anti-development or propagated the communist philosophy.<sup>250</sup>

The presence of prosecutors among citizens in villages, together with other state bodies, contextually reminded that the watchtower was there and that they were being observed. It attempted to possibly subject the villagers to a form of behavioral modification resulting from the omnipresence of the state apparatus. It instilled a fear of being watched, in the hopes that this would cause the villagers to act 'lawfully' to avoid being punished. Bentham assumed this fear of a continuous omnipresence would remain with the subject long after his stay in the panopticon, and cause the subject to avoid crime. In this manner, the subject aids in his own constraint, as noted by Michel Foucault:

'He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power, he makes them play spontaneously upon himself: he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he

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<sup>249</sup> Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia 1985, pp. 244-245.

<sup>250</sup> Report on the *Saresehan* (Gathering) of Readers, Listeners, and Learning Circles with the Attorney General and Minister of Information. Departemen Penerangan Republik Indonesia 1984, p. 28.

simultaneously plays both rules; he becomes the principle of his own objection.<sup>251</sup>

The state translated the panopticon as more than a prison building. It was the embodiment of a set of four principles, namely (a) pervasive power: the state sees into every cell and sees everything that goes on so it can regulate everything; and (b) obscure power: the state sees into the cell, but the subjects cannot do likewise. They cannot ever know when, how, or why they are being observed; so (c) direct violence is replaced by structural violence. Bentham emphasizes that overt coercion through beating or chains becomes unnecessary. What the prisoner does not realize is that the structure of the panopticon itself is coercive. It subjugates the prisoners just by being there; and (d) structural violence made profitable, i.e. taking the structural violence and using it for the benefits of those in power.

By using these four principles, the state expanded its power into every aspect of people's lives and molded them into submissive subjects that the state wanted. Without ruling out state repression and constant threats — an understanding that the state could employ (mass) violence like in 1965, as well as gentle but consistent exclusion from the society, there was little need for arms, physical violence, or material constraints. Just a gaze that each individual under its eye will end by internalizing state authority to the point that he is his own overseer.<sup>252</sup> Despite individuals such as Hasjim Rachman, Joesoef Isak, and Pramoedya Ananta Toer, as well as Yogyakarta students Bambang Isti Nugroho and Bambang Subono who looked back, protested, and facilitated production of books that challenged the ideology of the regime, the New Order employed its own people to join in the bureaucratic structures against their fellow citizens and serve the regime's expanding power, allowing the state to penetrate and regulate more completely. Civil society was instrumentalized to keep society under surveillance.

### **Censorship in Action: Mechanism and Procedure**

According to Law No. 4/ PNPS/1963, the procedure of book banning consists of four stages, namely, material collection, investigation/research, decision making, and confiscation. Article 2 of the law required every printing press to send the printout to the Head of the local state prosecutor, no later than 48 hours after printing. Every book had to be approved for publication. A team of experts in the intelligence division of the Attorney General Office conducted an analysis on the content of the book to see whether it could disturb public order. They worked in a focus group discussion to examine the content of the book, the impact that it might have on readers, and whether the book could actually disturb public order. Inputs from community members, therefore, played a role in this process. In the case of Pramoedya's novels *This Earth of Mankind* and *Child of All Nations*, the team and

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<sup>251</sup> Foucault 1995, p 203.

<sup>252</sup> Foucault 1980, p. 155.



the Attorney General took into consideration a letter from the Commander of KOPKAMTIB dated May 22, 1981 and suggestions from educators, religious leaders, university students, all of whom claimed to have read the novels and urged that the novels should be prohibited and that Pramoedya should be forbidden to write.<sup>253</sup> The Attorney General actually paid attention to this and took the input into consideration and listed them as one of the reasons for the ban. Recommendation for censorship also came from the Department of Religious Affairs, Department of Information, Department of Education and Culture, National Defense Agency, Intelligence Coordinating Agency, Operational Command for Restoring Security and Order, Strategic Intelligence Agency of the Armed Forces, the Indonesian Police, and the Indonesian Council of Ulama, all of whom claimed to have read and written an analysis of the book.

Up to this point, we see an almost ritualistic emphasis on procedure, which was a fundamental characteristic of the New Order, i.e. the appearance and performance of order.<sup>254</sup> According to Vickers, ‘while the bureaucracy produced the appearance of rational administration, it consisted of inefficient clusters of largely incompetent institutions with overlapping responsibilities and underpaid employees.’<sup>255</sup> Vickers argues further that as a strong bureaucratic state, the New Order is better termed an *asal bapak senang* (ABS) state — meaning a bureaucracy whose main function is to ‘keep the boss’ (or whoever is higher up in the bureaucratic or corporate ladder) ‘happy’. While it is true that this behavior influenced every aspect of life from the political to the social and personal, my research finds that in the case of censorship, reason also came into play. In addition to internal assessment and public inputs, the deputy Attorney General for Intelligence invited representatives from other state bodies and ministries to discuss their findings in the *Forum Rapat Koordinasi Polkam*.

From the meeting notes archived in the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, it was evident that they brainstormed the plan and reasons for censorship or ban on particular publications. One example was the case of *Tingkah Laku Politik Panglima Besar Soedirman* (The Political Behavior of General Soedirman, 1983). The book, which was written by General Abdul Haris Nasution, Roeslan Abdulgani, S.I. Poeradisastra, and Sides Sudyarto, hinted at General Soedirman’s involvement with the *Persatuan Perjuangan* (Struggle Front), a coalition that Tan Malaka was organizing during the Indonesian Revolution. This fact was considered to potentially raise doubts about the immaculate reputation and service of General Soedirman during the war of Independence. Representatives from BAKIN insisted that

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<sup>253</sup> Early in April 1981, in Jakarta, Dolf Soepamena, an avid reader, gathered members of Indonesian Council of Ulemas, DGI, MAWI, university teachers, AMPI, and KNPI in a discussion forum called Kelompok Diskusi Tjujuhbelas. According to him, the forum found that Pramoedya was on a mission, every novel that he wrote was consistently loaded with communist teachings. Therefore, the forum urged the government to not simply ban the book but also forbid Pramoedya from writing. See Buku Pram’ 1981.

<sup>254</sup> Vickers 2001, pp. 72-84.

<sup>255</sup> Vickers 2001, p. 77; Schulte Nordholt & van Klinken 2007, p. 6.

censorship on several parts of the book was necessary, but not a complete ban. Other censors from the Ministry of Education, the Head of Research at KOPKAMTIB, and BAIS ABRI, however, opted for ban. Another consideration for this eventual ban was the fact that one of the writers was a former political prisoner in Buru Island and member of disbanded LEKRA.<sup>256</sup> Relatedly, in the *Forum Rapat Koordinasi Polkam* in 2017, I witnessed such debates where one party resorted to prohibition while the other argued that books were not supposed to be banned as they contained ideas, and ideas cannot be murdered. Surprisingly, the latter who were against censorship and bans, were representatives from the state intelligence agency (*Badan Intelijen Negara*, BIN), from which recommendations for bans usually come.<sup>257</sup>

Furthermore, if the analysis remained inconclusive, the representatives would return to their respective institution and have their own team conduct a separate content analysis of the book. Often, professionals, scholars, and university professors were involved in this process.<sup>258</sup> The outcome of this stage was a lengthy academic report which contained a thorough examination of the banned book and rationale behind its ban — a supplement to the decree which, according to S.H. Pasaribu and D.J. Tampubolon, was never published or made available to the public.<sup>259</sup> During archival research in the mini library of the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, I had rare opportunities to access piles of aged papers that present details on considerations leading to bans from the 1980s to 2016. I was given permission to skim them, but not to make copies. Nonetheless, with the help of an unsuspecting librarian at the said library, I was allowed to take pictures of a 5-page document entitled *Butir-Butir Permasalahan tentang Pelarangan Peredaran Buku Berjudul Rumah Kaca Karangan Pramoedya Ananta Toer* (Bulleted Points on the Prohibition of the Circulation of the Book entitled *Rumah Kaca* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer). The document, written in 1988 prior to the issuance of the Attorney General's banning decree, opens with:

*‘Dengan kepandaianya menulis, dalam buku Serie ke IV ini Pramoedya Ananta Toer menyusun ungkapan, dialog-dialog dan pernyataan, yang bersifat agitatif, propaganda, serta ajaran-ajaran ideology komunis secara terselubung dan halus namun mendasar.’*

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<sup>256</sup>See also Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung Republik Indonesia nomor KEP-167/JA/8/1984 tentang Larangan Peredaran Barang Cetakan/Buku Berjudul Tindakan Laku Politik Panglima Besar Soedirman. ‘Himpunan Surat Keputusan.’ Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>257</sup> *Forum Rapat Koordinasi Polkam* mengenai Rencana Penyusunan Peraturan Pemerintah mengenai Sistem Perbukuan: Khusus mengenai Pengawasan on October 25, 2017 in Ruang Rapat Jaksa Agung Muda Intelijen, Gedung Utama Lantai III, Attorney General Office, Jakarta.

<sup>258</sup> The dossier, especially the invitation letters, at the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET office reveals names of literary scholars and professors from Universitas Indonesia who were involved in drafting the documents.

<sup>259</sup> Interview with S.H. Pasaribu (pseudonym) and D.J. Tampubolon (pseudonym) on October 5, 2017 in Jakarta.

(With his excellent writing skills, in this fourth volume (of the Buru Quartet), Pramoedya Ananta Toer compiles expressions, dialogues, and statements which are agitative in nature, propaganda, and teachings of communist ideology in a veiled and subtle, yet fundamental way.)

What follows the opening are 11 bullet points that outline the reasons and considerations for the banning of the book — from anti-religious sentiments that the book implicitly promotes to Marxist concept of labor, which *Rumah Kaca* highlights. Interestingly, an immaculate English version of the document, also written in 1988, was also made available by the Attorney General Office, entitled *Considerations Leading to the Banning from Circulation of the Book Entitled “Glasshouse” Written by Pramoedya Ananta Toer*. When asked about the reason behind the English translation and to whom this document was directed, which readers, the librarian evaded the questions and responded instead by saying that after the document and its English translation, a thorough analysis on the ban, with more pages than the outline, followed. Besides the document, D.J. Tampubolon and S.H. Pasaribu, while refusing further access to the piles of aged papers that I mentioned above, gave me a copy of *Kompilasi Kajian Tim Pakem Tingkat Pusat terhadap Ormas Gerakan Fajar Nusantara – GAFATAR* (Analyses Compiled by the Central Supervision Team on the Mass Organizations the Dawn Movement of Nusantara – GAFATAR) written in 2016. For my research, the document is irrelevant, but as D.J. Tampubolon and S.H. Pasaribu said, it gives a general description and template of how a thorough analysis that provides academic reasoning on a ban is formulated and finally written.

The next stage is the decision to ban. After hearing input from the Clearing House and other agencies, the Attorney General issued a decree. In this decree, the Attorney General always referred to Law No. 15/1961 concerning the Attorney General’s Authority (later replaced by Law No. 5/1991) and Law No. 4/Pnps/1963 as the legal bases of the ban. This Attorney General's decision was then announced to the public through newspapers or other mass media. Authors and publishers were almost never told directly that their printed material had been prohibited and they generally were informed by the mass media. The Attorney General's decree was usually followed by instructions to the heads of the High Prosecutor's Office and the District Attorney's Office throughout Indonesia to take security measures against banned books. The prosecutor's office and the police then went to the address of the publisher and the printing press, if listed, and confiscated all the remaining forbidden books. The confiscation at the publisher was followed by confiscation in bookstores or vendors. The books that were seized by the prosecutor's office or other security apparatus were then sent to the local prosecutor's office to be destroyed by burning.

In the event of rejection or resistance from publishers, bookstores, or book owners to submit banned books, the authority could bring the case to the legal domain. The fact that the work of Pramoedya was forbidden did not only have consequences for him, but also for the people who read his books. Bambang Isti Nugroho and Bambang Subono, both university students in Yogyakarta, were arrested and charged in 1988 for slanderous (subversive) activities based on the anti-

subversion law of 1963: they possessed prohibited literature and discussed it. They were the first of the post-1966 generation accused of propagating the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The forbidden books that they had in their possession were works of Pramoedya: *The Girl from the Coast*, *This Earth of Mankind*, and other works.



Admiral Soedomo, Minister for Political and Security Affairs and Sukarton Marmosujono, Attorney General, holding a copy of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Gadis Pantai*, during press conference for the book ban in 1988. Photo Collection of SUBDITPAKEMBARCET

In 1989, the trials started against the two Bambang, who were charged with the death penalty because they owned, borrowed, and sold books of Pramoedya Ananta Toer. They were given eight and seven years in prison, respectively.<sup>260</sup> Bonar Tigor Naipospos (a student in Yogya) was also charged with subversive activities. Bonar was only tried in 1990, more than a year after his arrest, and was finally jailed for eight year and six months. In 1978, Heri Akhmadi, a student from Bandung, was sentenced for circulating *Buku Putih Perjuangan Mahasiswa* (White Book of the 1978 Student's Struggle), which 'lambasts the government for endemic corruption, economic policies which facilitate self-enrichment at the expense of social welfare, repression of independent political voices, and losing touch with the people.'<sup>261</sup> In the following year, *Mendobrak Belenggu Penindasan Rakyat Indonesia – Pembelaan di Depan Pengadilan Mahasiswa* (Breaking the Shackles of Oppression of the Indonesian People – a Plea before a Trial of a Student), a plea that he wrote and eventually printed for brief distribution was also banned.

<sup>260</sup> Saunders 1998, p. 20.

<sup>261</sup> Students of Bandung Institute of Technology 1978, pp. 151-182.

## Criteria for a Ban

An important aspect in the banning of books was the vague and fluid nature of the criteria developed by the Attorney General Office. These criteria were never specifically formulated; however, they appeared in every consideration section of each decree that was issued from 1963 to 1991. The main criterion to ban a book was that it could “disturb public order.” Conveniently vague, this term made the arbitrarily taken decisions look rational and consistent. This broad and ambiguous term found its definition in law no. 4/PNPS of 1963. The explanation section of the law stated that disturbing public order is equivalent to damaging the trust of the people toward the revolution, socialism, and the state leaders. Furthermore, disturbing public order could also be defined as promoting indecency. Interestingly, the law also understood the vagueness that the term “disturbing public order” brings. It mentioned that “writings that could not be tolerated or read by society depend on the spatial and temporal condition of the society or the state.”

In addition to the explanation section of the law, the Attorney General published a list of criteria that explained and gave definition to the phrase ‘disturbing public order.’<sup>262</sup> Books were considered to be disturbing public order and therefore fit for banning if they were:

1. Against the state ideology Pancasila and the Constitution of 1945;
2. Propagating the teachings of Marxism-Leninism/Communism;
3. Damaging the unity of the Indonesian people, the nation, and the state;
4. Damaging public trust in the national leadership;
5. Damaging morals and stimulating lewd acts and pornography;
6. Teaching anti-God, anti-religion and defamation of religion, religious conflict;
7. Disrupting the development program and the results that follow;
8. Creating horizontal conflicts among ethnic groups, race, and religion;
9. Against the Indonesian Guideline of State Policy;<sup>263</sup>
10. *Dll.* (etc.)

This list appears to be more complete than the explanation section of law no. 4/PNPS of 1963. It also attempts to highlight the flexible nature of the term ‘disturbing public order.’ This is evident in the criterion number 2, which is clearly a definition that deflected the original law issued during the Sukarno era. Propagating the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and Communism never disturbed public order except under the anti-communist New Order regime. However, even though more explanatory, several criteria overlapped each other, points number 6 and 8 on religious conflicts,

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<sup>262</sup> Interview with S.H. Pasaribu (pseudonym) on August 15, 2017 in Jakarta. Also republished in *Jakarta Jakarta*, No. 273, September 21-27, 1989, p. 21.

<sup>263</sup> GBHN, *Garis Besar Haluan Negara*, was a set of political, economic, and social principles enacted every five years by the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR) as a guideline for prosperity of Indonesia and the Indonesian people — a centralized national development planning scheme.

and 1 and 9 on the fact that the guidelines were based on the Pancasila and Constitution of 1945. In addition to the overlap, the list ends with point number 10, which in its original text is ‘dll.’, the abbreviation of ‘dan lain-lain.’ This indicates that the list is not complete and that there are other criteria for ‘disturbing public order’ beside the ones that are explicitly mentioned. Therefore, despite its explanatory appearance, the list allows the Attorney General to still take the liberty in interpreting or deciding which publications fall under the category of ‘disturbing public order’ and become subject to censorship or ban.



Indonesian translation of Harold Crouch’s *Army and Politics in Indonesia*. Banned on the basis that it disturbed public order and damaged public trust in the national leadership. Several hundred copies of the books were labeled, catalogued, and shelved in the mini library of SUBDITPAKEMBARCET in Jakarta.  
(Photo collection of Taufiq Hanafi)

Besides the criteria, book bans could also be based on the political affiliations of the authors with reference to the Instruction issued by the Minister of Domestic Affairs on the Re-education and Supervision of Former Political Prisoners linked with the communist party. Books that were banned on this basis were all books that were written or edited by Pramoedya Ananta Toer — to name but a few, *This Earth of Mankind*, *Child of All Nations*, *Footstep*, *House of Glass*, and *the Pioneer*. Book banning that targeted authors generated protest from Ajip Rosidi, one of the authors central in this thesis who was also the chair of IKAPI, and the owner of a major

publishing house at the time, Pustaka Jaya. He wrote a news article demanding that the government spare the communist writers.<sup>264</sup>

The flexibility of these criteria could easily cause confusion. It created anxiety among writers and intellectuals because they understood that such flexibility was subject to abuse of authority. Such secretive, arbitrary criteria inside an inscrutable bureaucracy could instill fear in society, especially among writers and publishers. Some developed further into a cynical and apathetic attitude that results in the loss of creativity. However, in the eyes of the state, this was deliberate. The fact that the state had broad, flexible powers to define what was hostile and could disturb public order shows how the regime had all the means necessary to maintain and exert power. These criteria manifested into a panopticon tower that instilled another level of fear, in the hopes that this would cause the writers/publisher to write 'lawfully' to avoid being punished. This flexibility on the side of power explains the rigidity on the side of print industry in following state guidelines and orders, particularly Gramedia that claims to have always adhered to Pancasila values in their process of literary production.<sup>265</sup>

## Conclusion

Censorship under the New Order was heavily influenced by the history of its own birth. In the political changes of the mid-1960s, a large number of literary and creative writers disappeared from the world of literature, generally because they were sent to internment camps for their involvement in the aborted coup of 1965. Others fled because they were found to be 'unclean' (*tidak bersih diri*), such as being a member of or sympathetic to the LEKRA, which was banned by the government following the dissolution of the Indonesian Communist Party. The Sukarno era's concept of politics as the commander in literary writings was canceled under the New Order, as were works that raised social issues in society, especially those that depicted the resistance of the poor or the opposition in society. Literature was separated as much as possible from politics and moved to various arts centers such as Taman Ismail Marzuki in Jakarta and other arts councils in every region which were then guarded by a number of official literature publications such as *Horison*. These institutions then, through various festivals, awards, and official publications, gradually developed the formalized or legalized literature. In addition, as the government emphasized the importance of economic growth, alternative political activities were dubbed disturbances of stability, and easily labeled as communist. The prohibition of literary works thus occurred in accordance with the interests of

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<sup>264</sup> This article, *Laranglah Buku, Jangan Pengarang* (Ban the Book, Not the Author) was reprinted in Rosidi 1973, p. 67.

<sup>265</sup> Interview with Anastasia Mustika Widjaja, Fiction Editorial Manager, on September 11, 2017 in Jakarta. The interview was interestingly held in one room called Secret in Gedung Kompas Gramedia Palmerah Barat. Throughout the interview, she constantly referred to Pancasila as their main guideline in publishing literary works. According to her, this was the company's commitment to following state regulations, in addition to avoiding production costs that may have been lost due to violation in production or censorship.

publishers and authors on the one hand and the political rulers on the other. While publishers and authors had an interest in protecting literature from political contamination, political rulers had an interest in maintaining stability by preventing elements of subversion from entering cultural field. Censorship, therefore, 'operated in terms of complicity and collaboration between the state and its various apparatuses as censors, and literary producers, authors, and critics, rather than in terms of radical oppositions between dumb censors and intelligent literary writers.'<sup>266</sup>

The *modus operandi* of state, in this case the Attorney General, in treating its subjects works similarly to that of Jacques Pangemanann, the main character-cum-narrator in Pramoedya's *House of Glass*. Excellent at taking notes, observation, and management of information, Pangemanann puts each of his objects of investigation and surveillance inside a house of glass which he put on his desk — forever contained, controlled, and constantly visible. For Pangemanann, almost everything is under scrutiny. Similarly, the Attorney General spied on the population (of writers, editors, and publishers) and their activities through a vast network of departments, intelligence agencies, students, and citizens-turned-informants. He continued to consolidate in a game of management by integrating control, giving assignments, instilling fear, developing stringent measures as well as blending in with the people. The upshot of this panoptic principle is that its subjects behave themselves simply by knowing that they are visible, which underscores the concern that surveillance plays a key mechanism of social control and 'seeks to produce subjects according to explicit and implicit norms.'<sup>267</sup> The subjects, therefore, are both susceptible to censorship and allowed to create. The notion of censors as political bureaucrats ignorant of literature who carried out censorship tasks only to maintain some professional pride often distorts the real picture of censorship. While, indeed, the state, c.q. Attorney General, played the leading role, censorship was not exclusively carried out by state institutions but rather operated more diffusely, as the collective result of censorial subjects within the censorship system.

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<sup>266</sup> Burt 1998, p. 21.

<sup>267</sup> Judith Butler quoted in Muller 2004, p. 6.



## Chapter 4

### The Complexity of Censorship: Interlaced Systems of Author-Editor-Publisher Relations

“Our biggest challenge is to be constantly able to adapt in a clever, creative, and innovative way.”

Jakob Oetama<sup>268</sup>

On October 17, 1978, J.B. Kristanto, the chief editor of cultural desk in *Kompas*, received a telephone call from an official at the Ministry of Information. The person on the other end of the line was a state official directing his ire at Kristanto and expressing his objection to the fact that Yudhistira’s *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, which was run as *cerita bersambung* (a serial) in *Kompas* prior to its novel form, was accompanied with an illustration that according to him was not only offensive but also challenged the state ideology, i.e. Pancasila. In the illustration, a section of small hammer and sickle, the most common symbol of communism which was gradually adopted after the Russian revolution, appeared as a background overlaid with the non-realistic images drawn from a series of sharp lines. To the untrained eye, the illustration was already abstract enough; one could see three head figures, a shack, and a bicycle — all important elements in the story, but would definitely need an extra effort to actually notice the crossed hammer and sickle at the bottom left corner of the illustration. However, the symbol was more than noticeable to the eyes of the state official, who then grew irate. He delivered a curt reprimand over the phone and threatened to shut down *Kompas* unless the story and the illustration were removed. Kristanto did not haggle and simply hung up the phone as the conversation ended.<sup>269</sup> But, as if living up to the title of the serialized story, Kristanto did not give in (*mencoba tidak menyerah*). Instead, he persisted in keeping the story and letting it continue to run as serial in his newspaper. In order to appease the state official, however, on the following day, which was the third day that *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* appeared in the newspaper, Kristanto had the barely-visible hammer-sickle symbol removed, while the rest of the illustration remained in print.<sup>270</sup>

The anecdote above shows a piece of evidence of how meticulous state surveillance was and how the affected group responded to the ubiquitous panoptic towers that the state had established. A self-censorship practice, prompted by the dreaded telephone call, was performed by the editor in order to please the state or

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<sup>268</sup> Jakob Oetama (1931-2020) is the co-founder of and owner of Kompas Gramedia Group. This statement appeared in the Kompas Gramedia company profile (2000).

<sup>269</sup> Interview with J.B. Kristanto, former editor of the cultural desk of Kompas daily, on October 3, 2017 in Jakarta.

<sup>270</sup> ‘Mencoba Tidak Menyerah’. *Kompas*, October 18, 1978.

avoid possible reprisal without having to cancel the entire story. As indicated in Chapter 3, the state c.q. the Attorney General played out a coordinating game of surveillance by employing numerous agencies both state bodies and informal non-structural groups to carry out censorial tasks. In this chapter, the perspective shifts as I scrutinize surveillance from the point of view of the subjects of censorship. To return to the case of the problematic illustration above, Kristanto anticipated further by-phone-warning by directing the readers' attention, including the attention of the angry censor, from noticing the part of the illustration that was now missing. Not only did he remove the hammer and sickle, but he also instructed the illustrator to add a massive abstract image of a human head of an eleven-year-old boy on the bottom right corner of the illustration — the boy who in the story acts as both the protagonist and narrator. In this light, I will discuss how the affected groups responded to state surveillance and censorship by building complex systems of self-censorship that involved interlaced relationships among authors, editors, and publishers, playing along with the government-cum-censors in their surveillance game, and accommodating the power structure by employing self-censorship which could range from 'omission, dilution, distortion, and change of emphasis to choice of rhetorical devices by [authors, their editors, the publisher] in anticipation of currying reward and avoiding punishment.'<sup>271</sup> The complex interplays among authors, editors, and publishers contributed under these circumstances eventually to the success of production, circulation and distribution of the books.

In this context, I focus on the publishing companies *Kompas* and Gramedia, where the novels at the heart of this study, i.e. Yudhistira Massardi's *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, and Ajip Rosidi's *Anak Tanahair*, were edited, printed, published, and serialized in the newspaper prior to their publication in novel form.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, *Kompas* was a leading newspaper with the biggest readership and among the few national newspapers to ever offer a special literary section. Furthermore, Gramedia, which began in 1972 and was initially assigned only for printing the highly-sought *Kompas* newspaper, grew to become known as the publisher that focused on publishing entertainment novels or literary works that were less serious. Almost every serialized story (with an exception of Ajip Rosidi's *Anak Tanahair*) that appeared in *Kompas* was later printed in novel form by Gramedia. This strategy was moderately assumed as an economic strategy but could also be seen as a way to have a preview of the response from censors before committing to publishing the novel.

This chapter investigates what the authors, editors, and publishers did to get their stories written, printed, distributed, and finally to appear in print and be read by the public. It explores how publishers/editors dealt with state surveillance and navigated through the ever-present and repressive mechanisms of state censorship. This included cultivating political and friendly ties and employing self-censorship in

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<sup>271</sup> See Lee 1998, pp. 55-73. See also Skjerdal 2008, pp. 185-206.

the pre-publication phase. Furthermore, since the novels examined in this research, according to the literary critics of the time, fell under the category of popular novel as opposed to ‘serious’ literature, I argue that this categorization is an important aspect in the discussion, as the authors, editors, and publishers took advantage of pre-existing literary streams in the 1970s and 1980s Indonesia under the premise that popular novels received smaller attention from state censors than serious literary works. An elaboration on the literary streams in Indonesia in the 1970s and 1980s and how the authors played along with this will explain whether authors opted for one stream over the other in order to gain greater leeway in writing and getting their messages across and simultaneously avoiding censorship.

### **Cultivating Political Ties: the Publisher and the State**

An examination of the publisher, together with its political significance, as well as affiliation, is crucial in order to explain how Indonesian literary situation was played out and why, eventually, the novels at the heart of this study survived repressive censorship. As indicated earlier, the novels *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* (1979), *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (1982), and *Anak Tanahair* (1985) were printed by the same publisher, namely Gramedia, and prior to their novel form, they were run as a serial in *Kompas* newspaper, except for Ajip Rosidi’s *Anak Tanahair*. On this particular condition and, in addition, due to the fact that there is an overlap in direction and leadership, I consider that *Kompas*, the leading and largest newspaper in Indonesia, and Gramedia, the largest modern publisher that prints popular novels, local newspapers, tabloids, and magazines, are both inseparable and interchangeable.<sup>272</sup> What is more, the two form the main pillars of the largest media conglomerate in Indonesia, namely the Kompas Gramedia Group (KKG) holding company.

In his dissertation that delves into the company’s long relationship with power holders, Wijayanto (2019) finds that fear has not only been a running theme but also become the main reason that the company survived authoritarian regimes, especially the three-decade reign of the Suharto government. He argues that the company was born into ‘a culture of fear’ that stemmed from, on the one hand, constant threats of bans whenever it was considered to be critical to the powerholders and, on the other hand, the practices of discrimination associated with the Chinese and Catholic identities of their founders.<sup>273</sup> This lifelong apprehension which the company internalized over decades of authoritarian regimes was decisive for the course that the company took — in short, Kompas Gramedia Group (KKG) sought a cautious and tricky balance between appeasing government censors while informing the readers about developments in the country.

Drawing from this culture of fear and the impact it has on the company, Wijayanto coins the term ‘*jurnalisme rasa*’ (journalism of feeling), a journalistic practice exclusively developed by *Kompas* that entails anxious compromise or

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<sup>272</sup> Kompas Gramedia Group 1995, p. 17.

<sup>273</sup> Wijayanto 2019, p. 41.

submission to state power. Along this line of reasoning, my research, however, finds that *Kompas* and Gramedia played a bigger and even more important role which demonstrates an agency of its own. This was first evident in a statement made by D.J. Tampubolon, the state censor at the SUBDITPAKEMBARCET of the Attorney General Office in Jakarta. On October 25, 2017, prompted by a question on the publication of Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, D.J. Tampubolon informed me that “*mereka adalah teman dekat kita* — they are close friends with us,” with reference to *Kompas* Gramedia. In fact, as I investigated further and with the permission from D.J. Tampubolon to briefly skim invitation letters (*Surat Keluar*) which were compiled in several black Ordner binders, I found that the director of Gramedia had been on regular invitation lists for a series *Forum Rapat Koordinasi Politik Keamanan*.<sup>274</sup> In these meetings, the director of Gramedia or his delegates, together with 19 other analysts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Intelligence Coordinating Body, the Coordinating Agency for the Maintenance of National Stability, the Armed Forces Intelligence Agency, and academics, came together and brainstormed to carry out censorial tasks that included but not limited to examining printed matters, writing analyses, and making recommendation for censorship or bans.<sup>275</sup>

In this sense, different from but still along the lines of Wijayanto's notion on the company's submission to power due to fear, my research shows that *Kompas* Gramedia played an accommodating role with regard to censorship to satisfy the need of both the state and the company. Assigned by the state, the company became an inherent part of the censorship machinery — making it both the subject of censorship and, simultaneously, the censor. Indeed, fear played a substantial part in the production of censorship in the concerned media organization. That said, its direct relationship with the state and the advanced knowledge it had on the censorship mechanism made the company possess a broader understanding in anticipating the eventual selection and de-selection of manuscripts, their editing, and to help navigate towards publishing manuscripts that were potentially controversial. Hence, a good example of well-calculated self-censorship.

Moreover, the fact that these people all knew each other personally, saw each other regularly, and had cordial relationships casts this notion of ‘fear’ in a different light, and suggests some nuance is needed to grasp how influence functioned in practice. This might help explain how certain works successfully navigated the obstacle course of censors, and were published. Clearly, publishers had different priorities and enjoyed a different relationship with the public than the military government did, with its myriad, diffuse institutions of censorship. But the level of coordination between this private publisher and government censors, combined with

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<sup>274</sup> Interview with D.J. Tampubolon (pseudonym) on October 25, 2017 in Jakarta. D.J. Tampubolon showed me extensive dossiers of *Surat Masuk* (incoming letters) and *Surat Keluar* (outcoming letters) which comprise invitations to meetings organized by the Attorney General Office, recommendation letters from state bodies and the public on supervision for certain publications in Indonesia from 1980s to 1990s.

<sup>275</sup> ‘Undangan’. Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

the personal relationships cultivated over years on both sides of the aisle, suggests a far more ambiguous and complex story than merely one of a trepidatious independent publisher responding to threats by powerful government censors.

## Kompas

Under the regime of Sukarno the period of the 1960s was marked with partisan politics, characterized by sharp divisions among political forces, namely the nationalists, religious, communists, and the military. In this decade, almost all newspapers and publications were close to one of the major political parties, be it for ideological reasons or religious convictions. *Suluh Indonesia* (founded in 1953) and *Merdeka* (founded in 1945) were in line with the nationalist party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia* – PNI), while *Duta Masyarakat* (1955) affiliated with the Nahdlatul Ulama, *Harian Rakjat* (1951) with the communist party (PKI), *Abadi* (1947) with Masyumi, *Pedoman* (1948) and *Indonesia Raja* (1949) with the socialist party (*Partai Sosialis Indonesia* – PSI). This condition resulted in a strong interdependence between political parties and media companies. Political parties needed the media to promote their programs and platform to their constituents, while the media companies need the political parties for political protection and readership.

*Kompas* came out on June 28, 1965 amidst the rising temperature of the political crisis, which culminated on September 30, 1965 with an aborted coup. Its origin could not be detached from the role of the then Chief of Staff of the Indonesian Army, Lieutenant General Ahmad Yani, who advised Frans Seda, a Catholic and minister in Sukarno's cabinet, to start a weighty publication to counter the communist media which during the period were not only growing stronger but also offensive against other media. Looking back, on June 28, 1980, Seda himself admitted that the motivation behind the founding of this newspaper was for the catholic group to balance or curb the PKI and its allies.<sup>276</sup> He further clarified and promulgated this anti-communist stance in a featured video which *Kompas* released in September 2015 called “*Jakob Sang Kompas*” (Jakob the *Kompas*). In the video, Seda said that “*Kompas* news fulfills what the people want. People who want to be free, who are free, who despise the PKI, who shun communism.”<sup>277</sup> With this idea in mind, Seda brainstormed with his colleagues from the Catholic Party Ignatius Joseph Kasimo Hendrowahjono, popularly known as IJ Kasimo, and, afterward, urged that Chinese Indonesian Petrus Kanisius Ojong (born Auwjong Peng Koen) and Jakobus Oetama, two Catholic journalists who were then already running the monthly magazine *Intisari*, start making preparation and run the newspaper. Even though in the beginning, Ojong and Oetama hesitated due to the economic and political nature

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<sup>276</sup> See *Sepanjang Jalan Kenangan* (Along the Memorial Road), an article that Seda wrote in *Kompas* on June 28, 1980, to commemorate its anniversary. See also Ishwara 2014, p. 214. See also Wijayanto 2019, p. 48.

<sup>277</sup> Wijayanto 2019, p. 50.

of the period, in the course of history, these two figures became the determining factors in realizing Yani's idea.<sup>278</sup>

This new media was initially to be named *Bentara Rakyat*, but later changed into *Kompas* based on the suggestion from President Sukarno. The initial capital came from the three founders: I.J. Kasimo donated a pick-up truck, Oetama donated a radio, and Ojong handed over a typewriter. The houses of Oetama and Ojong were even used as *Kompas* offices. During the first few months of its operation, *Kompas* was often ridiculed as *Kompas Morgen*, since it always arrived in readers' hands on the following day. The communists mocked the newspaper and called it '*komando pastor*' (priest's command) because its founders, I.J. Kasimo, P.K. Ojong, and Jakob Oetama, were prominent members of the Catholic party.

*Kompas'* affiliation with the Catholic Party lasted until 1971, when the New Order government cut ties between newspapers and political parties and removed their close loyalty and primordialism. In 1973, the government abolished the identity of old political parties. Nine parties participating in the 1971 election (except Golkar) were forced to fuse to simplify the party system and strengthen Golkar.<sup>279</sup> Two political parties participating in the election were the United Development Party (PPP) that housed former Islamic parties; and the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) for Christian, Catholic, and nationalist parties.

*Kompas'* relationship with the Catholic group later grew tenuous although the Catholic influence was still felt. The owners of *Kompas* began to realize the importance of a newspaper eliminating a partisan attitude and highlighting the business aspect in order to be able to advance. From the very start, Ojong and Oetama had actually been implementing the modern management concept in running *Intisari* and *Kompas*, as well as other business units, but official implementation only began in 1980 when *Kompas* Gramedia Group first introduced the Management by Objective (MBO), a work ethic then exclusive to *Kompas* Gramedia Group which emphasized performance-based incentives.<sup>280</sup> Ojong and Oetama's choice to implement modern management in handling the company was a courageous breakthrough because, at the time, media companies and the press prioritized political ideals and struggle rather than business mission due to the influence of *Pers Perjuangan* (press of political struggle).

The choice that Ojong and Oetama made did not only affect the company's internal affairs, but also the pragmatic attitude of the company in dealing with the authoritarian New Order government. Especially for *Kompas*, Oetama established a technique of news writing that was less common, which involved softening the message by using euphemisms and inviting readers to read between the lines for the

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<sup>278</sup> In his eulogy to the passing of Ojong, published in *Kompas* June 2, 1980, Oetama wrote that they "felt hesitant to accept the request to publish *Kompas*. The economic and political environments, as well as the infrastructure, were not supportive. But the request was urgent and came at a time when some newspapers were labeled BPS (Badan Pendukung Sukarno) while some who had anti-communist stance were shut down." Cited in Ishawara 2014, p. 317 and in Wijayanto 2019, p. 50.

<sup>279</sup> Yanuarti 1997, p. 18.

<sup>280</sup> *Kompas* Gramedia Group 1995, p. 17.

subtly implied message. There may be an aspect to this that is self-serving, the sort of justification one might use to rationalize difficult choices in conforming to censorship. Rosihan Anwar, Indonesia's renowned journalist, author, and former editor of the socialist party newspaper *Pedoman*, mocked such technique and called it '*jurnalisme kepiting*' (crab journalism) for lack of courage and integrity in delivering the news.<sup>281</sup> Like a crab, *Kompas* walked sideways, instead of courageously moving forward.

Oetama defended this technique and argued that criticism could be delivered in an honest, polite, and responsible manner.<sup>282</sup> It accommodated the wishes of the ruler and benefitted the companies in both the short and long terms. Furthermore, the function of criticism and press control were the manifestation of the commitment and support for the government. And after all, direct criticisms and ideological challenges would only lead to the closing of the newspapers (or worse) by the authorities. Despite its indirect and complicated news writing style, *Kompas* remained in high demand due to its in-depth news coverage and language.

## **Gramedia**

Gramedia publishing house served as the backbone of print industry. Prior to the establishment of Gramedia, *Kompas* relied on publishing houses run by other companies. *Kompas* was first printed in PT Eka Grafika that also printed other newspapers in Indonesia. This situation explained the delayed circulation of *Kompas* in the first few months of its publication. *Kompas* tried to overcome this issue by getting the newspaper printed at a more advanced publishing house, Percetakan Masa Media. As circulation grew, Percetakan Masa Media could not meet *Kompas*' demand to increase the number of its copies. It then moved to another printing company, Kinta Printing. The same issue occurred. Finally, on March 12, 1972, Ojong and Oetama established their own publishing house, PT Gramedia. The initial aim of this company was to meet the ever-increasing needs of the newspaper, especially since in 1972 *Kompas* circulation already reached 115,655 copies.

In the same year, Ojong and Oetama purchased a modern British printing machine with the help of a government loan. This loan was part of the New Order's strategy to help boost publications while at the same time control the press and publications by creating dependence on the government.<sup>283</sup> The former Director of Radio, Television, and Film at the Ministry of Information, Ishadi, S.K., said that under the New Order the print industry received facilities in the form of subsidies, investment, credit, reduced prices for prints, and cash lump sum for journalists who made positive coverages on state project, all of which making the press and print industry "agent of government."<sup>284</sup> The purchase of the modern printing machine,

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<sup>281</sup> Fachruddin 2019, p. 18.

<sup>282</sup> Kompas Gramedia Group 1995, p. 17.

<sup>283</sup> Oetama 2001, p. 313.

<sup>284</sup> Ishadi 2014, p. 10.

therefore, marked not only the shift in publishing technology into the new era of modern printing, but also the stronger state cooptation in the publishing industry by means of favoritism towards certain media, *budaya telepon* (state warning via telephone calls), and discriminatory printing permits.<sup>285</sup> A *Kompas* senior journalist, who worked at a culture desk in the 1980s, confirmed such cooptation which, according to him, had created a working environment steeped in fear and suspicion. Distrust among colleagues became prevalent, especially after not really knowing which colleague worked solely as journalists or as government agents stationed in the said office. This later indirectly resulted in his temporal dismissal by his superior, the owner of *Kompas*, due to pressure from the state official at the Ministry of Information who had discovered that the journalist's father was a member of the Communist Party in 1965.<sup>286</sup>

### **P.K. Ojong and Jakob Oetama**

Ojong and Oetama were central in turning *Kompas* Gramedia Group into Indonesia's largest media conglomerate. They not only established the group, but also became the leaders and zeitgeist of the company. They were the ones to first lay the company foundation.

Petrus Kanisius Ojong, born Auw Jong Peng Koen in Bukittingi West Sumatera on July 15, 1920, came from a family of traders. He received elementary and middle school education in Padang before he was enrolled in a vocational school for teachers in Jatinegara, Jakarta. After graduating high school, Ojong studied law in Universitas Indonesia and graduated in 1951.<sup>287</sup> According to Ishwara, Ojong was an intellectual who had a very deep concern for and attention to the state, as well as legal and social issues, and became an influential figure in a number of areas. He served in the Legal Aid as curator and public advocate, the forerunner of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI).<sup>288</sup> He also served as member of the central committee of the Catholic party, was on the central board of the newspaper union (*Serikat Penerbit Surat kabar* – SPS), the treasurer at the Yayasan Indonesia which published the literary magazine *Horison*, became the coordinator of the International Catholic Union of the Press (UCIP) for Indonesia, helped established a Catholic news agency in Hong Kong, and ran the Yayasan Tarumanegara, which founded Universitas Tarumanegara in Jakarta.

Jakob Oetama was born on September 27, 1931 in Howahan, a small village situated near Borobudur temple in Central Java. He went to a seminary in Yogyakarta in 1951, completed a degree in history and journalism from both

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<sup>285</sup> Ishadi 2014, p. 10; Dhakidae 1991, p. 250; Ardimas 2002, p. 118.

<sup>286</sup> The journalist was removed from his position, and transferred to Kompas Gramedia subsidiary in Aceh. Several years later, he was reinstated to his original position in Kompas culture desk. Interview with Budiardjo (pseudonym) on September 26, 2017 in Jakarta.

<sup>287</sup> Ishwara 2001, p. 337-339.

<sup>288</sup> Ishwara 2001, p. 337-339.



Perguruan Tinggi Publisistik in Jakarta (1959) and Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta (1961). His journalistic career began when he was accepted as an editor at the Catholic weekly magazine, *Penabur*, in Jakarta in 1955. In 1965, he worked as chief editor at *Kompas*, while Ojong was the president director. When Ojong died in 1980, Oetama assumed the position, making him both the chief editor and president director of *Kompas* Gramedia Group, the positions he held until 2002. In press organizations, Oetama was the advisor to the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists, member of the International Press Institute. As in politics, Oetama served as a member of parliament (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat – DPR) representing Fraksi Pembangunan Karya or Golkar from 1966 to 1977. In 1977, he served in the People’s Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat – MPR), the highest governing body in Indonesia. His path was followed by one of his senior journalists in *Kompas*, Ansel da Lopes, who also became the representative from Golkar.

The closeness of the *Kompas* Gramedia top executives was not limited to their membership in the Catholic Party. They were also active in the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a think tank on social, international, political, and economic issues that played a pivotal political role in the 1970s and 1980s, and became the main supporter of the New Order.<sup>289</sup> Oetama had also been the core administrator of the Indonesian journalist association (*Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia* – PWI); chair of the Press Council (*Dewan Pers*), and chairperson of Indonesian newspaper union (SPS), the positions of the New Order era which were only given to intellectuals and community leaders whose thoughts and political understandings were in line with the government's views. This gave rise to Benedict Anderson’s characterizing *Kompas*’ style as determined boringness and his description of the newspaper as the New Order media par excellence.<sup>290</sup> Even the censors with whom I have established rapport at the Attorney General Office assumed a close relationship between the office and *Kompas* Gramedia.<sup>291</sup> This was later confirmed by his superior who said that the relationship between the two has been established since censorship practice under the New Order began to take place and became more intimate in the 1980s.<sup>292</sup>

Ojong and Oetama were not only journalists, but also intellectuals, entrepreneurs, and political enthusiasts who were able to adapt to every political condition of each era. Motivated by the predicament of being Chinese-Indonesians, concocted with the worldwide Catholic networks they maintained as well as the shared experience of having two of their earlier newspapers (*Keng Po* and *Star Weekly*) shut down on August 1, 1957 and October 7, 1961 respectively, they developed an accommodating attitude in their business practice — the very ability

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<sup>289</sup> Hill, D. T. 1994. p, 63.

<sup>290</sup> See Anderson 1994, p. 140. See also Hill, D.T., 1994, p. 84.

<sup>291</sup> Interview with D.J. Tampubolon (pseudonym) on August 15, 2017 in Jakarta.

<sup>292</sup> Interview with S.H. Pasaribu on August 15, 2017 in Jakarta.

that helped them protect their businesses, and even befriend the state censors, as made explicit by the official from the Attorney General Office in Jakarta.<sup>293</sup>

### **Categorizing Novels: Serious vs Popular**

According to Boen S. Oemarjati, the New Order era was marked with a change in the socio-cultural conditions in Indonesia which allowed rapid growth in literary writing as the government priorities were to provide social stability and to recover economically.<sup>294</sup> Unlike authors under Sukarno's Guided Democracy who were coached on state ideology and expected not just to reflect society but to guide it in its function as a servant of the people in their struggle to complete the revolution, authors in the New Order enjoyed more space to breathe and were given opportunities for creative freedom. Oemarjati stated further that under Guided Democracy, 'the term 'experimentation', for instance, was one-sidedly interpreted as 'imperialistic', whereas under the New Order experimental forms have gone to such an extent that 'improvisation' "has become the last cry in the recent Indonesian literary movement."<sup>295</sup> This – very relative – creative freedom was further equipped with government sponsorship, literary training and education, mass media, and potential readership.

In view of the socio-cultural conditions, two main streams in literary writing, mainly prose, took shape: the first stream being the 'serious' novel — or novel *sastra* (literary novel), whereas the second was termed 'popular' novel. The distinction between the two was unclear; critics, however, have deliberately made distinctions between the two.<sup>296</sup> Novel *sastra* or serious novel, according to Jakob Sumardjo, centers its theme on virtuous qualities in life and its complexities. It employs all intrinsic elements of the novels i.e. plot, characterization, setting, and point of view, all of which were used to make the story well-developed; and it discusses narrative in depth using standardized language.<sup>297</sup> Umar Kayam, a literary critic and writer, made a similar distinction. According to him, a 'novel that is 'literary' does not only capture reality, but it also problematizes it by means of craftsmanship, manipulation, and linguistic taste. It discusses life and includes all possibilities of it.'<sup>298</sup> In contrast, the popular novel, which finds its traces in 1930s, 1950s, and 1960s and was formerly termed as *roman pitjisan* (dime novel) due to its relatively low selling price, was intended for mere entertainment, and commercial gain, and confined to its

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<sup>293</sup> See Eduard Kimman and Michael Traber. (1979). *Beyond the Catholic Market: A report on cooperation possibilities of the six catholic publishing houses in Indonesia*. Jakarta: Episcopal Commission for Social Communications and Aachen-Federal Republic of Germany: Catholic Media Council. This report details a consensus about the need for an outside consultant to advise what can be done in making the Catholic publishing houses more self-supporting. P.K. Ojong and Oetama participated through internship program conducted in their publishing house. p. 338.

<sup>294</sup> Oemarjati 1979, p. 134.

<sup>295</sup> Oemarjati 1979, p. 134.

<sup>296</sup> Even Teeuw himself said that it was difficult to draw a strict dividing line between the two novels. See Teeuw 1967, p. 12.

<sup>297</sup> Sumardjo 1979, p. 10-11.

<sup>298</sup> Kayam 1980, p. 6.

spatial and temporal context, often emphasizing petty romance.<sup>299</sup> In the late 1930s, popular novels were mushrooming in Medan, the capital of North Sumatra. These novels were printed by private publishers who found financial opportunities in publishing stories that revolved around the topics of sex, supernatural power, petty romance, and sensation, which attracted a large number of readers.<sup>300</sup> The emergence of *roman pitjisan* began as an adaptation, if not simplification, of literary novels that had begun earlier, initiated by Eurasian and Indonesian-Chinese authors and journalists in the nineteenth century, who were the first to begin the serialization of popular novels in 1924.<sup>301</sup>

This trend, however, was halted during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945). Literary writings were then produced generally to generate sentiment against the Dutch and mobilize support for Japan as the leader of a new Greater Asian awareness, or pan-Asian loyalty. The Cultural Center that the Japanese colonial government established forced artists and authors to write literary works that supported the politics of the Japanese government. *Tjinta Tanah Air* (1945) by Nur Sutan Iskandar and *Roman Pantjaroba Palawidja* (1945) by Karim Halim printed and published by Balai Pustaka, the state publishing house, were two novels among many. Due to tight censorship and limited themes for writing, only few novels could be published under the Japanese occupation.<sup>302</sup>

After Japan left, and against the backdrop of World War II, publishing began to pick up pace again. The number of publications began to increase, especially literary novels. Almost all works written by authors of the Generation of 45 were published by the state-sanctioned Balai Pustaka and Pustaka Rakyat.<sup>303</sup> Within five years, new publishers emerged, focusing on literary quality manuscripts that could not entirely be published by both Balai Pustaka and Pustaka Rakyat. First, Pembangunan; followed by Nusantara, and then Gunung Agung. To accommodate readings that were not considered serious, private publishers were also flourishing, such as Bwan Niaga, Mega Bookstore, Aryaguna, and Wilendra.<sup>304</sup> This is when *roman pitjisan* made its comeback in Indonesia.<sup>305</sup> Slightly different from 1930s *roman pitjisan*, the first half of the 1950s *roman pitjisan* shifted its theme to the romantic lives of young people against the old fashioned tradition of their parents – the story of a generation gap.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> ‘Seni populer merupakan hiburan bagi pembaca karena ia dibiarkannya asyik dengan dirinya sendiri dan segala sesuatu yang telah dikenalnya’, Damono 1979, p. 210.

<sup>300</sup> Damono 1979, p. 210.

<sup>301</sup> Lan 1962, p. 23.

<sup>302</sup> See Jassin 1975. Also Mark 2018.

<sup>303</sup> *Angkatan 45*, Generation of 1945, refers to the Indonesian authors who had first published their texts during the Japanese occupation and the years of the national revolution, irrespective of their politico-cultural affiliation. The works of Angkatan 45 were often more realistic, as opposed to those of the earlier group, known as the Pujangga Baru, which were more romantic and idealistic. See Teeuw 1967, p. 122. Also Heinschke 1999, pp. 145-169.

<sup>304</sup> Teeuw 1967, p. 224.

<sup>305</sup> Roolvink 1958, pp. 171-179.

<sup>306</sup> Roolvink pp. 173-179.

Entering the 1960s, literary publishing was sluggish. In addition to economic hardship, reading interests of the larger public in serious books were not well established. It should also be added that in this period, like the press, literary writings were 'party-bound' as they could be expected to be influenced to some degree by one party or another, either through direct supports or through associations of the writers.<sup>307</sup> This was evident in the emergence of LEKRA which was affiliated with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI); the National Cultural Institute (LKN) with the Indonesian National Party (PNI); Muslim Art and Cultural Institute (Lesbumi) with the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Writings produced by writers affiliated to any of these party organs were heavily colored by political agendas, becoming very serious and, therefore, losing the interests of general readers who sought entertainment. *Roman pitjisan*, however, thrived. Motinggo Busye's popular novels became bestsellers, making other authors change course and follow his lead.<sup>308</sup> His books revived the original tradition of *roman pitjisan* and were jammed with sex and sensation. The books came out in pocket size with lavishly illustrated covers which did not always describe the content of the story.<sup>309</sup>

Due to the political turmoil in 1965 after the attempted coup, *roman pitjisan* temporarily stopped only to re-appear in 1966. The number of popular writers grew exponentially, to name but a few Asbari Nurpatra Krisna, Motinggo Busye, and Abdullah Harahap. Pierre Labrousse in his study on the sociology of *roman pitjisan* stated that in the period of 1966-1973, official literary novels were considered to be rare while popular novels dominated and controlled the market.<sup>310</sup> Balai Pustaka shifted focus and became engrossed with printing and distributing textbooks under the state sanctioned book procurement project, popularly known as Proyek INPRES.

In response to this situation, in 1971, a group of literary authors with the financial help of Yayasan Jaya Raya established a new publishing house, Pustaka Jaya, chaired by Ajip Rosidi. This publishing house was dedicated to publishing literary novels and translation, as well as children's literature. Immediately after its establishment, Pustaka Jaya became Indonesia's main publisher for literary writings — publishing serious novels written by many, including Mochtar Lubis (1922-2004), Iwan Simatupang (1928-1970), Nh. Dini (1936-2018), and Ajip Rosidi (1938-2020).<sup>311</sup> The publication grew even more robust as the training and education centers for arts, such as Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ), organized fiction writing contests on regular basis. In addition to such art centers, mass media, newspapers and magazines, such as *Kartini*, *Femina*, and *Gadis*, organized similar writing contests.

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<sup>307</sup> Crawford 1971, p. 160.

<sup>308</sup> Some of Motinggo Busye's novels are, to name but a few, *Bibi Marsiti* (Aunt Marsiti), *Dosa Kita Semua* (Our Sins), *Perempuan itu Bernama Barabah* (The Girl Named Barabah). Some of Motinggo Busye's novels are, to name but a few, *Bibi Marsiti* (Aunt Marsiti), *Dosa Kita Semua* (Our Sins), *Perempuan itu Bernama Barabah* (The Girl Named Barabah). See Rosidi 1979, p. 19.

<sup>309</sup> Rosidi 1979, p. 19.

<sup>310</sup> Labrousse, 1974, p. 241-250.

<sup>311</sup> According to Sumardjo, serious literary works were overlooked by publishers due to limited resources. What's more, authors of serious novels would never want to get their novels published elsewhere. Sumardjo 1979, p. 143.

Furthermore, Yayasan Buku Utama (foundation for fine books), a state-sanctioned organization first established in 1973 responsible for literacy and the development of literary production in Indonesia, gave awards to writers and publishers for their literary merit in the writing industry.

In line with a more general trend in literature, the tradition of *roman pitjisan* remained, but was now refined and generally known as novel pop or popular novel. The year 1973 saw the establishment of Gramedia Pustaka Utama, an equally important publisher that contributed to the development of creative writing in Indonesia. It began publishing pop novels, the first of which was *Karmila* (1971) written by Marga Tjoa, which had been previously run as serial in *Kompas* newspaper. The novel was soon followed by numerous other popular novels, such as *Cintaku di Kampus Biru* (1974), *Badai Pasti Berlalu* (1974), and, the novels of the authors central in this thesis: *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* (1979), *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (1982), *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari* (1985), *Jentera Bianglala* (1986), and *Anak Tanahair* (1985).

The generic criteria of popular novels, however, did not seem to fit Yudhistira's *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* (1979), Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (1982, 1985, 1986), and Rosidi's *Anak Tanahair* (1985). They did not center their themes on light romance and their characters were round and fully developed throughout the course of the novels. Furthermore, these novels better fit Kayam's description of the serious literary novel in that they did not only 'capture reality, but it also problematized it by means of a craftsmanship, manipulation, and linguistic taste.'<sup>312</sup> In regards to literary quality, *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* won the Dewan Kesenian Jakarta award in 1977, while *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* won the Yayasan Buku Utama awards. Funachi Megumi translated *Anak Tanahair* into Japanese for similar reasons that *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* won the Dewan Kesenian Jakarta's award. Foulcher (1990), Hoadley (2005), Taum (2015), and Scherer (1981) argue that these novels were the first literary novels to ever speak about political incidents that were never spoken of before, against the New Order orthodoxy while posing literary 'resistance' to the widely shared narrative about the 1965-1966 killings in Indonesia, as opposed to the said light romance. However, they fail to see that these novels were printed and eventually put by critics and indirectly by the publisher under the category of popular novels.

Literary scholars and critics admitted that the popular novel was a genre that was constantly overlooked by both critics and the government even though some of them recorded an excellent number of sales and dominated the literary scene in Indonesia in 1970s and 1980s.<sup>313</sup> In connection to this, based on the lists of banning decrees compiled by the Attorney General Office in 1991, no decree was ever issued to ban popular novels. The fact that the novels at the heart of this study were published by Gramedia, a publishing house known for printing popular novels in the

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<sup>312</sup> Kayam 1980, p. 6.

<sup>313</sup> Damono in *Sosiologi Sastra* p. 81 argued that popular novel is not situated within literary genre. It resides only in family or entertainment magazines. See also Sumardjo 1979, p. 143.

1970s and 1980s, implies that the decision to print the novels as such was likely an attempt by the publisher to get these novels to stay under the radar or to get as little attention as possible in order to avoid direct state censorship and any undesirable consequences which once befell the hyped *Bumi Manusia* in 1981. Looking at the advantage of this categorization of genre which indicates that the state mingled, intervened, or even paternalized the publishing industry and helped define the character and aims of popular versus serious novels, the decision to choose one category over another marked the beginning of self-censorship by the publisher.

### **Self-censorship: from Manuscripts to Prints**

In the 1970s and 1980s, Jakarta was pivotal in the Indonesian literary industry. It housed more than one-third (34 percent) of the total 300 authors,<sup>314</sup> making it a Mecca for creative publications. Various publishers, both large and small, with and without publishing permits, threw themselves into the field of creative publishing. Few, however, recorded a large nationwide readership, such as Pustaka Jaya (founded in 1971), Cypress (founded in 1972), and, especially, Gramedia, a wholly-owned subsidiary of *Kompas* Gramedia Group, which printed, published, and distributed the novels at the heart of this study.

The fact that Gramedia was one of the biggest publishing houses with a large audience led to two outcomes: first, it had to look for quality manuscripts for good publications in order to maintain or even increase the already great number of readers; and, second, it simultaneously attracted authors to get their manuscripts printed, published, and distributed by this publisher. In publishing a novel, Gramedia, like other publishers, thoroughly considered at least five important aspects of publication: collecting and selecting manuscripts, making graphic design, printing, marketing and distribution, and building relation with authors, all of which determined the success of publications. However, as marketing and distribution did not directly concern the authors, the discussion in this section will be limited only to the process of literary production that involved the publisher, editor, and most importantly, the author. Furthermore, it is within these aspects that extensive use of self-censorship was disclosed on the part of the publisher/editor, and perhaps as well, the authors.

### **Collecting and Selecting Manuscripts**

This process, which consists of collection, selection, and editing processes, is the first and most important aspect of literary production as it entails the decision makings of the publisher on whether and how to publish the novels.

#### **Collection**

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<sup>314</sup> While 36 percent lived in other large cities on Java, and 30 percent lived outside Java. See Sumardjo 1979, p. 114.

A generally shared notion of a good publisher in Indonesia in the 1970s and 1980s is that one should not wait for the manuscript to be handed in by the author. Instead, the publisher should actively seek out authors to provide manuscripts for publication. To get the manuscripts, publishers would use two approaches: first, the publishers had the editorial staff contact the author directly; second, the publisher could obtain manuscripts through writing contests that they organized. This second approach was normally taken by Indonesian publishers that also ran newspapers or magazines, such as Gaya Favorit Press, with its monthly magazines *Femina* and *Gadis*, or Variasi Jaya Kartini Group, with its monthly magazines *Kartini* and *Puteri*.

Outside the publishers, the Jakarta Arts Council (*Dewan Kesenian Jakarta*) and Yayasan Buku Utama which had established connections with IKAPI and, in particular, Gramedia, organized writing contests and giving awards for quality books on a regular basis —the most prestigious of which was *Sayembara Novel Dewan Kesenian Jakarta* (Jakarta Arts Council Novel Competition) which began in 1973.<sup>315</sup> As this competition became the best channel for authors to get exposure to the Indonesian literary scene, *Dewan Kesenian Jakarta*, which annually hosted the competition, shelved a great volume of original manuscripts, only five of which won the awards. Manuscripts that were considered to have literary quality but did not win the contest were archived in a manuscript bank while waiting to be published by affiliated publishers.

In the case of *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, the collection phase was slightly different. In an interview that I had with Yudhistira in 2017, he claimed that he had completed the manuscript in 1976 with the original title *Aku Bukan Komunis* before he sent it to the writing contest organized by *Dewan Kesenian Jakarta*, and then won the award in 1977. He jokingly said that the main motive behind it was purely financial — no ideals or political aims whatsoever ever crossed his mind. At the time Yudhistira submitted to the competition, the first prize of the contest was equal to four months' salary for the average worker in Indonesia, and represented more than enough for him to live by.<sup>316</sup> According to J.B. Kristanto, when Yudhistira first moved to Jakarta, he was destitute. Also according to him, the fact that he was in such predicament was likely due to his inability to acquire any profession for not being '*bersih diri*' (personally clean or untarnished), a term which insinuated that one was free from the influence of, and association with, the outlawed Communist

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<sup>315</sup> In a report by the secretary of Yayasan Buku Utama, A.S. Nasution, which was addressed to the Minister of Culture and Education, Gramedia was mentioned as a regular donor, among 9 Indonesian publishers, to the Yayasan Buku Utama. In five consecutive years, from 1973 to 1978 when the report was written and signed, Gramedia donated Rp. 200.000 annually which was spent by the Yayasan Buku Utama to award authors of quality books in Indonesia. See Yayasan Buku Utama 1980.

<sup>316</sup> Interview with Yudhistira Massardi on July 22, 2017 in Pekayon, Bekasi. See also report on "*Sayembara Mengarang Roman DKJ 1977*" via <http://dkj.or.id/articles/sastra/sayembara-menulis-novel-dari-masa-ke-masa>. It is interesting to note that one of the judges in this writing contest was Boen S. Oemarjati, one of the authoritative figures in Indonesian literary criticism who made the categorization of popular and serious novels.

Party.<sup>317</sup> This was also confirmed by Savitri Scherer in her essay ‘Yudhistira Ardi Noegraha: Social Attitudes in the Works of a Popular Writer’ (1981).<sup>318</sup> In a letter that he sent her, Yudhistira wrote that from 1973 to 1975, he and Noorca, his twin brother who was also a writer and poet, lived like ‘*gelandangan*’ or homeless, literally in the streets of Jakarta. At night they slept inside various luxury cars parked behind the state-run department store, Sarinah. The cars were owned by nouveaux riches that still lived in areas with small narrow alleys. In order to guard these luxurious cars from being vandalized at night, the owners arranged to have homeless teenagers to sleep in them for a fee. During the days, Yudhistira and his twin brother spent their time in the Bulungan Youth Forum, one of the best art centers for youth in Jakarta and only a 5-minute walk from the Attorney General Office where his novel likely went through a lengthy discussion in a *Rapat Koordinasi Polkam*.<sup>319</sup>

After winning the competition, Yudhistira did not intend to send it to any publisher until it was collected by *Kompas*, via J.B. Kristanto, who was the chief editor for cultural desk in *Kompas*. Kristanto’s initial intention for it was to get it printed as a novel by Gramedia. However, it came out as a serial in *Kompas* newspaper instead, with its first appearance on Monday, October 16, 1978. Instead of objecting to it, Yudhistira saw this as an advantage to his financial situation. With it being serialized in the newspaper, Yudhistira would get regular income from the publication. From the publisher’s perspective, *Kompas* Gramedia would know the public reception of the story which then would help *Kompas* and Gramedia to decide whether to publish it as a novel. A year later, Alfons Taryadi (1936-2013), J.B. Kristanto’s colleague and editor for Gramedia, had Yudhistira’s manuscript published as a novel. Again, for Yudhistira, the deal was purely financial—there was no ideological idea or political objective behind his story, so he claimed.<sup>320</sup>

As for *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, after Tohari completed the manuscript in 1980, he personally handed it in to the young Listiana Srisanti (1954-2010), the chief editor at Gramedia, who had it published as a trilogy — consisting of three short novels, namely *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk: Catatan Buat Emak* (1982), *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari* (1985), and *Jentera Bianglala* (1986). Similar to Yudhistira’s *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, Tohari’s trilogy first appeared in *Kompas* newspaper as a serial. The first of the trilogy appeared daily between July 17, 1981 and August 21, 1981; the second between September 24, 1984 and October 27, 1984; the third between September 25, 1985 and October 26, 1985.

By then, Tohari was already known as an award-winning novelist. His ‘second’ novel *Kubah* (1980) was published, without having to go through any editing process, by Indonesia’s prestigious literary publisher, Pustaka Jaya, which

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<sup>317</sup> Interview with J.B. Kristanto on October 3, 2017 in Jakarta. This is similar to the case of the senior journalist that I mentioned earlier in this chapter. Even more surreally similar is the fact that the journalist also lost his father after he was disappeared by the military in 1965 due to his affiliation with communists.

<sup>318</sup> Scherer 1981, pp. 31-52.

<sup>319</sup> Scherer 1981, pp. 31-52.

<sup>320</sup> Interview with Yudhistira Massardi on October 10, 2017, in Pekayon, Bekasi.



was owned by Ajip Rosidi. *Kompas* Gramedia, however, did not initially seem to be very interested in Tohari's latest manuscript, *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*. Unlike Massardi's *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* it had to go through repetitive massive editing processes. According to Tohari, it was so massive that Tohari gave up and told Gramedia that he himself lost interest in getting his novel published.<sup>321</sup> Knowing that Gramedia had a larger readership than Pustaka Jaya, he was hoping that the publication *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, which came out at a time when literary works with similar themes were scarce, would alleviate the trauma that originated from him witnessing the mass killings of 1965-66 and, simultaneously, educate the public about the injustice that the government directed against particular members of society. The story and nature of Tohari's manuscript editing will be elaborated on in the section, Editing.

Completely different from the aforementioned novels is Ajip Rosidi's *Anak Tanahair*. According to Rosidi, in an interview in Bandung in 2017, *Anak Tanahair* was intended to be published by Pustaka Jaya, the literary publisher which he himself ran. The manuscript, however, was finally published by Gramedia in 1986 after it had been 'stolen' from his apartment in Kyoto, Japan when an editor from Gramedia paid him a visit.<sup>322</sup> The novel was the first and only novel that Ajip Rosidi had ever produced, even though he had written hundreds of short stories and essays. Knowing that Ajip Rosidi was already a big name in the Indonesian literary scene and also in publishing industry, it seems that Gramedia intentionally skipped the two generic approaches that a publisher would use in order to obtain a manuscript of a novel. Gramedia did not request the author to provide the manuscript nor did it collect the manuscript from the competition organizer that the publisher was affiliated with. Moreover, Ajip Rosidi was the *Ketua Dewan Pekerja Harian Dewan Kesenian Jakarta* (chairman of the Jakarta Arts Council) who regularly delivered the annual decision and announced the winners of the writing competition that DKJ organized. In short, in Ajip's own words, the manuscript was "*dicuri*" (stolen).<sup>323</sup>

Unlike manuscript collection elsewhere, especially in Western countries, in the 1970s and 1980s Indonesia, manuscript collection did not involve literary agents and scouts who work for a publisher, search for manuscripts, and pass them on to the editorial board, while literary agents work for the author to get his or her work recognized and published by the publisher.<sup>324</sup> In the Indonesian publishing industry, it seems that publishers would not want to include scout's fees to entire production costs, while authors preferred to have a direct relationship with the publishers

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<sup>321</sup> Interview with Ahmad Tohari on November 6, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas. See also Riyanto 2006, pp. 43-57 Yudiono 2003, p. 6.

<sup>322</sup> Interview with Ajip Rosidi on July 25, 2017 in Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi, in Bandung. He claimed that when an editor from Gramedia paid him a visit in Kyoto, he took the manuscript back to Indonesia without Ajip's permission and then published it as a popular novel. This must have taken place sometime around 1983-1986 in between his appointment as Professor Extraordinary at the Tenri Daigaku, Nara, and Kyoto Sangyo Daigaku, Kyoto.

<sup>323</sup> Interview with Ajip Rosidi on July 25, 2017 in Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi, in Bandung.

<sup>324</sup> Smith 1975, pp. 58-59.

without any intermediary. According to Oemarjati, an Indonesian literary scholar who was also one of the judges who awarded Yudhistira's *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* as the winner of the Jakarta Arts Council Novel Competition in 1977, publishers in Indonesia in these two decades might have had a sufficient number of manuscripts due to their affiliations with art institutes like the *Dewan Kesenian Jakarta*, and due to growing initiatives from authors who, under the new government, had relatively wider space and more topics to address in their writings.<sup>325</sup>

## Selection

In an interview in August 2017, when questioned about the main requirement for a novel to be published by Gramedia, the fiction manager Anastasia Mustika gave a normative answer and mentioned that the novel must be in accordance with the state ideology, Pancasila.<sup>326</sup> When pressed further, she went on to explain that the selection process was conducted by an editorial board consisting of at least three editors. This process includes work such as assessing and weighing the manuscript prior to making a decision whether the text is to be published, rejected, or postponed. In assessing and weighing the manuscript, Gramedia formulated the following standards:

- a. Authenticity. This is to ensure whether the manuscript was original, an adaptation, or a product of plagiarism.
- b. Recognition. In this regard, the literary status of the author is considered to be an indication of publishing success, sometimes despite the content.
- c. Content. The editorial board will consider whether the content would please the changing tastes of the readers, as this will greatly affect the distribution of the novel. Content consideration would also include analysis of the theme, plot, setting, and characterization in the manuscript.
- d. Reading benefit. This refers to the literary benefit that readers could get from reading the novel. This consideration would normally become the greatest concern for a literary publisher.

Since Pancasila was at the center of the publication process, the considerations above were made to meet or to adapt to the basic criteria for novels that the New Order government had established – and that shows that the ‘creative freedom’ the New Order promoted was in reality very limited. Good novels should:

- a. use standardized language
- b. present an interesting story
- c. promote decency, not pornography
- d. spread truth

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<sup>325</sup> Oemarjati 1977.

<sup>326</sup> Interview with Anastasia Mustika on September 11, 2017 in Jakarta.

- e. contain a logical storyline
- f. promote development
- g. not contain slander, provocation, or propaganda.<sup>327</sup>

According to Mustika, despite the formulated standards and criteria, assessing a manuscript was not an easy task. At least three editors worked together to provide a more objective assessment.<sup>328</sup> Suggestions could also come from other publishing units, such as the production department, marketing, and distribution. Sometimes the director of the publisher, or even the owner, would be involved in deciding whether one manuscript should be published or rejected. This selection process, however, could be overlooked if the manuscript had already been recognized for its literary quality, perhaps by winning a writing contest organized by a bona fide institution, such as the Dewan Kesenian Jakarta.

In regard to authenticity, Gramedia did not seem to have any difficulties in deciding to choose Yudhistira's *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, and Rosidi's *Anak Tanahair* for publication. Even though Yudhistira was a newcomer to Indonesia's cultural sphere, on November 19, 1977, *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, formerly *Aku Bukan Komunis* won the award from the Jakarta Arts Council, which meant that the manuscript had been carefully weighed and assessed and, therefore, was guaranteed to be original and of literary quality. In addition, the committee of judges who assessed the manuscript consisted of Indonesian prominent scholars and literary authorities, namely the above mentioned Boen S. Oemarjati (1940-2011), author and professor at the Faculty of Arts University of Indonesia, M. Saleh Saad (1930-1982), academician, Benny H. Hoed (1936-2015), linguist and professor at the Faculty of Arts University of Indonesia, Rusman Sutiasumarga (1917-1977), author and editor at Balai Pustaka, and Dodong Djiwapradja (1928-2009), Sundanese poet and translator of works by Tolstoy, Saint-John Perse, W.H. Auden, and Charles Madge.<sup>329</sup>

It is interesting to note that while Boen S. Oemarjati was the literary scholar who made the categorization of popular versus serious novels — the literary compartmentalization which in time was used by publishers to get their products received by readers and simultaneously to avoid censorship, Dodong Djiwapradja had been an active member of LEKRA and was a regular delegate of Indonesian authors to attend Asian-African Authors Conferences from 1958 to 1962, together with Rivai Apin, and Utuy Tatang Sontani.<sup>330</sup> However, unlike Rivai Apin who was imprisoned from 1965-1979 for his affiliation with LEKRA, or Utuy Tatang Sontani who was exiled for life from 1965 until his death in Moscow in 1979, or Yudhistira, who was forced to live a destitute life for not being 'personally clean' during the

<sup>327</sup> In the case of Tohari, Tohari often used non-standardized language in his *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*. In addition, pornographic or indecent episodes also appear in the novel. Massardi and Rosidi also did not always follow these guidelines.

<sup>328</sup> Interview with Anastasia Mustika on September 11, 2017 in Jakarta.

<sup>329</sup> Pusat Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan Nasional 2003, p. 103.

<sup>330</sup> Pusat Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan Nasional 2003, p. 102.

second half of the 1970s, Dodong Djiwapradja actually enjoyed the complete opposite situation of a pleasant life being in the center Indonesia's literary scene. Due to their closeness, Ajip Rosidi in his anthology of Sundanese authors, *Apa Siapa Orang Sunda* (2018), even wrote a section on Djiwapradja without ever mentioning his obvious involvement in LEKRA.<sup>331</sup>

To add to the complexity of the situation, a year later, one of the members/judges of the Jakarta Arts Council who selected Ahmad Tohari's novel *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak* was Saleh Iskandar Poeradisastra, a.k.a. Buyung Saleh. He was a writer and former lecturer at the University of Indonesia, and belonged to the Communist Party. On February 13, 1985, the Attorney General Office issued a confidential circular, signed by the head of the directorate of social and politics, Adam Nasution, SH. This circular was addressed to Indonesian IKAPI and its members, basically stating that all manuscripts written by 41 authors listed in the circular should never be published due to their alleged affiliation with the disbanded Communist Party and its teaching. The circular also urged the publishers to remain alert in the event that the authors would use a pseudonym, such as Saleh Iskandar Poeradisastra alias Buyung Saleh, and Hesri Setiawan alias Anom Sosrohardjo. Furthermore, the circular referred to the Instruction of Minister of Domestic Affairs No. 32 tahun 1981 on the re-education and supervision of former political prisoners tied in to the Communist Party, and stated that the publishers must not give employment to former political prisoners or those affiliated with them.<sup>332</sup>

Selecting *Anah Tanahair* for publication was equally easy for Gramedia, particularly because by then Ajip Rosidi was already a big name in Indonesia's cultural sphere. He had been a prolific author 'with his first story published in the children's section of the newspaper Indonesia Raya at the age of 12. By 15, his poems and short stories had been published in prominent magazines like *Siasat* (Strategy), a literary magazine run by an Indonesian poet of the 1945 generation, and *Zenith* (Zenith), a cultural monthly under the editorship of the Indonesian literary custodian, Hans Bague Jassin (1917-2000). 'Researcher Ulrich Kratz said in 1988 that Ajip was the most productive writer in Indonesia, with 326 works published in 22 magazines before 1983, with dozens of titles having been translated to languages like Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, English, French, Croatian, and Russian.'<sup>333</sup> In addition to writing, he also ran Pustaka Jaya, a well-known publishing house which

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<sup>331</sup> See Ajip Rosidi 2018, p. 118 Djiwapradja had also been close to H.B. Jassin, who edited and compiled his poems in *Gema Tanah Air* (1948) and later became his teacher at the Faculty of Arts University of Indonesia in Jakarta from 1951-1952. He also worked as an illustrator for Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (1908-1994), founder of Pujangga Baru, prominent member of Indonesia Socialist Party, a progressive author of numerous books on a range of subjects, and an honorary member of KITLV (1976). In addition, he was also close to W.S. Rendra who with his great admiration lauded Djiwapradja as a poet who was very '*waspada*' (cautious) of his surroundings and observant. See Rendra's introduction to Djiwapradja's poem anthology *Kastalia* (1997: ix).

<sup>332</sup> 'Himpunan Peraturan.' Arsip SUBDITPAKEMBARCET, Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>333</sup> 'Ajip Rosidi: A prolific author, spirited literary activists passes away' in *Jakarta Post*, Friday, July 31, 2020.

in the 1970s and 1980s focused on publishing major pieces of Indonesian literature, replacing Balai Pustaka which from the 1970s had shifted focus to printing and publishing textbooks for elementary and high school students in Indonesia. Furthermore, he served as the chairman of the Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ) for three consecutive periods from 1972-1981 while also chairing the IKAPI from 1973 to 1979. In terms of fame, Rosidi's literary status was already an indication of publishing success.

While it was easy for Gramedia to choose to publish *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* and *Anak Tanahair* — because the publisher did not have to make extra effort to evaluate the content and edit the manuscripts, since both manuscripts had either won awards or were written by a literary giant — *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* was neither famous nor award-winning. The reason that it was written was because the author wanted to overcome his trauma from witnessing the mass killings of 1965-66, something that was common but never openly discussed or recounted. Since writings on the killings were virtually non-existent due to its sensitive nature, *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* was considered to be a courageous breakthrough, and therefore worth publishing. Content-wise, the manuscript offered a new story that would give new insights to Indonesian readers who had been accustomed to the state narrative on 1965 and/or had never heard of the aftermath killings. In other words, the selection of this manuscript relied solely on the imagined 'reading benefit' that readers might get from the novel.

The same sensitive topic was also brought forth by Yusuf Bilyarta Mangunwijaya, popularly known as Romo Mangun (Father Mangun), a writer-cum-Catholic religious leader, in his novel *Durga Umayi* (1991), through which one can also discern the politics of representation and gain insight into the remembrance of the 1965 coup as well as social and political conditions under the New Order regime in Indonesian literature.<sup>334</sup>

Although Mangunwijaya's articles had regularly appeared in *Kompas* daily since 1967, and even his trilogy of *Rara Mendut* (*Rara Mendut*, *Genduk Duku*, and *Lusi Lindri*) was run as a serial from 1982 to 1987, *Kompas* Gramedia did not take the opportunity to choose *Durga Umayi* for publication. Instead, the manuscript was printed and published by the *Tempo*-owned publisher, Pustaka Utama Grafiti which only began in late 1980s and published works written mostly by friends of Goenawan Mohamad, the founder of *Tempo* and one of the signatories of *Manifes Kebudayaan*. Interestingly, while *Tempo*, which was also printed by Pustaka Utama Grafiti, was banned in 1994 for reporting about an internal government split over the apparent corrupt purchase of old East German warships ordered by Habibie, the Minister of Research and Technology and a close friend of Mangunwijaya, *Durga Umayi* managed to slip through the censor's gaze and circulate without any

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<sup>334</sup> Mangunwijaya 1991. The historical background on which the novel was based made this novel categorized also as historical novel. See Taum 2010, pp. 29-48.

repercussions, similar to *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* and *Anak Tanahair*.<sup>335</sup> Apart from the language play that this novel employed, the assumed ‘laziness’ of the state censors contributed to the fact that this novel escaped the net of censorship.

## Editing

As indicated above, *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* and *Anak Tanahair* did not go through massive editing. As a matter of fact, if we rely solely on Ajip Rosidi’s recollection in 2017, *Anak Tanahair* did not go through any editing process at all. Upon arrival in Jakarta after it was ‘stolen’ from Kyoto, the manuscript was immediately sent for publication.

*Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* was a similar case. Considered to have gone through editing processes during the evaluation and assessment by a team of judges from the Jakarta Arts Council, *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* only went through minor revisions prior to publication, both as a serial in the *Kompas* newspaper and then in novel form. In the original manuscript that was completed in Jakarta in July 1977, editing occurs only in few cases of omitting possessive adjectives and correcting prefixes, relative clauses, conjunctions, indirect objects, and minor spelling errors.

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<sup>335</sup> Batubara 2001, p. 3. McCargo, p. 77. See also ‘Sejarah Tempo.’ Available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20150425122726/http://korporat.tempo.co/tentang/sejarah>. [accessed on August 10, 2021].

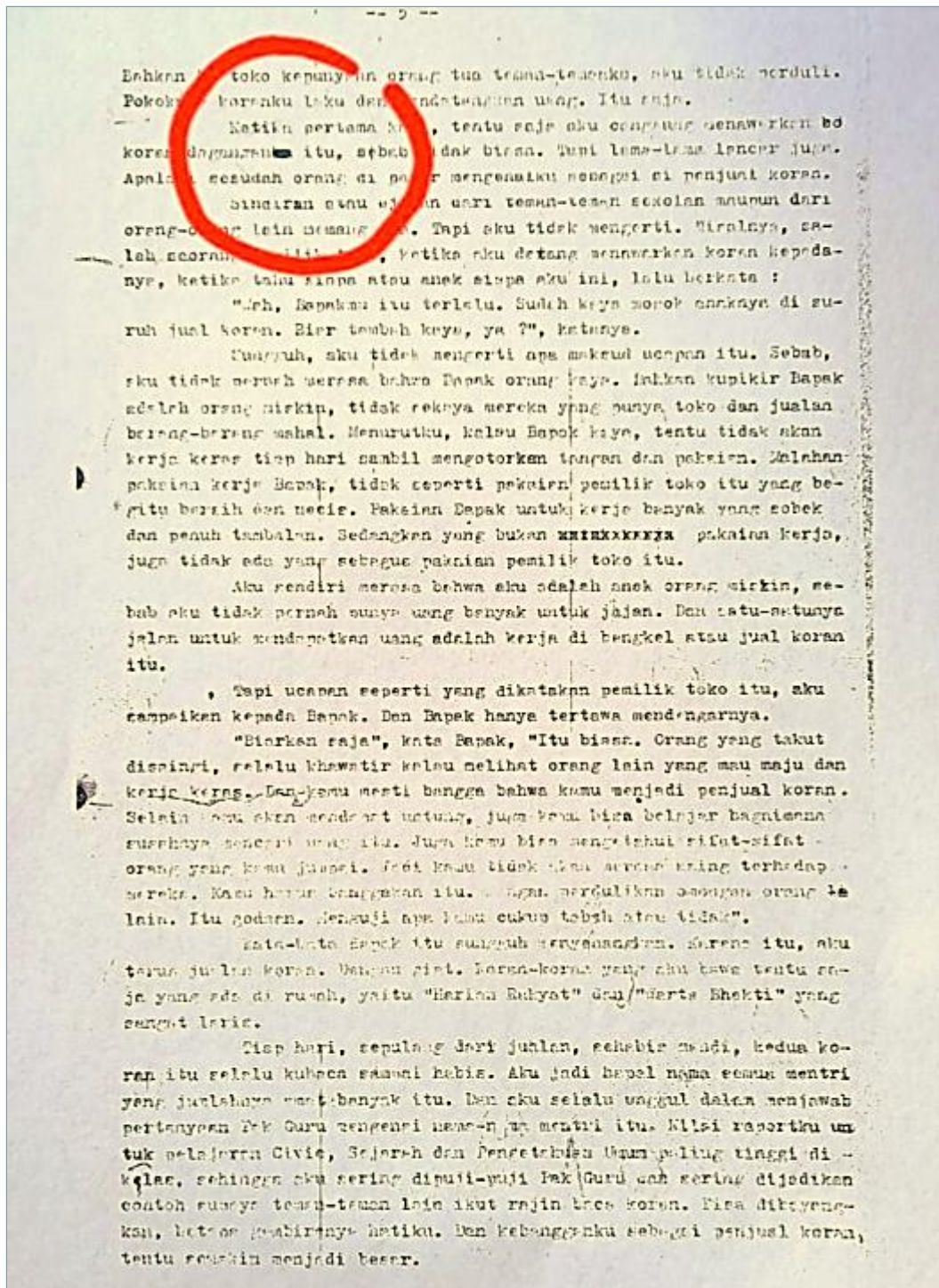



Fig. 1



...kamu? ...  
...sekarang ini? ...  
...sehingga aku betul-  
...yang dia  
...menjadi, namun  
...dibantu. Hanya saja  
...dan ti



2

5

5

5

5

5

Fig. 2



✓  
 sungguh-sungguh telah dijadikan sebagai anak bawang yang penuh ke-  
 genjilan oleh mereka semua. Oleh lingkungan~~ku~~. Dan aku harus men-  
 rima semua itu tanpa bisa menawar lagi, sebab itulah keputusan yang  
 dijatuhkan oleh orang-orang di sekelilingku. Jadi, semakin aku jauh  
 dan dijauhi lingkunganku, semakin jauh pulalah aku kepada diriku  
 sendiri. Aku jadi seperti layangan putus yang terdampar nyangkut  
 di pohon. Melayang terus di angkasa sampai mungkin akhirnya rebek  
 sendiri. Direbek oleh kekuatan alam. ~~Mengetahui bahwa itu memang~~  
~~mengetahui~~  
 Merasakan goyangan-goyangan jadi seperti itu, memang  
 amat berat. Sehingga, kupikir adalah wajar jika banyak ibu-ibu yang  
 runtuhnya dihancurkan, semuanya ditangkap entah dibawa ke mana dan  
 tak tentu menderita lalu menjadi gila. Dan bunuh diri. Aku bisa me-  
 maklumi itu. Tapi tentu saja aku tidak menyangka ada salah ~~seorang~~  
 seorang di antara kami yang bernasib seburuk itu. Aku tidak ingin  
 Ibu atau Bapak menjadi hilang ingatan. Aku ingin semua dari kami  
 tetap sehat dan waras dan sanggup bertahan menghadapi segalanya.  
 Tapi apakah aku sendiri bisa bertahan? Entahlah! Aku ragu.  
 Satu hal yang selama ini memberikan kepercayaan dan  
 sanggup memberi kekuatan pada diriku adalah kenyataan bahwa Bapak,  
 tetap berada di tengah-tengah kami, walaupun rumah kami sudah tiga  
 bulan yang lewat dihancurkan.  
 Aku sendiri merasa heran pada kenyataan itu. Sebab hal  
 Bapak itu sungguh diluar kebiasaan. Biasanya sesudah rumah orang  
 yang betul-betul PKI dihancurkan Bapak atau ibunya atau kedua-dua-  
 nya lalu diciduk, di bawa ke Kodam atau entah dibawa ke mana. Bia-  
 sanya begitu. Dan itu waktunya sangat berdekatan dengan ketika ru-  
 mah itu dihancurkan. Tapi Bapak? Sudah berbulan-bulan ternyata ti-  
 dak ada yang datang dari rumah. Tidak ada tentara atau polisi  
 yang menciduknya atau mengancamkannya. Bapak masih bebas pergi ke ma-  
 na saja.  
 Aku sungguh tidak mengerti itu. Kupikir kalau Bapak be-  
 tul-betul orang komunis, pasti sekarang-sekarang ini sudah tidak  
 berada di rumah lagi. Tapi Bapak tolh tetap di rumah. Jadi, aku pu-  
 nya kesimpulan bahwa Bapak tentu bukan orang PKI, dan aku yakin,

Fig. 3

In figure 1, revision occurs only on the omission of the possessive adjective 'ku' (my) in 'daganganku' which refers to the newspapers that he was selling. The adjective was omitted due to the redundancy with the demonstrative 'itu'. The deletion, therefore, did not change the story.

In figure 2, revisions were made on the misplaced words, i.e. *juga* and *yang*. In this paragraph, the first-person narrator, an eleven-year-old boy, is describing President Sukarno as the charismatic figure he wishes to become — a smart individual and excellent orator without rivals. He ‘*betul-betul ingin menjadi orang seperti dia, sebagaimana **yang juga** diharapkan ibu*’ (He really wants to become a man like Sukarno, just like what mother also wishes for me).

In figure 3, revisions occur due to slight confusion between ‘*di*’ as a preposition and ‘*di*’ as a prefix. In the Indonesian language, ‘*di*’ as preposition is written separately to indicate location while ‘*di*’ as prefix is combined with the verb that follows to indicate passive voice. Throughout the 135 page manuscript, Massardi confused ‘*di*’ as preposition and ‘*di*’ as prefix. While this did not significantly impact the story of the *Aku Bukan Komunis*, the use of this prefix shows that language use of the author limits if not completely deletes the agency of the actor — in such sentence structure, the object becomes the subject, while the original subject was made absent. Things were ‘*disuruh*’, ‘*diservis*’, ‘*dihilangkan*’, ‘*dipenjara*’, ‘*dibunuh*.’ The actors, and in particular the perpetrators, were erased and agency was removed or made invisible.

Content-wise, revisions that were based on the feedback from the editor were absent. Alfons Taryadi, the editor, never seemed to bother to delve into the content and other intrinsic elements of the manuscript, as it had been weighed and assessed by professional literary scholars and authors who were judges of the writing contest. Except for the layout, which concerns production efficiency and pricing, what was typed in the original manuscript is exactly the same as what appeared in the daily serial in *Kompas*, and its novel form published by Gramedia. (Self-)censorship on the part of the editor, therefore, was never put into practice in the case of this novel. The author, however, as indicated above, carried out the practice of self-censorship as he resorted to using passive voice in many of his sentences throughout the manuscript. This use of passive voice demotes the active subject to an optional oblique syntactic position, the immediate effect of which is that the agency of actors was limited or even erased — instead of actors killing people, people disappeared, perished, or died. I will further elaborate this in Chapter 5 when I examine aspects of language in more detail.

Aside from the self-censorship practiced by the author, pre-publication changes by the publisher took place in the renaming of the title. According to Yudhistira, Alfons Taryadi was so worried that readers or the government might put too much focus on the word ‘*Komunis*’ in ‘*Aku Bukan Komunis*’ that they literally ignored the original title of the story, and actually negated what would have been accused of the author or that it actually propagated anti-communist sentiment — ‘I Am NOT a Communist’. Based on the editor’s anxious anticipation, the title was changed to ‘*Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*’ which was immediately approved by both *Kompas* and Gramedia in both serial and novel form.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Interview with Yudhistira Massardi on October 10, 2017, in Pekayon, Bekasi.

Original Covers of *Aku Bukan Komunis* – Pre-publication 1977



Fig. 4

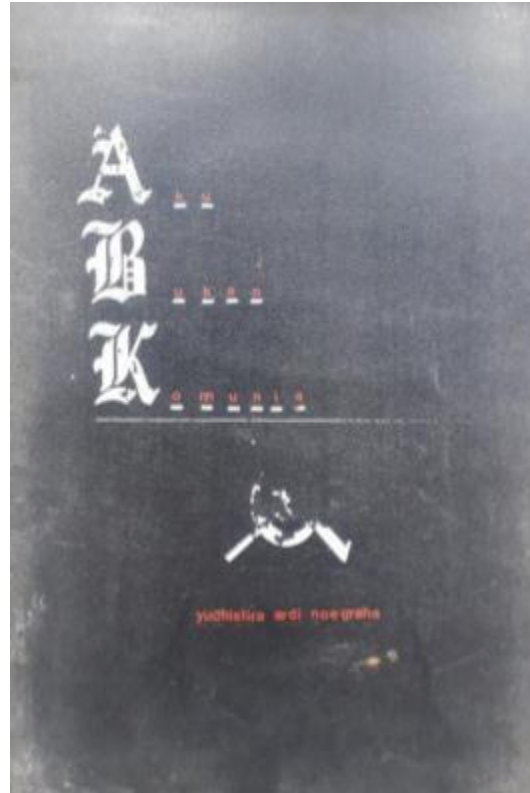


Fig. 5

Figure 4 is the title page of the original manuscript of *Aku Bukan Komunis*.

Figure 5 is the cover of the plastic folder that contained the original manuscript of *Aku Bukan Komunis*. On the bottom center part of the folder was a faded communist insignia in typeface on the cover. This was the folder that Yudhistira sent to both Gramedia for publication and the Jakarta Arts Council for the writing competition, and this was also the same plastic folder that led to me being rounded up by the police officer in Jatinangor for questioning at the local precinct.

Taryadi's anticipation to change the title was in itself the first act of self-censorship to avoid bigger repercussions in the form of state censorship. Yudhistira did not entirely agree to it because that was the title that made him win the competition in November 1977 which was endorsed by the government c.q. the Ministry of Culture and Education of the Republic of Indonesia. Despite the objection, Taryadi went ahead with the new title. His precaution was perhaps effective in getting the novel published, especially since even the smallest thing could draw the ire of the state.<sup>337</sup>

<sup>337</sup> Interview with Yudhistira Massardi on October 10, 2017, in Pekayon, Bekasi.



Fig. 6

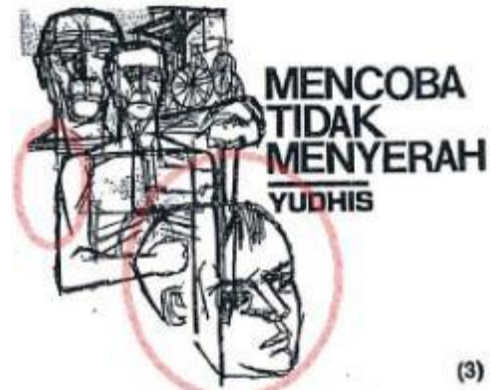


Fig. 7

Figure 6 is an illustration to the serial *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* that appeared in *Kompas* on Monday, October 16, 1978, a year after the original manuscript of the story won the DKJ award. This illustration, however, angered the government, c.q. Ministry of Information who noticed the communist insignia partially hidden behind the forefront male figure in the illustration. The government found out about it on the second day the serial appeared in *Kompas* and on that very day, the government made a phone call to the editor of *Kompas* threatening that the story be removed, or *Kompas* would be shutdown. While probably successful in anticipating the rage that the original title of the story could have provoked, *Kompas* failed to anticipate the fury that resulted from the simple mishap of including the communist symbol. Figure 7 is the illustration that began to accompany the story starting from the third day of its appearance, October 18, 1978. In order to accommodate the demands of the state while preserving a level of independence for the newspaper and respecting readers' wish to continue reading the story, *Kompas* changed the illustration by omitting the hammer and sickle and replacing it with the head of the eleven-year-old narrator-cum-main character in the story. The head shape was intended to distract the reader from noticing what was missing and to focus on the huge head that began to appear on the third day the story was run.

A similar incident took place five years later. On Monday, April 18, 1983, the popular Japanese novel, *Musashi*, was first serialized in *Kompas*.<sup>338</sup> Due to the massive number of pages, it appeared in the newspaper from that day until the following year. Prior to the publication, the novel had been translated from English

<sup>338</sup> "Musashi: Cerber" in *Kompas*, April 18, 1983.



to Indonesian by Koesalah Soebagyo Toer (1936-2016), the brother of Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925-2006). He was hired by *Kompas* to translate the novel through his famous brother's connection with *Kompas*. On the third month of its publication, *Kompas* chief editor at the cultural desk, J.B. Kristanto, informed Koesalah that the government, c.q. the Department of Information under Harmoko, wanted the serialized story removed from print because of the translator's affiliation with the then disbanded communist cultural institute, LEKRA (whereas in fact he was not and had never been associated with LEKRA).<sup>339</sup> Because at the time *Kompas* did not have available an alternative story to replace the serialized *Musashi* — what is more, it had also gained a huge readership, Kristanto negotiated with the Department of Information and came to an agreement that the story could continue as long as the name of the translator was omitted. When the story was published as pocket-size novel in seven volumes, Koesalah's name was still absent. The aftermath of this incident was that not only Gramedia but also other publishers, such as Gunung Agung, Panca Simpati, Sinar Harapan, and even Pustaka Jaya decided not to hire Koesalah Soebagyo Toer for future translation projects — a perfect example of preventive censorship by the publisher.<sup>340</sup>

Among the three authors, Tohari was the only one who had to work extra hard and felt disappointed with the publication of his novel in three series. A year after the third volume of his trilogy had been published, Tohari looked back in anger at the creative process of *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*. He even wrote a six-page essay, *Aku Hamil Mengandung Srintil* (I Was Pregnant with Srintil), which elaborated on the real event that *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* was based on, his personal aim for writing the novel, and his brief mentioning of the editing process which led him to anger and disappointment.<sup>341</sup>

Being conscious and cautious about the perilous story that he was about to tell, Tohari developed, by way of preventive censorship, a unique way of narrating which he called 'mlipir-mlipir' (Javanese words for walking silently on the periphery), which indicates carefulness, constant self-revisions, and simultaneously a direct self-censorship — a practice which he developed when he was an editor for the newspaper *Harian Merdeka* (1979-1981).<sup>342</sup> In an interview in August 2017, he told me that he wanted to protest the government for the injustice that they had committed against their people without having to take the risk of angering them. In

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<sup>339</sup> Interview with J.B. Kristanto on October 3, 2017 in Jakarta.

<sup>340</sup> Interview with J.B. Kristanto on October 3, 2017 in Jakarta. Also see Sidharta 2014. Available at [https://kbr.id/nusantara/10-2014/novel\\_musashi\\_dan\\_cerita\\_eks\\_tapol\\_65/51533.html](https://kbr.id/nusantara/10-2014/novel_musashi_dan_cerita_eks_tapol_65/51533.html) [accessed on August 10, 2021].

<sup>341</sup> Tohari 1987. Private collection of Ahmad Tohari. Unpublished paper presented in 1987 in a seminar organized by Ikatan Keluarga Sastra Indonesia in Rawamangun, Faculty of Arts, University of Indonesia, Jakarta.

<sup>342</sup> *On the Record: Film Transcripts and Biographical Information. Volume 4*. Jakarta: Lontar Foundation, 2004.

addition, he was on his journey to seek a cure for the trauma that was caused by the mass killings of 1965 that he himself witnessed.<sup>343</sup>

He began his journey by writing his novel *Kubah* that was published fifteen years after the massacres. In the novel, he played it safe (perhaps a key reason why he was able to avoid censorship and political repression). *Kubah* tells the story of Karman, a naive young Javanese who, after being unable to handle romantic rejection by the daughter of a pious Haji Bakir, plunges himself into politics and joins the Communist Party. When alleged communists face massacre in 1965, Karman discovers that his closest friends have been killed, and he immediately runs for his life. Finally, though, he is captured and sent to *Pulau B*, where all political prisoners were incarcerated. (*Pulau B* clearly evokes *Pulau Buru*, the most notorious concentration camp where the New Order sent alleged communists). Tohari chronicles the experiences of Karman and his friends, describing in particular detail their experiences of being chased by the military-backed mob and during their imprisonment at *Pulau B*, describing horrors similar to those endured by many accused communists during those years. Presumably aware of the omnipresent regime, Tohari twisted the plot, making his character regret his communist past. Karman decides to return to his village and contribute to society by becoming a very religious man and sharing his expertise and wisdom gained during his imprisonment in *Pulau B*. He helps Haji Bakir make an intricately designed *kubah* for a mosque that the community is building. Karman is depicted as reformed, perhaps even redeemed. Despite the representation of the anti-communist regime's cruelty, this novel ultimately acts as a tool of pro-regime propaganda. After all, it shows that communism only leads to demise, and stresses that through violence the religious state reforms and redeems those who stray from the flock, and in its mercy accepts them back into the fold, saving their souls and bringing them back to righteousness. This strategy of *mlipir-mlipir*, while accommodating the generic narrative of bad communists, proved a success with the regime. Just a year after publication, 1980, the novel won the Yayasan Buku Utama Award from Indonesia's Ministry of Education, which can only be interpreted as an endorsement by the New Order regime.

Tohari used the momentum to write another novel, published in 1982. *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, his second novel, cannot easily be read as an endorsement of the regime. It speaks more bluntly about the 1965-66 killings by making use of elaborate characterization of the main female character, Srintil, a naive and illiterate *ronggeng* (Javanese traditional dancer often associated with eroticism and sexuality), and a male character, Rasus, Srintil's childhood friend and eventually lover-savior. Through Srintil and Rasus, Tohari narrates in detail the events leading up to the 1965 mass killings.

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<sup>343</sup> Interview with Ahmad Tohari on August 10, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas. Also see Yudiono 2003, p. 5-7.

While Tohari's *mlipir-mlipir* proved a great success in his first novel, *Kubah*, leading Pustaka Jaya to publish it, Gramedia's considered Tohari's approach insufficiently accommodating for the final novel of the trilogy. Indeed, the first two volumes of Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk, i.e. *Catatan Buat Emak* (A Note for Mother) and *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari* (Shooting Star) were well received and garnered a huge readership, but the last of the trilogy *Jantera Bianglala* (The Rainbow's Arc) was considered so sensitive that Gramedia refused to print it. The original manuscript of *Jantera Bianglala* detailed the ostracization of the alleged communists and the mass killings, and identified the perpetrators. It portrayed an emotionally damaged Srintil. After two years of imprisonment, she returned to Dukuh Paruk a different person; the society, however, still saw her as a *ronggeng* whom they can pay for pleasure. Srintil refuses to provide sexual services to Marsusi, one of the novel's antagonists, who later threatens to send Srintil back to prison for being an unreformed communist. Srintil is terrified by the threat. This image of a woman forced into sexual servitude and living in fear becomes an allegory for the way accused leftists were stripped of dignity during the Soeharto regime. According to Gramedia, this kind of narrative was not appropriate for the time because the regime was still at the crest of its power.<sup>344</sup>

As Tohari insisted on getting the novel published, negotiation took place between him and his editor Listiana Srisanti.<sup>345</sup> This can easily be compared with the censorship under the German Democratic Republic where most books were 'arranged by negotiations between authors and publishers.'<sup>346</sup> According to Darnton, East German editors often developed friendly relations with authors, who usually worked with the same publishing house, notably in the case of East German contemporary fiction, the *Mittledeutscher Verlag* (MDV) based in Halle and Leipzig.<sup>347</sup> They worked together to improve phrasing and strengthen narratives. This kind of relation was also developed by Tohari and his editor, Listiana Srisanti. However, while the East German relationship remained mostly mutual until the very last stage of publication, which included the selection of paper format, the amount of paper required, the proposed pressrun, and the price, Tohari's relation with his editor was breached when the editor decided that no fewer than 40 pages in the first chapter of *Jantera Bianglala* had to be removed or partially re-written. According to J.B. Kristanto, Tohari was first asked to remove and revise the passages because, according to Gramedia's editor, those passages which Tohari had carefully written and became the central thrust of his novel were too sensitive under the current political condition and too vulnerable to post-publication sanctions.<sup>348</sup>

<sup>344</sup> Interview with Ahmad Tohari on November 6, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas. See also Andita 2018. Available at <https://lokadata.id/artikel/ahmad-tohari-kisah-ronggeng-dan-pembantaian-pki-di-pekuncen> [accessed on 10 August 2021].

<sup>345</sup> Interview with J.B. Kristanto on October 3, 2017 in Jakarta.

<sup>346</sup> See Darnton 2014, p. 157.

<sup>347</sup> Darnton 2014, p. 183.

<sup>348</sup> Interview with J.B. Kristanto on October 3, 2017 in Jakarta. Also see Yudiono 2003, p. 6.

In the beginning, Tohari welcomed and even accommodated the wishes of the editor, while still trying to keep in the essential part of the narrative in the manuscript. But after the seemingly unending revisions, Tohari gave in and followed what the editor had requested, i.e. deleting the part that both implicitly and explicitly mentioned the involvement of the state in the mass killings, including the actors involved.<sup>349</sup> This practice of preventive self-censorship and unbalanced negotiation processes by the publisher hurt Tohari so badly that he expressed his anger and disappointment for the practice in the unpublished essay that he wrote in 1987. In it, he personified the novel as a baby that he had just given birth to. He had been carrying this spiritual baby for so long that he was now ‘*hamil tua*’ (in late pregnancy). Prior to the labor, he had made preparations from gathering strength and resources to asking help from ‘*langit, semut, pelepah pisang tiba-tiba patah dan runduk*’ (the sky, the ants, and the banana stalk that just fell off from its tree — all of which were references to literary producers and publisher).<sup>350</sup> His relief, however, was temporary as he had to ‘amputate’ *Jantera Bianglala*.

‘*Cacatlah dia selama-lamanya. Ya Tuhan, siapa yang senang punya anak cacat. Apalagi cacat itu sebenarnya tidak perlu terjadi?*’

(He is now crippled. Dear Lord, who would want to have a crippled child? It was more painful still, since this did not have to happen to begin with).<sup>351</sup>

In that essay, Tohari continued to lament:

‘*Aku lelah, sakit, dan kecewa. Dan apakah ada orang mau tahu bahwa tiap-tiap lahir sebuah kalimat, bahkan sebuah kata dalam trilogi Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk selalu menguras tenagaku yang cukup banyak?*’<sup>352</sup>

(I am fatigued, ill, and disillusioned. Why wouldn’t they care how much energy it took for me to write a sentence, or even a single word for *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*?)

In the sentence that follows, Tohari even insinuated a practice of self-censorship which he described as ‘*mlipir-mlipir di tengah kemustahilan*’ (walking cautiously amidst impossibilities). He claimed that

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<sup>349</sup> Interview with Anastasia Mustika Widjaja on September 11, 2017 in Jakarta and Interview with Ahmad Tohari on November 6, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas. When I interviewed Anastasia Mustika, I inquired if I could get access to the original manuscript of *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* and its revisions. Mustika responded by saying that manuscripts were always returned to the author. Tohari claimed otherwise. He informed me that he did not keep the manuscript because it was taken by the publisher. Interestingly, the passages that were removed by Tohari and the editor appeared in 2003 print of the novel (now combined in one book). See Tohari 2003.

<sup>350</sup> Tohari 1987, p. 5.

<sup>351</sup> Tohari 1987, p. 5.

<sup>352</sup> Tohari 1987, p. 6.



‘Aku kadang sampai berhari-hari mengernyitkan kening hanya untuk menemukan sebuah kata yang cukup sah mewakili aspirasiku.’

(It took me days just to find a word that would accommodate my aspiration).<sup>353</sup>

The 40 pages that were “*digunting*” (cut) contained what Tohari claimed to be the “*puncak-puncak aspirasiku*” (“the peaks of my aspirations”) and the “*primadona JANTERA BIANGLALA (sic)*” (the prima donna of Jantera Bianglala), without which his novel became lifeless.<sup>354</sup> Tohari’s rumination on which words to choose and what sentences to write for *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, as well as his act of accommodating the hostile political situation under which he was writing his novel, became pointless, as the editor and publisher employed the same caution and preventive self-censorship that Tohari himself had performed during the creative process. Shortly after the novel was published, Tohari accused the editor/publisher of not showing “*penghargaan dan ketulusan mengungkapkan sesuatu yang sebenarnya berada pada dasar hati setiap manusia*” (appreciation and sincerity for someone who is struggling to reveal what lies at the bottom of his heart).<sup>355</sup>

The following screen-captures of *Jantera Bianglala* taken from three different editions will give a sense of the drastic nature of self-censorship from the publisher.

### Ahmad Tohari’s *Jantera Bianglala*



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Figure 8 is a screen-capture from Tohari’s *Jantera Bianglala* that ran as a serial in *Kompas* from September 23, 1985 to October 27, 1985. Figure 9 is taken from the novel that was published in 1986. Figure 10 is taken from the 2003 edition that

<sup>353</sup> Tohari 1977, p. 6.

<sup>354</sup> Tohari 1987, p. 6.

<sup>355</sup> Tohari 1987, p. 6.

compiled the three series into one novel. Due to the changing nature of the political condition in 2003, especially after Reformasi, when freedom of expression returned, Gramedia had decided to reinsert the removed pages to this edition and the editions that followed.<sup>356</sup>

As evident in the screen-captures above, figure 8 and 9 contain the same story, sentences, and words, as they indeed belong to the same manuscript or novel. However, when figure 8 and 9 were compared to figure 10, figure 10 looks as if it belonged to a different novel. The first two paragraphs in the first two figures linger in portraying the destruction of Dukuh Paruk (Paruk hamlet) as something that is natural and already bound to happen, while shying away from mentioning actors. The first paragraph in figure 10, however, was very direct, as it immediately mentions '*tentara, polisi, dan paramiliter*' (the army, the police, and the paramilitary). The sentence that follows reads: '*Tembakan bedil masih terdengar satu dua dari kejauhan.... Ada deru truk berhenti disusul suara langkah sepatu yang berat, lalu berangkat lagi*' (Shots were fired, and heard from afar... Trucks roared and then stopped, followed by the thumping sounds of heavy boots, and then set off again).

The many paragraphs that follow further detail the involvement of the military, the Hansip or civic action, the establishment of detainment centers, military bases, the imprisonment of the accused communists, locking thumbs to restrain prisoners from escaping, their immediate fate after they were transported by trucks, all of which were a '*potret ironi sejarah manusia yang telah membinasakan kemanusiaan itu sendiri*' (irony of mankind who destroyed humanity).

Given the fact that actors were mentioned, it is understandable that these pages were removed from the newspaper serial and earlier edition. Interestingly, it is actually this truncated edition that had made Tohari the way he is today, together with all of his reputation that he enjoys as the 'people's writer' who was willing to take the risk of being accused as communist sympathizer for writing what was not supposed to be written.<sup>357</sup> And like his first novel, *Kubah*, it also won him the Yayasan Buku Utama award in 1986 from Indonesia's Ministry of Education, which can only be interpreted as an endorsement by the New Order regime. On the flip side of it, in the same year Tohari won the award, on July 2 to be precise, he was arrested by the New Order secret police, the KOPKAMTIB, the state body from which most recommendations and even initiatives for book bans came and, therefore, regularly appeared in Attorney General banning decrees. At the military base, in five consecutive days, Tohari was interrogated over his motive for writing the novel. He was also forced to admit that he was part of the PKI.<sup>358</sup>

In the interview I had with Tohari, he admitted that no explanations and answers could satisfy them. It was only on the sixth day that he was released after he showed the interrogators his relation with Abdurrahman Wahid, then the chair of

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<sup>356</sup> Riyanto 2006, p. 20.

<sup>357</sup> Krismantari 2011.

<sup>358</sup> Interview with Ahmad Tohari on August 10, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas.

NU, Indonesia's largest Muslim organization. Shortly after Tohari handed in Abdurrahman Wahid's name and telephone number, the interrogator let him go.<sup>359</sup> Tohari claimed that together with Wahid, in the 27<sup>th</sup> Muktamar (Congress) in 1984 in Situbondo, he formulated and finally concluded NU's acceptance for *Asas Tunggal* (the sole basis), New Order's imposition of the political ideology in the obligation to adopt Pancasila as the basis for all political parties and mass organizations.<sup>360</sup> In the course of Indonesian history, NU has a long reputation of being more accommodating in its interaction with the state. Scholars, notably anthropologists and political scientists writing on Islam in Indonesia in the 1960s and 1970s, attributed NU's politically accommodative stance to the opportunism of the organization.<sup>361</sup> During the period of Guided Democracy, the organization benefitted a great deal from NU's support for Sukarno, especially in the form of huge subsidies that were channeled toward the development of the traditional Islamic schools under the auspices of NU, which in time, with the expansion of the State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) throughout the country, had helped the emergence of a new generation of well-educated, younger NU elite in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>362</sup> Its accommodating role did not seem to fade when the army intervened after the abortive coup in 1965. As a matter of fact, NU leaders welcomed and had hoped for greater access to power within the new regime. It even played a critical role in legitimating the rise of Suharto's New Order regime. As early as October 4, 1965 NU released its first statement regarding the events, calling for the PKI and its affiliates to be banned. In fact, NU and its affiliated bodies had also participated directly in the decimation of the PKI from the rural areas of Java.<sup>363</sup> Support for the New Order regime was also evident in the appointment of Abdurrahman Wahid as a committee member commissioned by NU as a preparation to accept Pancasila as the sole basis of the organization while many other organizations hesitated and even opposed against.<sup>364</sup> This makes it very likely that Tohari's political affiliation with both the top leader and the largest organization in Indonesia had not only enabled him to be rescued from further prosecution, but also kept his *Jantera Bianglala* to remain in circulation.

In connection with the editing process and the predicament that Tohari was put in by the state *vis-à-vis* his imprisonment by KOPKAMTIB which indicates states intervention, the state also intervened before publication was completed.

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<sup>359</sup> Interview with Ahmad Tohari on August 10, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas. Tohari also informed me that the last interrogator comes from the same town as Tohari does. He insinuated this spatial affinity grew sympathy on the part of the interrogator, which in time, led to his release.

<sup>360</sup> Interview with Ahmad Tohari on November 6, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas. See also Riyanto 2006, pp. 43-57.

<sup>361</sup> See Geertz 1960, pp. 228-249; Castles 1966, pp. 30-45; Jones 1980, pp. 1-20.

<sup>362</sup> Kadir 1999, pp. 160-161.

<sup>363</sup> See anonymous publication from Cornell Modern Indonesia Project titled "Report from East Java". This article details the aggression in areas of East Java was published in *Indonesia* no. 41, 1988.

<sup>364</sup> The Union of Indonesian Islamic High School Students (PII) and their prominent patrons such as Deliar Noer, Syafruddin Prawiranegara, and Yusuf Abdullah Puar, were among others who expressed their discontent with this idea. See Thaba 1999, pp. 265-266.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, not all Indonesian publishers were equipped with an editorial board. Many small publishers or those that were extremely profit-oriented ran their publishing house without editorial boards. After collection, manuscripts would immediately be printed without taking into consideration the authenticity of the manuscript or the literary benefit for the readers. This situation motivated the government via the National Book Advisory Council (*Badan Pertimbangan Pengembangan Buku Nasional* – BPPBN) to issue a policy which stated that permits, financial aid, and other publishing facilities would only be granted by the government on the condition that the publishing house employed skilled editors and correctors. Responding to this policy, in November 1980, the Indonesian Publishers IKAPI organized a workshop and training for manuscript editors. Participants, all 34 of them, came from 24 publishers in Jakarta. The advisory council, consisting of editors from major publishing houses, argued that skilled editors would result in quality books that were in conformity with the state interests.<sup>365</sup>

### **Novel Print: Size and Layout**

In addition to editing, choosing size and layout was inherently a practice of self-censorship by the publisher in order to avoid post-publication censorship by the state. The decision would determine to which literary stream one novel belonged. Generally, popular novels in the 1970s and 1980s were printed in pocket-book size, i.e. 11 x 8 cm, with which the font and its size were adjusted, either roman or sans serif size 12 or 11. In addition to these elements, the width of the text, margin, and spacing were adjusted in accordance with the size of the paper. This small size goes back to the tradition of printing *roman pitjisan* or *cerita silat* in the 1930s and 1950s as a form of pragmatism of saving papers, and other operational printing costs. And for readers, such novels were also very practical. This in time became inherent aspects of popular novels, in addition to their popularity and minimum literary quality.

A distinction in size was made in the publication of literary novels. Fonts and size might be the same; however, literary novels were printed in bigger size, i.e. 21 x 15. Almost all novels published by Balai Pustaka and Pustaka Jaya in the 1970s and 1980s were printed in this size, including: Ramadan KH's *Kemelut Hidup* (1977), Mochtar Lubis's *Berkelana dalam Rimba* (1980), Putu Wijaya's *Nyali* (1983), *Gerr* (1986) and *Dor* (1986), and Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Bumi Manusia* (1980), *Anak Semua Bangsa* (1981), *Jejak Langkah* (1985), and *Rumah Kaca* (1988). Ajip Rosidi's short story anthologies *Perjalanan Pengantin*, volumes of poems, and translations were all printed in this size by prominent literary publishers, such as Gunung Agung and Pustaka Jaya. The only exception was his novel, *Anah Tanahair*, printed by Gramedia, in pocket-book size, making it fall under the category of

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<sup>365</sup> Badan Pertimbangan Pengembangan Buku Nasional 1980, p. 6.

popular novel despite Ajip Rosidi's unparalleled literary expertise and authority. It is interesting to note that when Rosidi had *Anak Tanahair* reprinted in 2008, this time by Pustaka Jaya, the novel layout was changed and re-sized into the size of literary novels.

Equally relevant was the book cover, which contained illustrations and, therefore, reflected the content of the novel. Novels of the 1970s and 1980s took this issue very seriously because illustration, layout, and size determined the category of the novel. Literary novels of these decades were almost always accompanied with abstract images or even without any illustration whatsoever, whereas popular novels tended to embrace a much more concrete drawing. The cover of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Bumi Manusia* only displayed the title and the author's name, whereas *Kabut Sutura Ungu* featured a contemporary Indonesian actor and actress who supported the filmmaking. According to Agus Dermawan, the cover did not guarantee the quality of the novel; however, the popular novel was consistent in presenting illustrations that suggested contents that were light, banal, and cliché.<sup>366</sup>

Technical matters in the publishing industry in their relation to state censorship mattered greatly. The existing premise was that the smaller the size of the novel, the less literary quality it possessed. Novels in pocket size were assumed to overlook literary quality and not offer in-depth or critical understanding of things (*tanpa pendalaman*), and were often considered to only provide entertainment to an exclusive group of readers, mostly female adults and teenagers (junior high school and senior high school students).<sup>367</sup> Regarding the print and size, *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, and *Anak Tanahair* were printed in pocket size, and critics have accordingly categorized them into this category. This was in part the publisher's decision as one way to navigate through the repressive state censorship.

## Conclusion

The New Order government had an ambivalent attitude towards the publishing industry in Indonesia. On the one hand, it defended the interest of the media and publishing industry by providing subsidies for things ranging from reducing the price of prints and publication, to transportation, low-interest credit for purchasing printing machines, and training on management, reporting, writing, and editing techniques. But on the other hand, the government curbed the development of the industry through the regulation on publishing permits, so as not to become so large that it was difficult to control. The policy was run by the Ministry of Information, along with the Ministry of Trade, which regulated the paper and ink industry — two main

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<sup>366</sup> Dermawan 1981.

<sup>367</sup> Sumardjo 1979, p.10. Also see, '*Buku Novel*' 1977, p. 47-48. In addition, research conducted by the Center for Language Training and Development of the Universitas Indonesia found that romantic novels were most favored by teenagers, reaching a high percentage of 80.92 percent of the total 10,500 surveyed, whereas women popular novels that centered on household issues, and romance were favored by female adults as they offered solution to problems that the readers might have also faced. Nasution 1977, p. 63. See also Oemarjati 1979, p. 134.

ingredients for the publication — and the Ministry of Defense, which was responsible for domestic politics and security. They also controlled publications by selecting people who would sit in business and professional organizations that were recognized by the government. In this regard, the publisher and the state were two sides of the same coin. They might seem to contradict each other, contesting strength, and exercising power; however, the publisher was actually an inherent part of the state, and for that matter of the politics of censorship.

The historical development of publishing industry under the New Order shows that the publisher served as agent of development as well as partner of the government. They both encouraged the production of ideas by means of publication, while at the same time they kept such production of ideas from coming into being (complete). Novels were the products of a complex historical interaction that involved storytellers, their audiences, and a publishing industry interactively patronized, supported, or controlled by the state, and the larger society to which they belonged. They were inextricably linked with the history of censorship that shaped these novels, as censorship was internalized by both the publisher/editors and authors.

Finally, although internalized censorship owes its origin to state-imposed censorship, the internalized preventive censorship carried out by editors in Gramedia, as well as the authors, was distinct from state censorship, as it was generally negotiable, personal, and without visible sanctions. The editor and author or translator probed the limit of tolerance with state rules, and tried to discover what they could get away with. By removing pages, changing titles, and deleting illustrations, the editor handled its relations with authorities and avoided the infliction of adverse consequences on the author as well as the publisher.

## Chapter 5

### Literary Mode: Narrative, Perspective, and Language

“I wanted to prove that I could also write in a language those literary ‘gurus’ use.”

Yudhistira Massardi<sup>368</sup>

In a conversation on March 27, 2019 about the inspiration behind the writing of *Aku Bukan Komunis* (later edited into *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*), Massardi claimed that as an author he was equipped with the ability to write like those literary gurus who excelled in contemporary Indonesian literary scene — using a language that was refined, authentic, and organized (*tertib*), a language that mimicked contemporary literary modes and conventions. However, records show that, from the beginning of his literary career until right before the publication of *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, Massardi had always been associated with ‘un-literariness’ and a refusal to adhere to literary norms (*bebas-terbang layang*).<sup>369</sup> He was also accused of not having the literary expertise to bring about serious social and cultural themes in his works, despite his previous award-winning novels and play. In the light of this literary bias, *Aku Bukan Komunis*, which elaborated on personal memory, social trauma, and state power, was intentionally written as Massardi’s own way of refuting those authoritative figures and producers who kept pushing him to the sideline.

Moving on from the publishers and editors, in this chapter I focus on the writers and explore how and why they used particular strategies to ensure that they could tell the stories they wished to tell. I examine the novels at the heart of this study by looking at both contents and narrative techniques, together with the creative tactics that were used by the authors to link their experiences and observation, as well as the social, cultural, and political discourses that overlay their stories. For this, I incorporate into my analysis a narratological framing that relies heavily on the ideas and terminology developed by Gerard Genette (1930-2018), a French structuralist literary theorist, in combination with New Historicist approach that was first developed in the 1980s primarily through the work of the literary historian Stephen Greenblatt (1943- ).<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Online conversation with Yudhistira Massardi on March 27, 2019 on the motif behind writing *Aku Bukan Komunis*. “Tujuan awalnya nulis ‘hanya’ utk sayembara, yg terbayang cuma para juri. Maka, ya harus nulis sebagus dan seotentik mungkin. Nggak mikir yang lain. Yang sangat dipikirkan adalah bgm menulis novel baru yang formatnya sama sekali berbeda dgn Arjuna Mencari Cinta (yg sdh juara sebelumnya). Jadi dari segi bentuk dan terutama Bahasa, harus lebih ‘tertib’ dari AMC. Itu utk membuktikan, selain bisa nulis ‘bebas-terbang layang’, aku juga bisa nulis dengan para ‘guru bahasa’.”

<sup>369</sup> See for example *Horison* May 1978 No. 5 Tahun XIII, p. 135. This issue presented, a debate about Massardi unworthiness as an author who did not deserve to win literary award, nor to be juxtaposed or put on the same level with Indonesian literary giants.

<sup>370</sup> Genette 1980; Gallagher and Greenblatt 2000.

Narratology is a useful tool for categorizing different techniques used in literature — allowing for an examination of why authors chose a specific narrative strategy in the course of telling a story, and whether their choice, for example, suggests a difficulty in expressing a certain topic or dealing with specific issues and/or ideas (in this case, the Indonesian massacre). In *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* Genette divides his narrative theory into five different categories, namely, order, frequency, duration, voice, and mood. Due to concerns with perspective and narration, my main narratological focus will be on voice and mood. Voice, according to Genette, refers to the narrator of a story, whereas mood deals with the issue of point of view and is based on the character(s) ‘whose point of view orients the narrative perspective (or focalization).’<sup>371</sup> One of the most important sets of terms regarding voice is Genette’s division of narrators into three different types: ‘heterodiegetic’, commonly known as a third-person narrator, one who is entirely external to the action of the story; ‘homodiegetic’, a first-person narrator who is not the protagonist of that particular narrative; and ‘autodiegetic’, a first-person narrator who is also the protagonist.<sup>372</sup> This distinction is important, since the narrator’s capacity for knowledge regarding a certain situation and what takes place varies widely, depending on whether the narrator is a witness or participant in events, or is relaying what she or he has been told. Similarly, the mood or focalization of the narrative can also have a strong impact on the amount and type of information that is conveyed to readers. It comes in two different types: external and internal, each of which limits and/or allows access to the character’s thoughts and perceptions.

Equally crucial to the examination of the novel in this chapter is the New Historicist approach. New Historicism, which emphasizes the historical nature of literary texts, locates the novels within the social, political, and aesthetic contexts in which they were produced, and breaks down the distinctions between a text and its historical background as conceived in previous forms of criticism that views work of literature as a self-contained, self-referential aesthetic object. The New Historicist approach is concerned with ‘finding creative power that shapes [these novels] since their significance can be fully grasped only in relation to the other expressive possibilities with which it interacts.’<sup>373</sup> This approach, therefore, enables one to display a broad historical context for analyzing literature and allows for the examination of how the work is a reflection of the times in which the author wrote it, and the socio-political circumstances that might either encourage or hinder writing. By means of this approach, I argue that the texts are not exclusively self-referential but should also be seen in a complex societal context.

In this regard, Massardi’s style and grammatical preference which I briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, were not, I argue, simply a matter of sentence structure commonly used and found in Indonesian texts. Instead, they present a strong indication of a pre-existing serious issue in language use and probable narrative

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<sup>371</sup> Genette 1980, p. 186.

<sup>372</sup> Prince 1982, p. 103.

<sup>373</sup> Gallagher and Greenblatt 2000, p. 13.



tactic on the part of the author. In connection with state censorship, they can, thus, be regarded as one of the author's own anticipations and forms of preventive censorship. The moment he automatically resorted to using the repetitive passive voice, he was maneuvering with some kind of socially controlled form of speech in order to deal with the issue of agency. Exposing agency under the repressive socio-cultural setting where the novel was produced was considered overly sensitive and might have posed dire repercussions. In this specific case, passive voice operated as a means to stay clear of state censorship, because this sentence structure could distance the actors from their action, to the point that it might have even erased such agency completely (e.g. instead of the active voice clearly stating 'I do something' or 'he did something', the passive voice ambiguously states 'something was done' without clarifying who performed the action). In addition to this grammatical choice, Massardi used a narrative strategy for his novel by choosing an eleven-year-old boy as the narrator-agent, who with all of his innocence, naivety, lack of wisdom or judgement, recounts the tragic tale of the treacherous political situation, conflicts, disappearance, and mass killings.<sup>374</sup> Suggesting such innocence, Massardi's narrator falls under a narratological category of 'unreliable narrator,' as he possessed varying degrees of deceptiveness and/or mistaken beliefs in his own qualities and perceptiveness that diverged from those of the implied author's, all of which might have eventually helped Massardi to avoid state censorship.<sup>375</sup>

My close, critical reading of the rest of the novels shows that such use of narrative strategy and/or language play was not necessarily unique to Massardi, since it was also shared by the other two authors. Ahmad Tohari and Ajip Rosidi, among the few authors who recollected and wrote an account set against the background of the Indonesian killings of 1965-1966 in a light that is somewhat different from what the New Order has prescribed, formulated similar ways of recounting the unspeakable.<sup>376</sup> Tohari, as briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, developed by way of preventive censorship a unique style of narration which he called '*mlipir-mlipir*', which indicates carefulness, constant self-revisions, and simultaneously, direct self-censorship. Being the only author that comes from a culturally rich area in central Java but had never been known for literary expression, Tohari also brought local color into his story (in addition to using the passive voice like Massardi). He filled his first two volumes of the trilogy with extensive cultural references, a narration

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<sup>374</sup> Narrator-agent is a narrator who is a character in the situations and events recounted, and has some measurable effect in them. See, Ducrot and Todorov 1979.

<sup>375</sup> Booth 1983, pp. 158-159.

<sup>376</sup> In the late 1960s, short stories on 1965 were published in *Horison* and *Sastra*, written by authors such as Satyagraha Hoerip, Gerson Poyk, Usamah, Umar Kayam, Martin Aleida, Ki Panjikusmin. These short stories, however, were written in a uniformed tone that confirm the state narrative of the event — putting the blame solely on the communist, and giving no ample room for them to speak. Throughout the first half of 1970s writing about it was virtually absent. Only in late 1970s and the 1980s, longer works that recognized the mass killings and the violence that followed were written. The recognition, however, was indirect and subtle. Three of the novels are the center of analysis of this chapter.

mixed with Javanese words, and detailed depictions of nature and tradition.<sup>377</sup> The setting was so detailed that Tohari's biggest critic at the time of the publication was a botanist who was also an editor at some wildlife magazine.<sup>378</sup> The most controversial and experimental part of the story came only much later, which suggests an intended delay of language play on the part of the author in order not to become too direct or politically subversive for recounting the tragic event, nor to appear as communist sympathizer to avoid bigger repercussion from the state.

Furthermore, in a rather perplexing way of telling, Tohari alternates between various narrators in the course of telling a story of *Ronggeng Duku Paruk*. Tohari first used the heterodiegetic or all-seeing/third-person narrator and then changed to, and alternated between, a homodiegetic narrator, a first-person narrator who is not the protagonist of the novel, and autodiegetic narrator, a first-person narrator-cum-protagonist. This choice of narrative strategy can be read as not merely a linguistic decision, but as having social and political motivation. In a similar vein, Mangungwijaya's *Durga Umayi* was wrapped in a wayang-style narrative, with complex language, obscure references, and run-away sentences, a mad rush of narrative reflecting and refracting Indonesia's tumultuous history over decades. To add to the complex narrative style, Mangungwijaya tells his story through a protagonist with many names, making it difficult for reader to stay in the storyline.

As for Rosidi, he wrote *Anak Tanahair*, a novel that has distinct autobiographical characteristics, as an attempt to see the 'naked truth with regard to civil society's role in the massacre while simultaneously implying the crucial part of the army in the massacre.'<sup>379</sup> It was 'a realistic historical novel, in part a historical documentary, and peopled by actual historical figures, either under their own names or thinly disguised behind pseudonyms.'<sup>380</sup> To achieve his goal, Rosidi crafted multiple first-person narrators, shifted between them when narrating the first two parts of the novel, and ended the final part by using an epistolary approach, which is a narrative technique that pertains to letters intended to give the reader immediate access to the head of the character/narrator and minimize narratorial mediation. In addition, it becomes one means for the implied author to let go off his authorial responsibility and to detach from his account.

In this light and in connection to my thesis' central question, I argue that the reason that these sensitive-themed novels were published can be tied to the language play and narrative strategies that were molded into a method of preventive censorship which was (in)-directly and subtly applied by these authors. As language can be used to construct events and personages with qualities they do not or did not

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<sup>377</sup> Setting is defined as the spatiotemporal circumstances in which the events of a narrative occur. Setting may be textually prominent or negligible, consistent or inconsistent, vague or precise, presented objectively or subjectively. Furthermore, it can be utilitarian (every part of it has a function in the action), symbolic (of a conflict to come), and so forth. Chatman 1978; Grimes 1975; Prince 1982.

<sup>378</sup> Floribertus Rahardi, vice chief editor of *Trubus*.

<sup>379</sup> Hoadley 2005, p. 53.

<sup>380</sup> Foulcher 1990, p. 106.

possess, the authors produced or attributed characters that would either challenge or conform to the general narrative that existed during the period of the novels' publication. For example, in order to be able to tell the story of ideologically sinful Srintil, Tohari created a second main character that was almost a paragon, and ascribed to him the personal power of a savior, as he was a member of the army. Such choices proved effective in facilitating publishing.

Complementing these surreptitious techniques aimed at publishing works, I explore the novels in relation to the experimental use of language. For instance, I examine the character's use of vocabulary and passive constructions in order to shift focus from the actors to mere actions, and the author's choice to use an epistolary narrative style. This provides an immediacy that immerses the reader in the character's head, in the character's emotions and psychology, while on another more removed level, allowing the author to wield the power of details, imagery, and other rhetorical devices in 'anticipation of currying reward and avoiding punishment.'<sup>381</sup> These techniques and strategies play with tone, mood, voice, literary and cultural traditions, and rhetoric in subtle and ambiguous ways for both literary and political effects. Before going into the analysis of language play and the historical contexts that situate the novels and the authors in a larger socio-cultural framework, I begin my analysis by providing a summary of each novel in order to show how each story relates to the 1965-66 massacre.

## **Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk**

### **Synopsis**

The trilogy tells the days of mid-1960s Indonesia through a love story between Srintil and Rasus in Paruk, a hamlet in Central Java that struggles to keep up with the changing world as it is drawn into the turbulent situation, following the abortive Communist coup in Indonesia.

The first volume of the trilogy narrates the birth of a *ronggeng*, a traditional dancer that is also often associated with fertility and, thus, prostitution, in a remote Dukuh Paruk, a hamlet of twenty-three houses where everyone was related.<sup>382</sup> For eleven years 'since the time when many inhabitants, including the former *ronggeng*, had died from food poisoning after eating *tempe bongkrek* (fermented soybean cake, or tempeh)' that Srintil parents made and were also killed by, Dukuh Paruk had been a backward, barren, and lifeless land.<sup>383</sup> Upon hearing that Srintil, the main character, who was only eleven years old, was chosen by the *indang* (the dancing spirit) to revive the *ronggeng* tradition, the villagers became delighted and hopeful

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<sup>381</sup> Lee 1998, pp. 55-73. See also Skjerdal 2008, pp. 185-206.

<sup>382</sup> According to Damono, the first critic to ever comment on the novel, Dukuh Paruk, the setting of the novel, is depicted in such a way that it appears to be a *negeri dongeng*, a fairy land, that Tohari, the author, knows so well — as if Tohari was an inhabitant. Damono, 1983.

<sup>383</sup> Arnez 2017, p. 132.

that the hamlet would be finally be saved from starvation and recuperate its old fame. Equally central to the story was the 14-year-old Rasus, Srintil's fast friend, who was, like Srintil, orphaned due to the *tempe* poisoning. It was in Srintil's self that Rasus found the reflection of a mother he never knew and longed for. The mother image, however, was broken when he realized that he could not have Srintil for himself. In line with the village customs, Srintil was 'not only expected to perform dance and invite men to join in, but also to offer sexual services' to those who dared pay.<sup>384</sup> As Srintil blended into tradition and could not escape it, Rasus turned his back on the village — leaving behind Srintil and the image of the mother. He went to a neighboring town, Dawuan, where he entered military service and eventually became a changed and enlightened man.<sup>385</sup>

The second volume depicts Srintil's disappointment after Rasus left. She became ill and refused to dance anymore, which led to Dukuh Paruk's gradually losing its fame and life again. Until one day, 'prior to the events of 1965, Bakar, an official of PKI, entered her life and persuaded her to perform publicly as a *ronggeng rakyat* (dancer of the people),'<sup>386</sup> replacing the long-established title *ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, in order to garner sympathy for the political party he was linked to. She became more 'political' and appeared even closer to Bakar and his activities — performing more frequently as *ronggeng rakyat* in the PKI general meetings, propaganda events, and parades — gathering crowds and mobilizing people.<sup>387</sup> Furthermore, together with the villagers, she even welcomed the erection of communist flags and symbols at the entrance of Dukuh Paruk. This volume ends with a brief reference to the aborted coup of 1965, the killings of the general, and, subsequently, the imprisonment of Srintil and her troupe members for their political activities. Srintil did not understand the intricacies of politics and in the end was forced to accept reality as a victim of the chaos in life. Her detention became the turning point of an important change in the course of her life as a *ronggeng*.

As an immediate continuation of volume two, volume three begins with the depiction of ruins. In early 1966, Dukuh Paruk was in its worst condition. Houses were burned down and their owners were deprived of their livelihood and their leaders. While the rest of the troupe members were finally released a few months after they were first detained, Srintil remained in a military detention camp in Dawuan. After two years of imprisonment and harassment, Srintil returned to Dukuh Paruk but never recovered from the horrible experience. What is more, her new

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<sup>384</sup> Arnez 2017, p. 132.

<sup>385</sup> Interview with Ahmad Tohari on August 10, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas. Dawuan, a district in Banyumas, plays a historical significance in Tohari's creative process. Regarding his brief detainment in Jakarta in 1986, the interrogator who finally let him go after a series of questioning at the KOPKAMTIB had the same background. He came from Dawuan. Tohari claimed that the spatial affinity that he and the interrogator had, and the unique linguistic background, had made him spare Tohari's life.

<sup>386</sup> Arnez 2017, p. 132.

<sup>387</sup> General meetings, *rapat umum*, were events regularly organized by the Communist Party to break down and explain the party programs to its constituents. To attract large masses, these meetings often included art performances. See Aidit 1955.

status as a former political prisoner rooted out the dignity and humanity she ever had, leaving her forever ostracized and under constant threat. Then Rasus reappeared on the scene — ending the novel with the return of the military man-cum-savior to Dukuh Paruk to save both Srintil and Dukuh Paruk.

## Analysis

When writing *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, Tohari was motivated by two things: (a) the ghost of the young woman whom he personally knew, an alleged communist who was harassed, abused, silenced, and left to suffer until her demise, and (b) the fear of censorship that has left many Indonesians in the dark about the mass killings.<sup>388</sup> In the New Historicism, the context of a literary work and the details that surround it help determine the ultimate meaning of the text. What lies on the outside is of equal importance to the words on the page. In this light, Tohari's encounter in his teenage years with a *ronggeng* he would not dare to name (except for giving her initial, B) became the pivotal point from which the story of *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* was developed, combined with other materials that existed in the social realities of the author, which he incorporated in his creative works and manifested as a network of relation between facts and fiction.<sup>389</sup> Here, in line with the New Historicist approach which is concerned 'with finding the creative power that shapes literary work since its significance can be fully grasped only in relation to the other expressive possibilities with which it interacts,' *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* does not exist in a vacuum, but instead interacts within a historically and culturally specific context.<sup>390</sup> It speaks about and on behalf of 'B' together with all the historical and sociopolitical events that surrounded her, including the repressive nature, i.e. rampant censorship, under which the story was produced.<sup>391</sup>

Looking back at the creative process, Tohari called the writing of *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* as pouring into writing an accumulation of memory. He was seventeen when the coup broke out and the massive violent aftermath followed. Despite its prevalence — known by many but spoken only in silence, Tohari was aggravated by the absence of written accounts from authors whom he thought would bring about better and more comprehensive writings about the tragedy, such as Goenawan Mohamad, Rosihan Anwar, and Mochtar Lubis. He thought that it would have been a great mistake if this tragedy had never been recorded in Indonesian history. After a

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<sup>388</sup> Interview with Ahmad Tohari on August 10, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas. See also Riyanto 2006, p. 46.

<sup>389</sup> *Ronggeng* is Javanese traditional (erotic) dancer-singer performing for money. The fact that *ronggeng* sometimes offered sexual services fosters the image of *ronggeng* as prostitutes. See Ahmad Tohari. 1987. *Aku Hamil Mengandung Srintil*. Unpublished paper presented in 1987 in a seminar organized by Ikatan Keluarga Sastra Indonesia in Rawamangun, Faculty of Arts, University of Indonesia, Jakarta Personal document. Also, "The novel came from my own experience when I was a teenager. I changed the name; but she was definitely the *ronggeng* that I portrayed in the novel — detained and harassed by the military that run the prison." Interview on August 10, 2017.

<sup>390</sup> Gallagher and Greenblatt 2000, p. 13.

<sup>391</sup> Tohari 1987.

little waiting of more than a decade and seeing that no single Indonesian influential author would write about it, Tohari took matters into his own hand. “If not me, then who?” is the rhetorical question that he returns to when asked about his decision to write.<sup>392</sup> He then left his job as chief editor in *Harian Merdeka* in Jakarta and went back to Banyumas, his hometown in Central Java, the very place where he witnessed all the atrocities, to start writing about the haunting memories. He attempted to give meaning to his personal experiences. Even if his story failed to inform on the factual elements of historical events, it would still shed light on the prevailing ways of thinking or doing at that specific period.

Equally important to addressing dark pages of the past that were swept under the rug by the New Order regime, the writing of *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* also worked as a treatment for the trauma that Tohari had been suffering from for years since he witnessed the mass killings. Tohari analogized the feeling of having completed the book with the feeling of a mother who just gave birth — exhausted but relieved.<sup>393</sup> In this regard, he looked at history not as an explanation of events that happened in the past, but instead as a complex description of human reality.

Tohari gave B a new name, completed her story in 1980, and introduced her to Indonesian readers first through a serial in *Kompas* and, later, in novel form published by Gramedia in 1982. After its first publication, *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, consisting of three volumes *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk: Catatan buat Emak* (1981), *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari* (1984), and *Jantera Bianglala* (1985) was reprinted twice, in 1986 and 1988 — an indication that, according to Indonesian publishing standards at the time, it had a relatively large readership. Such readership was also evident in the number of translations of the trilogy into English, Dutch, and Japanese immediately after the original versions came out. The appearance of *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* on the cultural landscape strengthened the presence of local color in Indonesian fiction, and reflected the popularity of literary works that engaged with political history.<sup>394</sup>

In *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, Tohari kept the story very simple and told it in chronological order. As a novel, the first volume could stand alone as a complete story. It is a novel about unrequited love, which was a common theme that appeared in Indonesian popular novels of the 1970s and 1980s. Alternatively, it could also be read as a novel about a character with a mother complex, as the protagonist’s preferences were based on the actions and personality of his mother projected in his female counterpart. However, the novel was the first of a series, and Tohari used it as an opening to the second novel in which he signaled the beginning of a humanitarian disaster, and to the third novel in which he elaborated on the dark pages of Indonesian history that were almost always overlooked in writing published at the time — hence, its rather sensitive nature.

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<sup>392</sup> Riyanto 2006, p. 42.

<sup>393</sup> Tohari 1987.

<sup>394</sup> Riyanto 2006, p. 13; Yudiono 2003, p. 8.

This first volume begins with a lengthy description of natural landscapes of a remote hamlet surrounded by fields and paddy that have been dry for seven months due to prolonged drought. With the closest residential areas, the hamlet is only connected by a network of dikes that are almost two kilometers long. In addition, a detailed description was also given to the tomb of Ki Secamenggala, which was located on a small ridge in the middle of the hamlet, considered sacred and the mecca of the mystical life of all its citizens which also insinuates the village's isolation from both knowledge and modernity. Such isolation, however, led Dukuh Paruk to develop its own value system, created and maintained by its people. While one may feel that this lengthy description of the setting and use of stylistic tools with constant reference to local languages, in particular Javanese, were rather tedious, these were the tools Tohari used to safely gain readership and were actually in accordance with Tohari's intended lack of assertion to avoid being too obvious in presenting a grim theme that had never been written about. As Tohari himself described, this is a practice of *mlipir-mlipir*, where he tiptoed on the periphery before he finally would mount a protest against the injustice that the government had directed towards its citizens without having to directly challenge the regime or draw too much attention.<sup>395</sup>

Furthermore, Dukuh Paruk became a favorable setting for Tohari to work on the plot and characters. Tohari, the implied author who also acted as the narrator, did very well in the first part of the four sections of the novel as he narrated the story in simple language, with most sentences presented in bite-size chunks. And as a means to tell the story, Tohari seemed to have worked consciously with shifting narrators through whom perspectives and narratives were oriented.<sup>396</sup> In the first chapter of the first volume, the narrator is omniscient and was not involved directly in the story as a character. This was intended to take the readers by the hand as he 'gave the floor to his character,' introduced the main characters, Srintil and Rasus, and dove deeper into or played with their characterizations.<sup>397</sup> Portraying Srintil and Rasus, as eleven and fourteen-year olds, respectively, Tohari highlighted his characters' flaws in judgment regarding events taking place around them and simultaneously took advantage of their unreliability in narrating such events. In narratology, an unreliable narrator, like Rasus, is defined as a narrator 'whose norms and behavior are not in accordance with the implied author's norm; a narrator whose values (tastes, judgments, and moral sense) diverge from those of the implied author's.'<sup>398</sup> In this case, this in itself can be interpreted as a literary disclaimer on the part of the author, which insinuates that the author gives up his claim to the information given in the novel, or that the author has no direct involvement in it.

After breaking down the setting and introducing the characters in the first 43-page long chapter, Tohari abruptly switched his narrator. Shifting from the implied

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<sup>395</sup> Interview with Ahmad Tohari on August 10, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas.

<sup>396</sup> Genette 1980, p. 186.

<sup>397</sup> Genette 1980, p. 172.

<sup>398</sup> Prince 1982, p. 103.

author or the all-knowing narrator, Tohari now let Rasus, who is also the main character, recount the story of Srintil, the tradition that his village held, his love for Srintil, his longing for his mother's image, and the projection that he sees in Srintil, as well as his disappointment in the traditions that his village held. From the second chapter to its final part of the first volume, Rasus took charge and recounted the situations and events in his very own limited perspective as both a first-person narrator and a fourteen year old infatuated with Srintil.

In the second volume, after Rasus left Dukuh Paruk, the narrative technique shifted back to the all-knowing narrator. In this volume, Srintil claims her narrative position as the main character. Throughout the novel, she is portrayed as the most beautiful woman in Dukuh Paruk, gaining great attention from all its residents. Wealthy and respected men were coming from neighboring villages, willing to pay dearly to vent their lust. Despite great fortune, Srintil was conflicted, particularly because Rasus' departure led to a change in Srintil's characterization — from longing, to being disappointed, to getting duped by the communists, and eventually, imprisoned and harassed by people or the army without due process.

The change in her characterization, however, was unusually crafted by the author. Throughout the first 180 of the total 209 pages, readers were simply taken by the hand to explore the life of a *ronggeng*, her sexuality, vivid sensuality, and lewd description.<sup>399</sup> There was no mentioning of communist ideas or neither sympathies, nor was there an implied challenge to the state via a narrative that deviates from what was agreed upon by the society about what happened in 1965, such as the involvement of the army or the police in the massacre. The event that connects the *ronggeng*'s story to the communists and their massacres, imprisonment, and ostracism only appeared very suddenly in the final chapter of the volume, where Bakar entered the scene and persuaded Srintil to participate in his party activities. This almost makes the second volume of the *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* trilogy work similarly to the first volume, with its unusually long introduction. However, in this final part, Tohari eventually arrived at the beginning of his true narrative goal.

After a long walk of *mlipir-mlipir*, in the final pages of this volume, Tohari mentioned historical aspects that were never known before or had been kept in silence until the publication of this novel. He explicitly mentioned the police commander and the military, their involvement in arresting Srintil and the people associated with the Communist Party, and most importantly, the lists of names that they kept. In doing so, Tohari did not complicate the narrative style nor resort to complex grammatical structure. It did not, for example, follow the passive structure in order to eliminate or disguise agency. The sentences simply read:

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<sup>399</sup> This is remarkably because if we refer to the list of books that were banned or criteria for this issued by the Attorney General Office in Jakarta (see Chapter 3), the first two volumes of *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* should be subjected to censorship or even ban as it could easily be considered pornographic or promote underage sex/prostitution.



‘The police commander stood up and went into another room, followed by the military officer. The two armed men spoke.

‘[Your name] is on a list of people we are required to arrest. This is a command from our superiors, and I must carry out my duty.’<sup>400</sup>

Like the two previous volumes, the third opens with extensive and meticulous descriptions of natural landscapes, which again form a narrative strategy in itself as they probably create readerly boredom or textual deviation from the true message that the author tried to get across. In fact, the burning of Paruk, which bridges the second and the third volume, was described as ‘a just fate’ (*bagiannya yang sah*) by the ‘*Sang Mahasutradara* (Great Director –God), who had a taste for playing out His game in this universe, and whom Paruk had ignored.’<sup>401</sup> It was never clearly thought of or portrayed in the novel as a direct consequence of the village’s political involvement. Furthermore, the third-person narrator juxtaposes the burning of Paruk with the numerous cases of ‘food poisoning, inescapable destitution, and perpetual ignorance,’ suggesting the political retaliation as something that is natural, and beyond human control.<sup>402</sup> In this regard, the perpetrators were dismissed from the narrative as events were depicted as something that just ‘happened’ and did not require human agency.

This strategy, however, did not seem to belong entirely to the author. In the first editions, volume two (1984) and three (1985) are not as well connected as volume one (1981) and two (1984). However, if one reads the original manuscript as it also appeared in the much later edition which was published after the collapse of the New Order regime (2003), the imprisonment of Srintil and her fellow villagers that was portrayed in the final part of volume two flows rather smoothly. The mentioning of the ‘police commander’ and the ‘military officer’ (even though depicted in general functional terms) who kept the list of people they were ordered to arrest which basically ends volume two was bridged properly as it was followed by an entire portion detailing the military involvement in the political event of 1965 and the killings that followed in volume three. In the original manuscript, volume three opens with a clear mentioning of suspected perpetrators of the terrible things that befell Srintil and Dukuh Paruk, instead of resorting to repetitive lengthy descriptions of the setting. In the original manuscript, the very first page of the volume reads:

‘More than six months of oppressive darkness. Apart from security personnel such as the police, the armed forces, or paramilitary officials, nobody ventured outside after the sun sank beneath the horizon. Sounds of occasional gunfire sporadically echoed in the distance. Every so often, there was the roar of an arriving or departing truck followed by heavy steps of booted feet.’<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Tohari 1985, pp. 203-204.

<sup>401</sup> Tohari 1985, p. 207.

<sup>402</sup> Tohari 1986, p. 7.

<sup>403</sup> Tohari 2003, p. 247.

From this description, Tohari dismissed his act of *mlipir-mlipir* and directly linked the events that took place in the closing of volume two — creating an uninterrupted narrative flow. In the passage above, Tohari's common strategy of narrative delay and the extensive descriptions of the setting were absent. In fact, he even directly attributed the fall of Dukuh Paruk to the actors that he mentioned above.

Furthermore, in the sentences that follow, Tohari accused them of having committed the killings.

‘The nights were often shattered by the howls of roaming wild dogs inflamed by the smell of blood and rotting flesh. Corpses, by the hundreds, drifted lazily down the rivers and streams. Hundreds more were buried in shallow mass graves, others left lying in open fields.’<sup>404</sup>

In addition to the killings, the dehumanizing act committed by the military was also evident in the following passage which portrays the dire condition in prison camps.

‘The walled house was an emergency prison camp, holding almost two hundred people, many of them women. Because of the extremely limited space, the prisoners had to remain standing, packed together like bundled kindling wood. The air reeked of the stench of humankind. Sweat. The floor was slimy with urine and shit.’<sup>405</sup>

The walls had turned moist with condensation from sweat and humidity. Despite these appalling conditions, several of the women, no longer having the strength to stand, sat on the floor leaning against the wall with their legs folded up as tightly as possible.

‘There was little communication among the two hundred prisoners, only occasional soft whispering and the momentary exchange of glances. Some of the prisoners remained awake, while others dozed off even as they stood, no longer able to withstand the physical exhaustion and lack of sleep. In those eyes that were still open were inscribed images and entire stories of the collapse and destruction of human dignity. The eyes winced in unison at the sound of gunfire in the distance. What were they thinking? Perhaps they thought that the gunfire was the source of power representing the authority that now shackled them. And if every gunshot was being aimed at a particular human target, who would be the next one to fall headlong with his chest or head shattered by a piercing bullet? The eyes squeezed shut.’<sup>406</sup>

I would argue that if these passages had been printed in 1986, the Attorney General would have had more than enough reason to issue a decree to ban *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, as it not only insinuated the role of the state, c.q. military in the killings but

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<sup>404</sup> Tohari 2003, p. 247.

<sup>405</sup> Tohari 2003, p. 272.

<sup>406</sup> Tohari 2003, p. 272.

also posed a challenge against the state for promoting a ‘false’ narrative about the events. In this regard, the decision to delete these entire passages and to re-package the final volume with a narrative that is similar to the first two volumes, which are filled with lengthy plots and rather unstable narration through ever-changing and complicated perspectives, had made the narrative become less attractive or disruptive in the eyes of the censors.

## **Mencoba Tidak Menyerah**

### **Synopsis**

*Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* opens with the first-person narrator — who becomes the main character — overwhelmed with extreme anxiety in his search for his father, who had been disappeared. It flashes back to the recent past to provide information about the narrator, his father, and the entire family. The narrator comes from a hardworking family; the mother is an astute businesswoman who runs small ventures like a local food stall, while the father is a successful, hard-working entrepreneur, running a bicycle repair shop. He also works organizing a cooperative that distributes basic needs for the villagers and sells the two left-wing newspapers. The narrator and his brothers were also taught to be self-reliant, helping in the repair shop and to sell the newspapers (*loper koran*) to make extra money.

The year 1965 was a turning point for the first-person narrator. The ‘I’ narrates that the communists mercilessly butchered six army generals. Prior to that, the narrator witnessed mass mobilizations of organizations from the left and the nationalists, as well as the Muslim groups. They were all involved in violent fights against each other during the commemoration of Independence Day. After the aborted coup, homes of the alleged communists were burned down, while the owners were rounded up and taken to the Kodim (military bases), before they were finally tortured, beheaded, and thrown into the river. The ‘I’ then became known as ‘*anak PKI*’ (the son of a communist), his house was burned down, and his father was detained in a nearby military base under the accusation that he was a communist. This accusation was foreshadowed in the novel by the references to the two daily newspapers that his father sold, and the distribution of basic needs to members of the cooperative that he ran. After his father’s arrest, the ‘I’ becomes the breadwinner for the family. He works for a Chinese family doing house chores; sells newspapers; and even re-opens the repair shop. He finds solace in visiting his father, who was then imprisoned and transferred from one military base to another. His affection for his father grew stronger over time to the point that he considered his father to be Old Shatterhand, while he himself was a crybaby Winnetou. But one day, his father could no longer be found anywhere — not in the military base, nor in the nearest forest, nor in the rivers. He had disappeared.

## Analysis

As I have hinted in the opening of this chapter, *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* (1979), originally *Aku Bukan Komunis*, began as Massardi's attempt to prove his worth to condescending Indonesian literary judges and critics. When in 1977 he won the DKJ award for his poem anthology *Sikat Gigi*, other winners, namely Sutardji Calzoum Bahri and Abdul Hadi, both of whom were already literary giants, disparaged Massardi as un-literary,<sup>407</sup> and said he did not deserve to be put on the same level as they were. Furthermore, critics and prominent authors and poets also belittled him as a writer of 'pop' quality, typically bringing forth works that were lighthearted, witty, and sarcastic, the quality of which was evident in his *Arjuna Mencari Cinta* (*Arjuna in Search of Love*, 1977), *Obladi Oblada* (1979), *Wot atawa Jembatan* (*Wot or a Bridge*, a play, 1977), and *Ke* (*Towards*).<sup>408</sup> Through these works, he was accused of bringing the mundane into literature and using language that was too easy to understand, which was why, according to another critic, Massardi was of a different standard, and belonged in a lesser category. Worse, Taufik Ikram Jamil, a Riau-born literary critic, equated Massardi's work to *dodol*, cheap sticky often tasteless rice cake.<sup>409</sup> Yudhistira took such accusations lightly. In fact, he responded by internalizing the accusation and calling his works as '*sastra dangdut*', a disparaging genre that he intentionally coined himself to refer to literary works that connect to readers with low taste in literature, just like *dangdut* was considered as music that belonged to the people with low taste in music. But, like that genre in popular music, Massardi's *sastra dangdut* had enabled him to establish a reputation in the Indonesian literary scene as it reached and communicated with a larger number of readers, including important figures such as Ramadan Karta Hadimadja, Soeharto's biographer, and Goenawan Mohamad, both of whom praised Massardi for his *Arjuna Mencari Cinta*, his very own novel that had also introduced him to Daoed Joesoef, Suharto's Minister of Education and Culture, who personally handed over the prize that Massardi won.<sup>410</sup>

However, even though Massardi took the disparaging comments half-heartedly, he still felt overwhelmed by a tension between maintaining his supposed lack of literary seriousness and proving the literary rulers and critics wrong. This time he opted for the latter, and began writing *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, which revisited and recounted the haunting memories of some of the darkest pages of

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<sup>407</sup> "Mana bisa Yudhistira disejajarkan dengan Sitor Situmorang, Sutardji, Abdul Hadi, dan yang besar-besar itu?" (How can Yudhistira be put on the same level as Sitor Situmorang, Sutardji, Abdul Hadi, and those giants?). See *Horison* Mei 1978 No. 5 Tahun XIII, p. 135.

<sup>408</sup> See Scherer 1981. *Arjuna Mencari Cinta* came out as the winner of best fiction by Yayasan Buku Utama, while both of his plays, *WOT atawa Jembatan* and *Ke*, won prizes from the Jakarta Arts Council. See, blurb *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* (1979).

<sup>409</sup> See Jamil 1985, *Antara Menjual Sastra dan Dodol*. See <https://dapobas.kemdikbud.go.id/home?show=isidata&id=48>.

<sup>410</sup> Ramadan Karta Hadimadja, popularly known Ramadhan K.H. and Goenawan Mohamad wrote personal reviews for Massardi's *Arjuna Mencari Cinta* that was innocent, iconoclastic, and anti-establishment. Private collection of Yudhistira Massardi.

contemporary Indonesian history. According to him, writing about a topic that was considered serious and extremely sensitive at the time and basing its intrinsic narrative elements on events that happened to and around him would be the easiest way to start writing a story in a very organized (*tertib*) language that paid attention to the then literary convention that the literary giants had been safeguarding.<sup>411</sup>

*Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* reflects the turbulent period as its historical context. But most intriguing is the fact that the plot, the characters, setting, and all intrinsic elements of the novels reflect the actual life of the author when he was 11 years old, making it work like ‘a historical documentary, full of autobiographical elements, and peopled by actual figures.’<sup>412</sup> Massardi claimed that the similarities in plot, characters, setting were intentional — not because it was meant to be autobiographical, but because it was easier for him to write a serious novel without having to craft new intrinsic elements for the novel.<sup>413</sup> A complication in the motive, however, surfaced when Noorca Marendra, Massardi’s twin brother, a playwright, a novelist, and a poet in his own right, revealed that *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* really is autobiographical and Yudhistira’s attempt to revisit his troubled childhood after the disappearance of the father.<sup>414</sup> Through this documentary writing, Yudhistira tried to come close to expressing the dismal sensation which his horrendous and painful experiences produced. *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* is ultimately tied to its creator more than to its audience.

In revisiting and recounting the haunting memories of the dark pages of Indonesian history, particularly in relation to his own father’s disappearance, Massardi chose a different approach than that of Tohari. While it took three books for Tohari to finally speak subtly about the disappearances, imprisonment, and mass killings of 1965-1966, Massardi opens his novel with his narrator-cum-main character’s fear for not knowing how to bring back his father, who was recently disappeared. The father had worked as a distributor for the two left-wing dailies, *Harian Rakyat* and *Warta Bhakti* — hence, his disappearance. Massardi tells his story straightforwardly and jams the first few chapters with portrayals of the violent events that followed the aborted coup of 1965. The vivid description is most evident in the final pages of Chapter 2, which reads:

‘Buildings were razed to the ground, and the workers were rounded up and taken to the KODIM (military district command), after having been severely battered...

Days and nights, they were ransacking villages. Looting the houses owned by suspected communists. And burned them down...

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<sup>411</sup> Online conversation with Yudhistira Massardi on March 27, 2019.

<sup>412</sup> Foulcher 1990, p. 106; Moriyama 2017, p. 152.

<sup>413</sup> Interview with Yudhistira Massardi on July 22, 2017 in Pekayon, Bekasi.

<sup>414</sup> Personal email correspondence with Noorca M. Massardi on July 22, 2017.

The communists were annihilated to their roots, each and every one of them; both party officials and unsuspecting sympathizers, [most of whom were] farmers, plantation workers, women, the underprivileged.... Or wives of members of BTI were rounded up, so were husbands of members of Gerwani....

October was the month of retaliations.... People who tried to run were captured and beheaded on site. Their bodies were tossed into the river. Fear was so extreme that it caused some other alleged communists to take their own lives.

Within days, rivers turned red. Filled with human carcasses, decapitated heads, rotting limbs, and whatnot...<sup>415</sup>

Since the aborted coup took place to the time of the publication of this novel, these kinds of descriptions of the aftermath of the coup could only appear in scholarly accounts written by mostly Western scholars (see my discussion on the Indonesian killings in Chapter 2). Horace Sutton, for example, reported in the *Saturday Review* on February 4, 1967 about the extensive killings — so extensive that often there was neither time nor inclination to bury the dead. The bodies were then tossed into rivers, hundreds, perhaps thousands of corpses floated with the currents, winding through the landscape past villages, so many of them that the waters turned red, and mutilated and decomposing bodies collected and accumulated at certain passages and bends in the rivers.<sup>416</sup>

In that regard, such descriptions were almost certainly absent from any research pieces or accounts that were written in Indonesia by Indonesians during the New Order period. To write like that, especially clearly mentioning KODIM which implicated military involvement in the Indonesian massacre, would immediately be considered a direct challenge to the already widespread state narrative — even the slightest sympathy for the dead would be faced with dire consequences. As I described in Chapter 2, the widely accepted narrative about 1965 in Indonesia under the Suharto regime centered exclusively on the tragic killings of the army generals which were blamed solely on the PKI. The extrajudicial killings of suspected communists by the military-backed mobs, their imprisonment and ostracism were never publicly discussed or researched — they were told only in silence.

Furthermore, besides describing the aftermath, before going into details of the massacre together with its portrayal of the angry mobs and the military behind them, the first-person narrator, the ‘I’, expressed great admiration for Sukarno, whose historical presence and importance in the Indonesian socio-political realm were reduced and downplayed by the New Order regime via the de-Soekarnoisasi (de-

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<sup>415</sup> Massardi 1979, pp. 24-26.

<sup>416</sup> *Saturday Review*, February 4, 1967, p. 29.

Sukarnozation) campaign. However, as if intentionally challenging the regime, Massardi through his narrator openly praised Sukarno.<sup>417</sup>

‘I don’t know any right person who would be able to replace his position as president. And I doubt if anyone can match Bung Karno’s greatness. Is there anyone, really, who is as ‘*sakti*’ and great as Bung Karno?’

The rhetorical question above was cynical or sarcastic in nature as it clearly made a direct comparison between Sukarno the Sakti and his unworthy successor, Suharto, who by the time this story was run as a serial (1978) had just entered his third term in power. As if the intentional taunt was not direct enough, the first-person narrator continued with mockery towards the military.

‘No, I don’t want to become a soldier. I want to be smart. So, when the friends of my father or anyone else asked what I want to be when I grow up, I always answered, ‘*Insinyur*’ (engineer).’<sup>418</sup>

That derision, which can alternatively be read as a direct insult to the profession, and the intelligence of average military personnel, did not even wait until the middle or final part of the novel. Massardi, the author, did not seem to care about narrative delay or the *mlipir-mlipir* strategy that Tohari employed in his *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*. He presented the insult in a very blunt and immediate manner. It appears in the novel in the sixth paragraph of the first chapter, which made it almost impossible for any reader or other unwitting censors to overlook.

While being direct, however, Massardi’s attempt to break the silence about the killings was also nuanced with narrative elements which could possibly ensure the success of his storytelling. In the novel, Massardi via the eleven-year-old boy narrator never specifically named a person. Like Tohari in *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, Massardi used rather general functional terms, such as *tentara* or KODIM, which were also often rendered invisible, or implicit, by his constant use of passive voice, for example:

‘The communists were crushed to their roots, both big political figures and sympathizers.’<sup>419</sup>

Due to such passive constructions found throughout the 164 page novel, agency is often missing; and perpetrators, therefore, could not easily be traced.

In addition to strategic grammatical use, the first-person narrator was also portrayed to show extreme empathy to General Nasution, the right-wing general who

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<sup>417</sup> De-Soekarnoisasi campaign was intended by Suharto to defame Indonesia’s first president and diminish his presence in Indonesian history, see Feith 1968, pp. 88-105. Also Winarno 2013; Kusuma and Elson, 2011, pp. 196-209.

<sup>418</sup> Massardi 1979, p. 8.

<sup>419</sup> Massardi 1979, p. 25.

was one of the seven main targets of assassination by the communists. The fact that Nasution managed to escape the assassination attempt by the G30S was briefly glorified in the novel especially when the first-person narrator described him associating with the General and pointed his opposition to the G30S. In addition, he also expressed his condolences to the passing of the General's daughter after she was brutally shot by the communists.

'The news about General Nasution's safety is also a relief. But I was deeply saddened by the fact that his daughter, Ade Irma Nasution who had fallen a victim to the cruelty of the communists. The little girl was shot in a cruel and inhuman way. But I am certain that she will go to heaven. How she will be happy there, meeting the angels, and walking alongside the kind god.'<sup>420</sup>

In doing so, the narrator 'I', set a clear boundary and simultaneously informed the readers which side he was on. He even made it clear in a statement in later pages that he was not affiliated with the communists.

'Who did they call a son of PKI? Does that mean my parents are PKI? Preposterous. I don't believe it.'<sup>421</sup>

Furthermore, to gain narrative reliability, the narrator attributed to himself a high moral virtue which contrasted with what the communists upheld, or were generally assumed to hold under the New Order Indonesia. He described himself as a pious Muslim who often stayed and even slept in the '*Rumah Tuhan*' (literally the House of God, a reference to the mosque) and therefore established an intimate relationship with God.<sup>422</sup>

All the while, he simultaneously characterized the communists as evil and ungodly, and therefore worthy of God's wrath and eternal punishment.

'When their parade passed the great mosque in our town, where I often prayed and made call of prayer, their shouting became more intense. They even brandished their fists and showed their butts towards the mosque. They exclaimed, "God is dead! God is dead! I got goosebumps and was horrified. They were bound for the burning hell of which flames, according to my religious teacher, were a thousand times hotter than earthly fire.'

Such portrayal shows the tension and narrative complexities that *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* possesses. In his attempt to recount the unspeakable historical truth together with the events that led to and resulted from it, Massardi could not entirely challenge the state's view without simultaneously conforming to the state's narrative on the subject matter. In other words, in order to break down and bring into public

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<sup>420</sup> Massardi 1979, p. 25.

<sup>421</sup> Massardi 1979, p. 29.

<sup>422</sup> Massardi 1979, p. 28.



discussion the mass killings, the imprisonment, and the ostracism of the alleged communists, Massardi had to partially surrender to the dominant narrative and agree to attach bad attributes to the communists — if not significantly dehumanizing them. Even prior to the disappearance of his father, the soldier who came to his house to arrest the father was portrayed as a savior instead of a symbol of state oppression. The soldier told the narrator that the reason he took his father to the KODIM was in order to remain safe and avoid bad things happening to him — ‘*Supaya aman dan terhindar dari kejadian-kejadian yang tak diharapkan.*’<sup>423</sup>

Eventually, all this may have had a similar effect as the extreme delay, massive deletion, and re-packaging of the final volume of Tohari’s novel and caused Massardi’s *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* to be overlooked by the censors, especially since a large portion of the narrative was in accordance with the New Order orthodoxy.

## **Anak Tanahair: Secercah Kisah**

### **Synopsis**

*Anak Tanahair* consists of three parts: (a) ‘*Kilasan-kilasan*’ (*Flashes*), which narrates the story of the main character, Ardi, during his school days in the early 1950s; (b) ‘*Helai-helai Kehidupan*’ (*Pages from Life*) which elaborates further development of Ardi, who now as a painter becomes accidentally involved with the left-wing cultural arm (LEKRA); and (c) ‘*Surat-surat Dini Hari*’ (*Letters from Early Morning*), an epistolary story (told through letters) from the other main character, Hasan. Rosidi’s deserved reputation as one of Indonesia’s most prominent authors is evident in the three narrative voices that develop the plot, respectively.

The novel begins with Ardi accepting the offer from his uncle, Abdulmanan, to come with him to Jakarta and pursue an education there. The plot of the novel develops from this very event. Ardi was happy to go. But once he arrived in Jakarta, Ardi was shocked upon seeing his uncle’s house, which was located in a slum — a small non-permanent hut that was also occupied by three other people. Despite the condition, Abdulmanan was determined to send Ardi to school, where Ardi would eventually cultivate a new interest in arts and began drawing sketches. After finishing school, Ardi became involved in youth groups concerned with the development of national arts, politics, and the tumultuous conditions that became very prevalent during the period. This concludes the first part of the novel. The narration now shifts. Ardi, the protagonist, now narrates the story from his own perspective.

As Ardi became even more established as an artist, he engaged more intensively in youth organizations. He moves out of his uncle’s house and shares a room with his new activist friend, Ahmad. During his stay with Ahmad, Ardi was

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<sup>423</sup> Massardi 1979, p. 75.

introduced to Hermin, with whom Ardi established a romantic relationship. He also befriended a communist activist, Suryo, who persuaded him to sign a document in support of *Konsepsi Presiden*, which signaled President Sukarno's turn to authoritarianism. Ardi believed it was simply a token of support for the president without any political consequences. But he was wrong, as he discovered that his signature meant that now he belonged to the Communist Party, which ended his friendship and relationship with Ahmad and Hermin. They both argued that Ardi was completely unaware of the kind of harm that he risked for himself when he joined the communist organization. To make matters worse, the magazine, where he was sending his sketches to earn a living, started to reject Ardi's work. But Suryo remained by his side. He designed and funded a solo exhibition for Ardi. The exhibition proved a success. Positive reviews and praises appeared in left-wing media. He was sent on several trips overseas as representative of the Communist Party.

On a trip overseas, Ardi ran into Hasan, his old painter friend. In this chance meeting shortly before the mass killings started, Hasan told Ardi that he despised politics and said that art was bigger than politics. He, too, warned Ardi that PKI was a dangerous establishment that took advantage of innocent people like Ardi. Because of Hasan, Ardi finally came into an understanding that he had been wrong. He decided to resign from LEKRA and PKI. But, when the attempted coup broke out, Ardi fled to Central Java, and was never heard from again, which gives the reader the impression that he was killed.

## Analysis

In contrast to Tohari and Massardi, who in the 1970s and 1980s were still relatively new to the Indonesian literary scene, Ajip Rosidi had long been celebrated as an established author. He was equipped with both (a) means of literary production as he owned his own publishing house and had run at least two literary magazines, i.e. *Suluh Pelajar* (*Student Torch*, 1953-1952) and *Mingguan Sunda* (*Sundanese Weekly*); and (b) extensive networks of artists, poets, and authors from both extremes (LEKRA and Manikebu), as well as endorsement from political patrons. As a matter of fact, he was also one of the literary 'gurus' that Massardi was trying to prove his worth to with the writing of his award-winning *Aku Bukan Komunis* or *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* in 1977.

Born on January 31, 1938 in Jatiwangi, West Java, Rosidi started his literary career at the age of fourteen (1952). His early works in two languages (Sundanese and Indonesian) appeared in numerous magazines such as *Mimbar Indonesia*, *Zenith*, *Gelanggang*, *Konfrontasi*, and *Indonesia*.<sup>424</sup> From 1955 to the first half of the 1980s, Rosidi published at least one book a year, making him the most prolific author in Indonesia. These works were later translated into many languages, namely, Dutch,

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<sup>424</sup> See <https://web.archive.org/web/20120425235717/http://indonesiabuku.com/?p=6158/>.

Chinese, English, and Japanese. In addition to being very prolific, Rosidi also built ties with Ali Sadikin, the governor of Jakarta, who in 1968 singlehandedly welcomed Rosidi's initiative to establish the Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ) as a part of the state's cultural campaign, which Rosidi himself chaired for three consecutive periods from 1972-1981. While chairing the DKJ, Rosidi also held a position as the chairperson for the IKAPI from 1973 to 1979. In the IKAPI, he was closely connected to, or even considered as the very right hand of army General Ali Moertopo, one of Suharto's closest aides, who Suharto consulted regularly for advice and the Minister of Information in Suharto's Third Development Cabinet (1978).<sup>425</sup> Furthermore, Rosidi was summoned regularly to Suharto's office in Binagraha to discuss matters on literacy and cultural development with President Suharto himself.<sup>426</sup>

Despite a head start in the publishing industry, his own literary privilege, and close connections with national political figures, Rosidi suffered from an acute inability to articulate his life experience in writing, especially in regard to 1965 and its aftermath — the topic which he claimed had been racing in his mind and disturbing his life for many years ('...*sudah bertahun-tahun mengganggu kepalaku*').<sup>427</sup> He was capable of writing down a few first pages about the topic only when he distanced himself from Indonesia. In November 1980, he was appointed a visiting scholar in Iwakura, Kyoto. It was there and during this year that he began writing a small portion of his story about 1965. However, shortly afterward, the writing, again, came to another halt. Only after three years of postponement, when he moved to Osaka Gaidai, another university in the neighboring city, Osaka, in August 1983, did he manage to finish a 300-page manuscript in a final burst of writing — incredibly, in just one week.<sup>428</sup> In that completed manuscript, which he called *Anak Tanahair*, Rosidi examined the anti-communist political pressure which he personally witnessed, experienced, or was impacted by.

In his attempt to recount historical events that directly affected the life of the individuals, he followed Massardi's and Tohari's train of thought and conformed to the generic view of the 1965 tragedy in order to clarify his own political and literary position. In 1979-1980, a rumor resurfaced and circulated among literary circles and in the publishing industry, accusing Rosidi of being a staunch supporter and member of LEKRA. The original accusation first came out six years earlier when Yahaya Ismail, Rosidi's contemporary, in 1972 mentioned Rosidi's direct affiliation with

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<sup>425</sup> In a conversation with Asrul Sani, Indonesia's prominent screenwriter, on the state's plan to establish the Dewan Film Nasional (Indonesian Film Council), Ajip was informed that Ali Murtopo rejected Sani's proposal to appoint Umar Kayam, Syumanjaya, and Wahyu Sihombing to run the national film council. Murtopo, instead, favored Rosidi, considering him to be the most eligible and trustworthy individual to run the council. Murtopo said, via Sani, "Pendeknya... yang dapat saya percaya hanya satu, yaitu Ajip Rosidi" (I can only trust one person [to carry chair the Indonesian Film Council], that is Ajip Rosidi). See Rosidi, A.2008b, pp. 783-785. See also Elson 2001, p. 169.

<sup>426</sup> Rosidi 2008a, p. 796.

<sup>427</sup> Rosidi 2008b, p. 826. In a letter to Benedict Anderson, he said that he should have written it down since 1970. But he could not. See Rosidi. 2008a, p. 323.

<sup>428</sup> Rosidi 2008b, p. 826.

LEKRA.<sup>429</sup> This rumor resurfaced following Rosidi's rejection to the written request, or circular, to be precise, from the publisher and the Attorney General in order not to include works from leftist writers in the poetry anthology that he was compiling. The circular instructed that poems written by Utuy Tatang Sontani, Rivai Apin and Sobron Aidit, all of whom were members of LEKRA, be removed from the book, and their names deleted. In the meantime, the public was also aware of the intellectual intimacy that Rosidi had been maintaining with these communist writers. Initially, Rosidi was not really concerned about the accusation but as it grew even more serious, he felt the need to defend himself — one of his undertakings was by breaking down his stance in nuanced storytelling of *Anak Tanahair*, where he favored neither LEKRA nor Manikebu.

Rosidi's non-involvement stance, which he addressed to Manikebu, declaring 'his ultimate rejection of any hint of sympathy with those authors who aligned with the left,'<sup>430</sup> combined with Rosidi's anxiety and urge to spell everything out, resulted in a positive outcome. Unlike the lopsided story of the state's narrative, *Anak Tanahair* came out as a novel that covered the experience from both extremes, in addition to insights from an outside observer — a third-person narrator in the novel. Furthermore, similar to Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* and Massardi's *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, *Anak Tanahair* provides a glimpse into the socio-political situations before and after the attempted coup in 1965, and reveals events that were almost always skipped over in Indonesian history, especially at the point where it hinted at the involvement of the army in the Indonesian massacre.

Before going into the heart of the story, *Anak Tanahair*, the narrative dwells first on the psychological and moral growth of Ardi, the protagonist. This first part of the book, which can separately work as a *bildungsroman* on its own, elaborates on the relationship between Ardi and other supporting characters that were significant in molding his personal thoughts and perspectives. Using a third-person narrative technique, it recounts Ardi's journey from his hometown to Jakarta in a rather detailed and much-delayed description of things, with frequent transitions to earlier periods that interrupt the chronological plot; hence, the title *Kilasan-kilasan*, or flashes.

Prior to arriving in Jakarta, for example, the narrator meticulously details Ardi's short stay in Bandung. Even though this locus of the event was short and rather insignificant for the development of the entire novel, at least two pages were written exclusively to narrate earlier events in Ardi's childhood and to describe the age-worn Bandung where things were

'completely the opposite of the pleasant imagination that Ardi once had after listening to stories about the city's charm. And opposite of the beautiful

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<sup>429</sup> Rosidi 2008a, p. 322. Also see Ismail 1972.

<sup>430</sup> Foulcher 1990, p. 117; Moriyama 2017, p. 159.

thoughts that arose from books that gave praises to the city. All the books that depicted Bandung as the most beautiful city in Jawa.’<sup>431</sup>

Similarly, a lengthy detailed description of Jakarta when Ardi first arrived is also presented in the earlier part of the novel. Upon arrival in Jakarta, the narrator carefully portrays Ardi’s shock upon seeing the poor conditions of his uncle’s house in an overcrowded slum of Jakarta — a common scene of the period.

When reading the descriptions of settings, one could argue that these function as the author’s critique of the ‘Old Order’ regime and the poor socio-political conditions that it had enabled or created. From a narratological point of view, however, this was intended in order to create engagement between readers and Ardi’s character development, as well as the story world where he exists. Simultaneously, it also produced a similar delay that Tohari created in his *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, for almost exactly the same narrative purpose — either to gain readerly trust or to distract the audience from focusing too much on the sensitive topic that the novel is centered on, which is the account on the Indonesian massacre and the events that surrounded it.

After a lengthy introduction, Rosidi only begins touching on the political aspects of arts just halfway through the novel where Muhammad, Ardi’s housemate, has a heated debate with Ardi on the role of arts in the socio-political life of the people. Tellingly enough, Muhammad is characterized as the main proponent of the ‘art for art sake’ camp, with an implied reference to the Manikebu. He says:

‘Arts should always be all about beauty. It should also limit itself to things that are decent for us to see or talk about in public. Consequently, it should bring pleasant feelings and inner peace.

Arts should imitate the beauty of God’s creations.’<sup>432</sup>

The moral virtues that Muhammad highlights in his statement originated from the discussion on the reproduction of Affandi’s nude painting, which was published in a Solo-based *Seniman* magazine. Muhammad argues that the arts are noble and should be separate from all sorts of moral decadence.

Muhammad’s virtue was further made apparent in a different event in the story, at a wedding of Ardi’s uncle, where he directs a verbal attack against the communists, and simultaneously against Sukarno. The fact that both communists and Sukarno become targets in the novel has something to do with the autobiographical nature of the novel. Unlike Massardi, who openly praised Sukarno in his *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah*, Rosidi in *Anak Tanahair* views Sukarno as a leader who:

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<sup>431</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 13.

<sup>432</sup> Rosidi 1985, pp. 67-68.

‘refused to see changes that were taking place in society. He denied the reality that was happening before his very own eyes. He rejected the people’s demand for justice. While he was living in a dream, filled with luxury, and not aware of his surroundings. He wanted Indonesia to become a respected nation; however, what he accomplished so far was just creating small-minded people and blind followers.’<sup>433</sup>

In the narrator’s telling, Rosidi reduces the presence of Sukarno in Indonesian socio-political realms and downplays his importance in Indonesia’s history.

Furthermore, he accuses Sukarno of maintaining a treacherous balance among the nationalists, religious groups, and communists.

‘If Bung Karno keeps pushing this, the unity that he keeps promoting will soon collapse. We can never dine at the same table with the communists. They never believe in national unity. Even if they did say so, it was a just false pretense in order to achieve their aim to establish a communist state. They are actually destroying our revolutionary goals.

How can Bung Karno forget about the treason the communists committed in Madiun during the revolution? Did he really think he could tame them...?’<sup>434</sup>

The above remarks were clearly linked to the prevalent New Order’s narrative of things, particularly about the latent danger of the communists and immediate distrust towards them, and, most significantly, the ‘de-Soekarnoisasi’ campaign.

As the passage above suggests, Rosidi’s presence in the political and cultural discourse in 1960s Indonesia became apparent as he subtly appears in the story through the mouth of the narrator. In his attempt to become a holistic chronicler, however, he casually presents a more balanced perspective on the Left, which under the New Order narrative had almost always been attacked, particularly in regards to its commitment to political involvement under the slogan “*politik sebagai panglima*” (politics as commander), which according to the argument, eventually resulted in the polarization of debates over cultural issues and the escalation of friction between LEKRA, ‘as the only legitimate voice of Indonesian cultural workers,’ and the new contender, Manikebu.<sup>435</sup>

In this regard, contrary to Muhammad, who viewed the nude portrait as a blunt symbol of decadence, Ardi was portrayed in the novel as a character that was against such normative views of arts and believed that beauty is an ambiguous matter, and resides in the eye of the beholder. It can originate from trivial daily matters or even from things that one finds repulsive or disgusting. ‘*Kuda berak pun mempunyai keindahan*’ (even horse shit presents a beautiful thing in itself).<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 311.

<sup>434</sup> Rosidi 1985, pp. 155-56.

<sup>435</sup> See Chapter 2. See also Foulcher 1986, p. 186; Jones 2013, p. 107.

<sup>436</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 68.

Corresponding to the Leftist view on arts, Ardi also argues that arts should be forever detached from false pretenses, and instead, rely heavily on the artist's "*kejujuran*" (honesty, p. 68). Artists, he argued, "*tidak boleh bersikap tak acuh akan kenyataan masyarakat [dan harus turut serta] menyelamatkan negara*" (should forever be concerned with the reality of the people, and must collectively help to save the nation).<sup>437</sup>

Interestingly, the hint of sympathy towards the left is also made more explicit in the narration, especially in the second part of the novel, *Helai-helai Kehidupan*, in which the narrator is Ardi himself. Responding to Muhammad's anger about the communist prevalence in the national politics and arts, Ardi chooses to be civil and "*lebih menjadi pendengar saja*" (decides to become a listener, instead).<sup>438</sup> He resorts to a Socratic mode of questioning to elicit a clear response and reasoning, and politely challenges Muhammad by asking,

'But didn't they gain the people's trust through the general election? You cannot just ignore the fact.'<sup>439</sup>

To highlight the author's sympathetic attitude towards Ardi, in the second part of the novel words or phrases that follow and accompany Ardi's remarks always relate to the character's wit. When Muhammad throws a tantrum over Sukarno's "*Kabinet Berkaki Empat*" (p. 155) warning that it represents a precarious move that could lead to the division of the nation, Ardi responds as though he is a defender of Sukarno. He cites facts such as that it was fair for such political move in order for Sukarno to create balance within the cabinet by accommodating the PNI, the Masyumi Party, and Nahdlatul Ulama, and by incorporating the PKI into it. Furthermore, he adds that "*Mereka sudah keluar sebagai salah satu dari empat partai besar*" (They came out as one of the winning parties in the 1955 general election).

Through Ardi, Rosidi even goes further by arguing that PKI should probably be given the opportunity to prove its worth.

'Don't you think the PKI deserve our trust and perhaps it is even their turn to lead the people?'

Not only sympathetic to Ardi and his cause, but the narration also continues on this track to the point that Ardi ridicules Muhammad and his artistic and political beliefs. Being fully in charge of the entire narrative and perspective of this second part of the book, Ardi responds with sarcasm offered in simple short jabs of questions like '*Mengapa?*', '*Jadi, bagaimana?*' or '*Maksudmu?*' while '*berkelakar*' (acting funny). As a matter of fact, Muhammad the anti-communist is blatantly humiliated through this dialogue where he does not know how to respond and stumbles inarticulately.

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<sup>437</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 227.

<sup>438</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 156.

<sup>439</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 156.

His very response to Ardi's question above, for example, is blunt and thoughtless, '*Itu akan berarti kehancuran*' (That can only mean destruction), without giving further explanation to this argument. Furthermore, his other responses are often juxtaposed with phrases that indicate impatience ('*katanya mencoba menyalakan diri*'), unpreparedness ('*Dia tampak tertegun*'), banality ('*sepele*'), and anger ('*katanya sengit*'). Ending the chapter, Ardi even accuses Muhammad of '*tidak riil... [dan] menakut-nakuti orang akan bahaya teoretis*' (not being realistic...and scaring people with only theoretical harm).<sup>440</sup>

Later, in the second book, as if answering his own rhetorical question about giving a chance to the Left to prove their worth, Rosidi included historically-based events — starting from the communist cause, its socio-political role, the positive view on revolution, organization, the *konsepsi presiden* as a token of support for Presiden Sukarno, and, most importantly, the success story of one of its members, that is Ardi. This hint of sympathy continued in part three where Rosidi repeats the narrative pattern by ensuring that the story covers all the bases.

In this part, the narrator shifts to another protagonist of the novel, Hasan, who is also Ardi's contemporary. Hasan actually appeared in Part Two, but he was narrated through the lens of Ardi, where he appeared to have minimal agency. Unlike Ardi, Hasan was portrayed as an unsuccessful painter because he chose not to have his art affected by politics. However, Ardi admires Hasan and considers him to be '*seorang guru yang baik...[yang meskipun telah berselisih jalan telah] berhasil mengembangkan potensi-potensi yang dimilikinya*' (a good teacher who, despite differing views, has successfully developed Ardi's potential as an artist).<sup>441</sup>

In regards to distance, Hasan also keeps one from the immediate reader or audience as he narrates poignant epistolary reflections of events that he and Ardi experienced. This was done by not telling the entire story in first or third person, but through letters that were compiled by the author to form an entire book, which allows readers to get a sense of what the narrator, who is also the main character, says.<sup>442</sup> This part consists of nine personal letters that Hasan wrote to another character that he calls "*sahabat*" (good friend). Didactic in tone and nature (which explains why Ardi refers to Hasan as *guru*), these letters were written in early mornings from the beginning of 1963 to December 8, 1965. The first eight letters are filled with information on socio-political conditions that took place between the said dates and operated as if they were the basis for the first two parts of the novel.

The last letter, however, was written after the disappearance of Ardi. Hasan opens the letter with a generic account about the 1965 tragedy which fit the New Order's narrative of the event.

'A number of generals were butchered at the end of September. The perpetrators were members of the Pemuda Rakyat and Gerakan Wanita

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<sup>440</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 157.

<sup>441</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 262.

<sup>442</sup> Genette 1980, p. 171.



Indonesia, two organizations under the Communist Party. Those butchers were dancing on top of the dead bodies that they mutilated before they were thrown into the dead well. The cruelty didn't end there; those murderers danced while naked and singing *Genjer-genjer*.<sup>443</sup>

Clearly, the opening of Hasan's letter conforms to the New Order mythology of the event, presenting a fabricated story about dancing and happy singing in order to disparage and discredit the communists. In the late 1950s and early 60s, *Genjer-genjer*, a folk song arranged by M. Arif, the head of of LEKRA's Music Association in Banyuwangi, East Java, gained popularity throughout Indonesia.<sup>444</sup> The song, which literally translates as 'yellow velvet leaf' or *sawah* lettuce initially began in the 1940s as a satire to ridicule the Japanese occupation and trigger memories of hardship that the people faced. In 1962, after Njoto, who held a high position in the PKI, took interest in the song, it came to be seen to have communist overtones. Sadly, this did not bode well for the song, as its fate drastically changed immediately after the aborted coup broke and the six generals were killed.

While the lyric tells about a woman harvesting *genjer* for sale in the marketplace, one line in particular, "*genjer-genjer neng ledokan pating keleler*" (*genjer-genjer* is spread out on the ground), was taken by the military as a blunt reference to the bodies of the generals who were laid down on the ground after they had been previously tortured by the immoral, dance-loving communists women. Furthermore, since the song had been used as a rallying theme by the Communist Party, it was singlehandedly interpreted by the military as a part of the PKI's maneuvering in preparation for an intended takeover of the government. Throughout the New Order and beyond, *genjer-genjer* became guilty by association, and singing it risked grave repercussions.<sup>445</sup>

This history is recounted in the novel from the state-sanctioned perspective, as Hasan states:

'I wouldn't have believed it if I had not read the news and saw pictures of the dead generals printed in newspapers. Their bodies were not intact.'

Through the eyes of Hasan, the agent of narrative objectivity, Rosidi claims to have first been filled with doubts that his fellow countrymen and women would have committed such unimaginable cruelty; however, like average Indonesian readers, he was tormented by the utterly false yet massive and unending newspaper reports. As I

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<sup>443</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 311.

<sup>444</sup> See Saptono 2005. Also, Setiawan, Hersri. *Surat dari Negeri Kincir Angin*...<https://www.mail-archive.com/search?l=siarlist%40minipostgresql.org&q=surat+ke+negri&x=0&y=0>

<sup>445</sup> On May 9, 2016, members of Mojokerto-based reggae band, Mesin Sampink, were rounded up by the police after they performed the song and were, therefore, accused of propagating communism in Indonesia. See <https://news.okezone.com/read/2016/05/09/519/1383611/band-reggae-pembawa-lagu-genjer-genjer-tak-bermaksud-sebarkan-paham-komunis>, and <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-timur/d-3205803/nyanyikan-lagu-genjer-genjer-konser-musik-reggae-di-mojokerto-dibubarkan> [accessed on August 10, 2021].

elaborated in Chapter 2, newspaper reports about the tragic death of the generals, the torture, *genjer-genjer*, and the diabolical communist women were fabricated by the New Order regime as one means to entirely eradicate the communists and, simultaneously, establish the regime orthodoxy. Anti-communist hysteria accounts for much of the informing logic of this relentless propaganda. But the killing was so widespread, with rivers literally flowing with blood, that there was also a need to admit that some serious sanguinary violence had taken place. Thus the propaganda pinned the violence on the communists, and away from the actual perpetrators. But heart-wrenching images and memories continued to haunt many Indonesians, and it was into this ominous psychological space that writers like Rosidi, Massardi, and Tohari began to explore imaginative possibilities for expressing what was still officially prohibited. These efforts were cautious, tentative, employed numerous narrative strategies, and the authors were often twisted with multiple motivations, including self-censorship. But the fiction of this period reflects some attempts to grapple with the enormity of what took place in Indonesia. Almost all articles about the deaths of several generals came from and were organized by Army-run newspapers and propagated so intensively that average Indonesians did not have any other options except to conform to this myth-turned historical account.<sup>446</sup>

The passage that immediately follows the opening of Hasan's letter, however, is interesting as it recounted the historical events that were almost always absent in Indonesian national written history and, therefore, very sensitive in nature. The passage elaborates on immediate retaliation and military involvement:

‘The communists were hunted down. The people went on street rallies demanding that communist organizations throughout the country be banned. But President Soekarno rejected the people's demand to disband the Communist Party. The military commanders in every region across the country took initiative to freeze the Communist Party and all organizations under it.’

Furthermore, after suggesting military involvement, the next paragraph was told in an uncannily similar wording as the report written by western scholar Horrace Sutton in *Saturday Review* published on February 4, 1967, which was also shared by the previous two authors, Tohari and Massardi, in their novels. The paragraph in Hasan's letter reads:

‘I heard that in East Java, hundreds of thousands of communists were slaughtered by the angry mobs. Brantas rivers, and rivers in Solo (Central

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<sup>446</sup> Between October and December 1965, all of the newspapers above propagated reports about orgies, torture, brutality and genital mutilation. *Berita Yudha* quoted eyewitness who claimed that Gerwani women had cut the generals' genitals, while *Angkatan Bersendjata* wrote that the women had mocked the generals before they killed them by playing with and fondling the genitals of the victims while at the same time displaying their own. See *Angkatan Bersendjata*, October 11, 1965; *Kompas*, November 30, 1965. See also Drakeley 2007, p. 15.

Java), and other smaller streams, were jammed with floating bodies—people refused to bury them because they were atheists.’<sup>447</sup>

Compare that narration with Horace Sutton report that reads:

‘Mutilated bodies, some missing heads and hands, and some already decomposing came floating down the... Brantas Rriver in East Java. ... The bodies jammed like logs and stayed there for days, decaying.’<sup>448</sup>

Hasan also narrated about how artists who were active in LEKRA were attacked and killed by mobs, including Trubus. ‘*Kudengar para pelukis yang aktif dalam LEKRA di Yogyakarta diserbu oleh rakyat dan dibunuh juga. Trubus konon tak diketahui nasibnya.*’<sup>449</sup> Rosidi found it necessary that this story be told particularly because one of his friends, Trubus Soedarsono (1926-1965), a professor at the Arts Institute in Yogyakarta and LEKRA activists, was killed in the aftermath. This makes Hasan, the narrator, is interchangeable with Rosidi, the author.

In addition to the killings, the letters also elaborate on extrajudicial arrests and the destruction of homes of the alleged communist artists, together with the paintings that they hung in their houses. Lamenting on the destruction of the artistic intellectual products, Hasan bemoaned, ‘*Sahabatku, kaulihat, juga karya-karya seni yang tak berdosa itu dihancurkan karena dendam yang meledak*’ (You see, good friend, those innocent arts were destroyed by explosive vengeance).

If one looks back at the ten criteria for a ban formulated by the Attorney General (Chapter 3, Criteria for a Ban), these passages, with their bits of sympathetic attitude and contestations over the state-sanctioned narrative about the tragedy (Chapter 2), could easily be considered violations against exactly the said criteria, particularly about the point of a narrative that is against state orthodoxy and might damage public trust in the national leadership. Despite the passive voice and unclear agency which means no clear mentioning of the perpetrators, these particular passages would easily be subjected to censorship.

However, the fact that this story largely fit with dominant narratives that reflect the state’s perspective and language, had probably contributed to making it appear innocent in the eyes of the state censors. Despite the evidence of sympathy that appeared in earlier parts of the novel to the opening of this last letter in the third part of the novel, Rosidi’s distance from his own story and his echoing of New Order’s language about the tragedy were of strategic importance in the success of the publication of *Anak Tanahair*. What is more, prior to concluding the novel with reference to divine interference and limitless gratitude towards Allah, one last condescending remark was made in mockery of Sukarno and his failed Guided Democracy, which would have probably pleased the New Order’s supporters.

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<sup>447</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 312.

<sup>448</sup> See Chapter 2. Also *Saturday Review*, February 4, 1967, p. 29.

<sup>449</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 312.

‘He was drowned in rhetorics and superfluous ceremonies, wasting the nation’s wealth. He wished to become the leader of the world; he considered himself as the leading warrior of the new emerging forces against the old established forces.’<sup>450</sup>

## Conclusion

The novels in this study share a common thread: they explore the theme of the violent aftermath of the 1965 cataclysm that had been for years swept under the rug by the New Order government. They were the first few known accounts that dealt with the state-sanctioned killings and the disappearance of men and women, and scrutinized the country’s dark past by making critical examinations on it. Fully aware of the circumstances under which their novels were produced, the authors developed narrative strategies that have both similarities and subtle distinctions between one another. These strategies, in both content and language use, were intended as one way to navigate and steer clear from or anticipate the rampant state censorship so that the tormented perspectives of survivors of the massive violence could be expressed to a wide audience, albeit through muffled and indirect voices, and cunning, furtive narrative techniques. Tohari opted for subtleness in narrating the repression and persecution generated by the state against its citizens, making only nuanced implications of the military involvement in the mass killings, and Massardi made use of the innocent perspective of an eleven-year-old narrator and the constant use of the passive voice in order to disguise agency, while Rosidi highlighted his neutral position by covering all the bases, by simultaneously criticizing both the perpetrators and victims through his epistolary approach.

The varying strategies these authors employed in their stories, in addition to their conformation to the state language and narrative, were significant factors that helped the publications of the novels, as they laid the groundwork for the storytelling. However, due to observable challenges that the novels posed, most evident in *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* and *Anak Tanahair*, social connections that the authors had established with characters outside the texts were equally decisive. Tohari, due to his over-cautious editor, suffered from extreme preventive censorship as he lost the main part of his story, which, if they had been printed, would have caused a much greater consequence. Massardi had an advantage from his connection with literary gurus, and most importantly the state, c.q. the Minister of Education and Culture himself. In his speech on September 22, 1978, Joesoef praised Massardi’s literary work as a great contribution to the advancement of the people (*bantuan berharga untuk kemajuan rakyat Indonesia*), the development of the Indonesian language (*memperkembang bahasa nasional*), and the foundation of national development (*landasan kebijakan pembangunan bangsa*). At the moment the minister handed over the prize to Yudhistira, Daoed Joesoef had not realized that

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<sup>450</sup> Rosidi 1985, p. 314.

Massardi's novel poked fun at the wayang story, which the minister considered sacred. As for Rosidi, he was never really concerned about state censorship because, in addition to his neutral position in literary politics, he belonged to the small circle most authors looked for social connections with.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion: Complexity, Complicity, and the Logic of *Antisipasi*

“We know them. They’re our friends.”

D.J. Tampubolon<sup>451</sup>

In the late 1970s and first half of 1980s in Indonesia, three authors, Yudhistira Massardi, Ahmad Tohari, and Ajip Rosidi, managed to get their novels that addressed episodes from Indonesia’s most violent history published, in manners and words that would be normally unspeakable and censored at the time. What ultimately explains how their books managed to be published despite the political climate, a legal framework hostile to free expression, active institutions of censorship and dominant cultural mores? In an attempt to answer this main research question exploring the explanations and stories behind the publication of the novels, I examined the features and mechanisms of the pervasive New Order censorship under which these novels were produced. My research revealed that, under the authoritarian Indonesian government, censorship was believed to facilitate literary growth, an important cultural goal of the regime, and this censorship was carried out effectively but unevenly through various institutions and publishers. The New Order offered clear incentives, with the lure of rewards and threats of punishment, all backed up by state resources that linked the growth of literacy and the creation of a national literature to its developmental goals. It was a well-organized and well-coordinated effort. At the same time, however, censorship was a more ambiguous matter than is commonly understood, as it drove literary authors, editors, publishers, and censors closer together rather than further apart.

Instead of fostering constant antagonism, as often highlighted in the liberal conception of censorship, in actual practice, the state, the censors, authors and publishers together engaged in an interdependent and nuanced relationship that was in constant negotiation, anticipation, and delicate recalibration. It is, therefore, a misunderstanding to view censorship in Indonesia entirely as an unorganized, arbitrary process in the hands of powerholders that pit censors against authors, and agents against victims while negating the complexity, complicity, compromise, and anticipation that took place during the entire process of literary production. It is in the analysis of these factors that we find an answer to the three cases under scrutiny here.

1.) The dominant scholarly view and popular imagination of censorship under the New Order Indonesia generally maintain that censorship was a disorderly,

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<sup>451</sup> Staff of censorship agency at the Attorney General Office when asked about the censor body connection with Indonesia’s largest publishing house and reflected its long history of mutual relationship. Interview in 2017.

erratic and arbitrary process in the hands of the power holders. It also assumes that censorship was carried out by understaffed, unskilled, and uncritical censors. My findings refute such generic claims since they often distort the complex, systematic, and institutionalized system of censorship in Indonesia. As I explored the heart of the state censorship agency, I found, instead, a massive, complex, and largely consistent system of censorship. It was operated with complete and heavy machinery that had many moving parts, buttressed by repressive legislation, heightened by intellectual bureaucrats who were not failed academics, but chose to make their way in the apparatus of the state in order to improve national literacy, and were entangled in unique forms of deference to authority.

Heavily institutionalized and highly pervasive, censorship in the New Order demonstrated a tendency for collective decision making, involving all state departments, apparatuses, academic bodies, and corporations who were determined to make sure that nothing explicitly offensive to the establishment would appear in print. Mobilizing hundreds of employees, the entire network of institutions involved formed a prohibition regime, of which growth is related closely to the increasing dominance of the New Order as a whole. The Attorney General, in which the state vested the sole right to censor, organized such networks and held the power to determine printed materials that could or could not be produced, distributed, and circulated in the community, making the body of knowledge of the entire nation fully dependent on the institution's policy and wisdom. In some cases, like Pramoedya Ananta Toer or his translator brother, Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, it appears that decisions had more to do with specific political considerations — such as the political attitudes of the author.

2.) Secondly, censorship in the New Order Indonesia bore a resemblance to that of eighteenth-century France, recently explicated by Robert Darnton in his seminal work *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (2014). In monarchical France, censorship was a matter of complicity between the state and society, where censors, authors and publishers collaborated in making literature by navigating the intricate culture of royal privilege. Along this line of new critical censorship, my thesis likewise opposes a Manichean view of censorship that reduces the subject to simply a battle of light versus darkness, repression versus liberty, or authority versus innocent authors and poor publishers. Initially, when I first started this research, I also shared the simple and dominant idea that censors stifled freedom. The way that Pramoedya Ananta Toer's books were banned gives that impression. The archives, documents, and informants I consulted, however, reveal how publishers and authors engaged in state censorship in complex and layered relationships of interdependency. Censorship under the New Order relied greatly on collusion, collaboration, and complicity enforced by a vast network of actors and institutions that included authors, editors, outside readers, various consultants, ministry officials, and, of course, the censors themselves. Interestingly, this interconnectedness lent advantages to the authors as well as their editors and publishers, particularly in regard to the publication and distribution of their novels, as well as literary awards from the state. The New Order created clear incentives, not

merely overt threats of punishment, but offering rewards subsidized by state resources in a coherent policy that linked the growth of literacy and the creation of a national literature to national development goals.

Literary works, of course, were formed in various and complex ways. Some may well have started as the author's moment of inspiration or political aspiration. The novels at the heart of this study, however, were shaped, resettled, and settled in a constant process of interpretation, compromise, complicity, and negotiations between the author and publisher. The publishing industry was also used by the government to maintain state dominance. My research finds that the only way for publishing businesses to survive was to have a cooperative relationship with the government. Editors edited manuscripts according to the taste of the censors — or what they believed and imagined to fall in accordance with the censors' taste. They gained instructions from the higher levels of the hierarchy as well as from regular contact and friendly relationships with the censors, and used this knowledge and sensibility to frame topics, influence people, and regulate the contents of manuscripts. Against this background, Jakob Oetama, the owner and founder of Gramedia, the publishing house where the novels were produced, highlighted the importance of adapting in clever, creative, and innovative ways, which often comprised publication strategies such as serialization, genre categorization, and layout. In addition to being creative, publishers and editors developed interplay with censors or in anticipating censorship, enacted self-censorship. At one point, as evident in the dossier archived in the Attorney General Office in Jakarta, the publisher that printed the novels discussed in this dissertation sat together with the censors, essentially working together toward shared goals.

3.) As I show in my last chapter, I argue in the third place that authors were also part of the system. Borrowing the words of Matthew Bunn in "Re-imagining Repression: New Censorship Theory and After," (2015) they 'engaged with censorship in inventive and novel ways, drawing out new avenues of inquiry into how textual boundaries are shaped by forces beyond those of the authors.'<sup>452</sup> As censorship became a constitutive feature in the creation and development of national literature, literary authors could dare to be subversive, but they ran the risk of being called obscurantists — deliberately preventing the facts or full details of something from becoming known, or selecting textual expressions that were favorable to the government. In this regard, they anticipated probable consequences by making sure that they did not contradict the grammatical discourse outlined by the state and resorted to obscure language that limits the active presence if not completely omitting its agency. As Burt (1994) puts it, 'censorship involves cultural legitimation as well as delegitimization.' This is evident, for example, in the case of linguistic features that Massardi resorted to in his novel. His frequent use of passive voice to a great extent limited the presence of agents or perpetrators of the killings and disappearance of the people. While less frequent in using Massardi's strategy, Tohari

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<sup>452</sup> Bunn 2015, p. 26.



developed an anticipating language that is filled with tedious narration jammed with detailed settings that often distorted or delayed the plot. Rosidi, a well-connected and reputable author, brought narrative balance while simultaneously took advantage of the epistolary form as a way to detach authorial presence in his novel. Furthermore, in addition to the narrative style and language and despite the apparent concern and sympathies, these authors still mimicked the state's main narrative of the 1965-66 events in the larger part of their storyline. As Henk Maier (1999) pointed out, due to the complexity and pervasiveness of state censorship, these authors without them noticing it were complicit in silencing themselves.

In connection with the wider debate in the field of censorship studies, the case of censorship under the New Order Indonesia conforms to New Censorship Theory that, 'stresses the multiplicity of censorship and the generative effect of censorship, an activity hitherto seen as purely repressive.'<sup>453</sup> The Indonesian case intriguingly confirms and endorses the study conducted by Darnton (2014) on censorship in three authoritarian regimes, namely eighteenth-century Monarchical France, nineteenth-century imperialist Britain, and twentieth-century communist East Germany; it concords with Burt (1994) on the prohibitive as well as productive nature of censorship; and echoes Bunn's (2015) findings on the multiplicity and generative effects of censorship.

Darnton finds that censorship is generally a complex process that varies depending on the character of each government, requires talent and training, and extends deep within the social order. In every case he studied, censorship crystallized around the core principles unique to each regime: privilege or approbation in the case of France, surveillance in the case of British India, and planning in the case of East Germany. In each case, censorship pervaded every aspect of literary life and shaped literature as a cultural system within a sociopolitical order. It was produced through a constant process of interpretation, compromise, complicity, and negotiation, 'rendering censors as actors internal to communication networks, and not as external, accidental features.'<sup>454</sup> In Bourbon France, in order for a book to be published, it first had to get what was known as 'privilege', similar to copyright, that was given by the censors and approved with a royal stamp which entailed the quality of the book, worthy of royal merit. In this regard, censorship was considered to be positive, as the censors thought that they were defending the honor of French literature. In British India, censors were concerned with surveillance through catalogs and were very systematic in the ways they kept records about publications, authors, press, and so on. The criteria that were used to apply censorship were developed by civil servants and special agents who ran libraries and other cultural institutions. They ranged from pornography to sedition. One record, for example, described one book as openly vulgar and, therefore, not having the semblance of an excuse for the public good. These criteria were as elastic as the criteria developed by the Attorney General in

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<sup>453</sup> Bunn 2015, p. 25.

<sup>454</sup> Bunn 2015, p. 25.

Jakarta which I examined in Chapter 3. In East Germany, the censors that also included authors, scholars and critics, drew up plans for national literature in partnership with writers in the country, which confirms Bunn's notion of the generative aspect of censorship, as well as Burt's productive side of it. Being a writer, therefore, involved a permanent interpretation of the guidelines, in the form of language and contents of the plots. Negotiation occurred at all levels, especially in the early stages when a text began to take shape.

The Indonesian case conforms to or fits with most of the characterizations of censorship under the three authoritarian regimes that Darnton investigated. Combining the core principle that was found in each authoritarian regime, censorship under the New Order was founded on positive criteria for publication outlined by the state, and defended by notable literary critics. The criteria developed and their number grew over time, from simply stating that books should be censored or banned if they disturbed public order (*mengganggu ketertiban umum*) to a detailed and more explanatory list consisting of ten points for the application of censorship or outright ban — the last point being extremely elastic, i.e. *dll.*, a contraction of '*dan lain-lain* (et cetera), in order to anticipate other criteria that might have not been included in the list. In regards to surveillance, while the British had the initiative to develop a list of publications for the purpose of surveillance, the New Order censors surveilled the authors through catalogs that were published by the supposedly independent IKAPI, which Rosidi himself once chaired. This eventually, and probably without them realizing it, incorporated involvement and complicity from the authors, editors, and publisher.

Interestingly, while seemingly in line with British India's heavy emphasis on the liberal value of freedom of expression, the New Order government, in fact, and more similar to the French, used a draconian approach in carrying out censorship — sending authors to the Bastille. The British in India rarely repressed books and official intervention was largely limited to surveillance, unless there was any sedition. Even so, the authors who were found guilty had the right to a proper trial and defense attorneys. Planning that became the core principle of communist East Germany was also a core principle in the case of literary production in the Indonesian authoritarian regime. As President Suharto himself stated, and this was further echoed by the Minister of Culture and Education, Daoud Joesoef, the government had a strong conviction that books, particularly literary works, contributed greatly to the advancement of the Indonesian people. According to Daoud Joesoef who, in some complicated ways, was connected to Massardi, literary works were the foundation of Indonesian culture of which core functions were to expand knowledge, increase literacy, and broaden the horizon of the people as long as they were planned and in accordance with the state mission of national development. This planning, as it was in East Germany, was carried out by censors, who were other writers, intellectuals, and academics, as well as editors and publishers.

A strong indication for such complexity and complicity in the case of censorship in Indonesia appears in an invitation letter for book assessment. On the

final page of the letter, a list of attendees was printed — consisting of names of scholars, institutions such as the IKAPI and History Department of Universitas Indonesia, state apparatuses, major publishers, and authors to discuss a book that was subject to censorship. This invitation began as early as the second half of the 1970s and was at least last issued in October 2017, which indicates that censorship has been active throughout, and across the New Order regime period until today.

Censorship in Indonesia only seemed to be inoperative during the first few years of Reformasi Era, especially after the withdrawal of Publishing Permit (*Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers*, SIUPP) by President B.J. Habibie in September 1999 and the disbanding of the Department of Information (*Departemen Penerangan*) by President Abdurrahman Wahid in November 1999. During these years, publications that were once considered sensitive began to jam bookshelves in bookstores in major cities in Indonesia. However, shortly after Abdurrahman Wahid was removed from power in 2001, the Attorney General Office immediately issued decrees to ban several books that centered their themes, in particular, on the Leftist movement and on the self-determination of the Papuan people and their rights. The Attorney General claimed that the books had gone through meticulous, selective assessment processes prior to their bans. These processes continued for several years until, in October 2010, the Indonesian Constitutional Court revoked Law No. 4/pnps/1963 that was often used by the Attorney General as legal standing for a book ban. The revocation, however, seemed rather ineffective. Recent illustrations of this can be seen in the confiscation of 138 books by the military and the Indonesian police in Kediri, East Java, and the Attorney General's attempt to take advantage of side-laws from the Ministry of Culture and Education on book supervision.<sup>455</sup> No matter how inoperative it might have seemed, the censorship machinery kept running. And to circumvent censorship or to get published, one had to play the game, with different ways of playing it, from using literary techniques and methods to personal relationships with the publishers, editors, censors, or even higher officials to deviate from the strict interpretations of the laws, rules and guidelines.

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<sup>455</sup> “TNI- Polisi di Kediri Sita Ratusan Buku Memuat Kata PKI”. Available at <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1159250/tni-polisi-di-kediri-sita-ratusan-buku-memuat-kata-pki/full&view=ok> [accessed on 10 August 2021].

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## SUMMARY

Within the framework of a larger debate on literary history and censorship studies, this research delves deeper into the role of literature in narrating Indonesia's bleakest pages of history, namely the events of 1965-66 and the mass killings that followed. The historical legacy of the events was a matter of grave contention within Indonesia and to speak directly and write with honesty about them could become fraught with danger. Therefore, throughout most of the 1970s, creative literature in Indonesia was almost totally silent on the background and meaning of the killings of 1965-66, the very specific topic that did not collocate with the values of the authoritarian New Order regime. The aftermath in the lives of individuals who witnessed this tragedy was also skipped over in Indonesian literature. In addition, the traumatic nature of the experience seemed to have been expunged from the memories of witnesses and inhibited a wider group of people from talking. However, against all odds, a few literary authors spoke up and openly addressed this theme in their novels. They were even sympathetic in portraying the victims even though the regime was at the height of its power and exerting maximum social and political control through rampant censorship.

In this regard, this dissertation addresses the broader question about what this case of literary production tells us about the nature of censorship under the New Order. In doing so, this dissertation begins, in **Chapter 2**, with an analysis of the New Order regime in which economic growth, political stability, and cultural change took place, which provides a setting under which the literary works central in this study were produced. It looks at the regime's cultural policy that was believed to generate growth in literary production and in the initiations of cultural institutions and activities. It also elaborates on the regime's shift into a state of increased constraints and tighter control that homogenized and policed cultural production.

Against the backdrop of the increasing control, and informed by theoretical literature by Jaringan Kerja Budaya (1999), Fauzan (2003), and Yusuf (2010) on regime of prohibition and modes of censorship, and by Burt (1994), Yamamoto (2011), Darnton (2015), and Bunn (2015) on New Censorship theory, this dissertation, in **Chapter 3**, moves on into a more specific discussion and thematizes the process of carrying out research at the heart of the state body that was tasked with censorship. It elaborates on the implementation of censorship which includes the rationale, mechanism, and procedures of censorship under the New Order which was run and coordinated by a single state apparatus, namely the Attorney General. The upshot of this was that the production or prohibition of literary works occurred in accordance with the interests of literary producers on the one hand, and the political ruler on the other.

While the state maintained stability by preventing subversion from entering the cultural field, literary producers protected literature from political contamination. This led to a situation where censorship was not exclusively carried out by the state institution but rather run more diffusely as a collective result of censorial subjects within the censorship system. It operated in terms of complicity and collaboration, as

discussed in **Chapter 4**, between the state and literary producers. Censorship drove literary authors, editors, publishers and censors closer rather than further apart. As a result, the general view that censors consisted of ignorant and unskilled political bureaucrats distorts the real picture of censorship under the New Order.

Instead of fostering constant antagonism, as often highlighted in the liberal conception of censorship, in actual practice, the state, the censors, authors, and publishers engaged in an interdependent and nuanced relationship that was in constant negotiation, anticipation, and delicate recalibration. All this is evident in the language play, nature, form, and functioning of narrative used in the novels at the heart of this study as examined in **Chapter 5**. Through the New Historicist approach, this chapter looks at the structure of the authors' works and the strategies in writing the story the specific way they did, and problematizes differing recollections and opposing accounts of the same historical events.

In conclusion, **Chapter 6**, this dissertation asserts that it is, therefore, a misunderstanding to view censorship in Indonesia entirely as an unorganized, arbitrary process in the hands of power holders that pit censors against authors, and agents against victims, while negating the complexity, complicity, compromise, and anticipation that took place during the entire process of literary production. It opposes a Manichean view of censorship that reduces the subject to simply a battle of light versus darkness, repression versus liberty, or authority versus innocent authors and poor publishers. In fact, censorship under the New Order relied greatly on collusion, collaboration, and complicity enforced by a vast network of actors and institutions. In connection with the wider debate in the field of censorship studies, the case of censorship under the New Order Indonesia conforms to New Censorship Theory that stresses the multiplicity and generative effect of censorship, an activity hitherto seen as purely repressive.

## SAMENVATTING (Summary in Dutch)

Binnen het kader van een bredere discussie over studies van literaire geschiedenis en censuur, verdiept dit onderzoek zich in de rol van literatuur bij het vertellen van de donkerste pagina's uit de geschiedenis van Indonesië, namelijk de gebeurtenissen van 1965-1966 en de massamoorden die daarop volgden. In Indonesië was een zware woordenstrijd de historische erfenis van deze gebeurtenissen en het kon uiterst gevaarlijk zijn er openhartig over te spreken en eerlijk over te schrijven. Het is daarom dat de Indonesische literatuur gedurende het grootste deel van de zeventiger jaren vrijwel volledig zweeg over de achtergrond en de betekenis van de moorden van 1965-66, dat heel specifieke onderwerp dat niet aansloot bij de waarden van het autoritaire regime van de Nieuwe Orde. Ook de nasleep in het leven van individuen die getuige waren geweest van deze tragedie werd in de Indonesische literatuur overgeslagen. Bovendien leek het traumatische karakter van de ervaring uit de geheugens van de getuigen te zijn gewist en weerhield het een grotere groep mensen ervan om erover te spreken. Hoe dan ook, enkele literaire auteurs spraken zich wél uit en behandelden dit thema in hun romans. Ze waren zelfs bereid om de slachtoffers af te beelden, hoewel het regime toen op het hoogtepunt van zijn macht was en door middel van buitensporige censuur maximaal sociale en politieke controle uitoefende.

Hierop aansluitend behandel ik in deze dissertatie de bredere vraag over wat de kwestie van literaire productie ons vertelt met betrekking tot het karakter van de censuur tijdens de Nieuwe Orde. **Hoofdstuk 2** begint met een analyse van het regime van de Nieuwe Orde en de economische groei, politieke stabiliteit en culturele veranderingen van deze periode. Deze gegevens vormen het decor voor de productie van de literaire werken die centraal staan in deze studie. Ik onderzoek het cultuurbeleid van het regime waarvan men veronderstelde dat het de literaire productie deed toenemen en culturele instituties en activiteiten initieerde. Daarnaast weid ik uit over de verschuiving van het regime naar een staat van toenemende restricties en strakkere controle die de culturele productie homogeen maakten en er toezicht op uitoefenden.

Tegen de achtergrond van de toenemende controle, en met de gegevens uit de theoretische geschriften van de Jaringan Kerja Budaya (1999), Fauzan (2003) en Yusuf (2010) over verbodsregimes en censuurmodi, en van Burt (1994), Yamamoto (2011), Darnton (2015) en Bunn (2015) over de Nieuwe Censuurtheorie (New Censorship Theory), gaat deze dissertatie in **Hoofdstuk 3** over in een meer specifieke discussie met als thema het proces van het uitvoeren van onderzoek in het hart van het staatsorgaan dat censuur tot taak had. In dit hoofdstuk ga ik verder in op de toepassing van censuur, met inbegrip van de beweegredenen, het mechanisme en de procedures van censuur onder de Nieuwe Orde die werden uitgevoerd en gecoördineerd door één enkel staatsapparaat, namelijk de Procureur Generaal. De uitkomst hiervan was dat zowel het produceren als het verbieden van literair werk plaatsvonden in overeenstemming met de belangen van de literaire producenten enerzijds en het politieke bestuur anderzijds.

Terwijl de staat de stabiliteit bewaarde door geen subversie toe te laten tot het culturele veld, beschermden literaire producenten de literatuur tegen politieke verontreiniging. Dit leidde tot een situatie waarbij censuur niet exclusief werd uitgeoefend door het overheidsinstituut maar eerder diffuser te werk ging als het collectieve gevolg van subjecten die onder censuur stonden binnen het systeem van censuur. Er was namelijk sprake van medeplichtigheid en collaboratie, zoals besproken in **Hoofdstuk 4**, in de relatie tussen de staat en de literair producenten. Het was de censuur die auteurs, redacteurs, uitgevers en censoren dichter bij elkaar bracht in plaats van ze uit elkaar te drijven. Dit leidde ertoe dat het algemene beeld dat censoren uit onwetende en ondeskundige politieke bureaucraten bestonden het werkelijke beeld van censuur onder de Nieuwe Orde vervormde.

In plaats van de voortdurende antagonismen te koesteren, zoals in de liberale opvatting van censuur vaak naar voren wordt gehaald, gingen de staat, de censoren, auteurs en uitgevers in de praktijk een wederzijds afhankelijke en genuanceerde relatie aan die aan voortdurende onderhandeling, anticipatie, en subtile herijking onderhevig was. Dit alles komt naar voren in het woordenspel en karakter, de vorm en het functioneren van het narratief dat in de romans werd toegepast zoals blijkt uit de kern van deze studie, onderzocht in **Hoofdstuk 5**. Met gebruikmaking van de Nieuwe Historistische benadering bekijk ik in dit hoofdstuk de structuur van het werk van de schrijvers en de strategieën waarmee ze hun verhalen op specifieke wijze schreven, en problematiseer ik van elkaar verschillende herinneringen en aan elkaar tegengestelde weergaven van dezelfde historische gebeurtenissen.

Als besluit, in **Hoofdstuk 6**, bevestig ik in deze dissertatie dat het een misverstand is om censuur in Indonesië te beschouwen als een louter ongeorganiseerd en arbitrair proces in de handen van machthebbers die censoren tegen auteurs en uitvoerders tegen slachtoffers uitspeelden, terwijl de complexiteit, de compliciteit, het compromis en de anticipatie van het hele literaire productieproces worden genegeerd. Ik verzet me tegen een Manicheïstische visie op censuur die het subject reduceert tot louter een strijd tussen licht en donker, repressie en vrijheid, of autoriteit versus onschuldige auteurs en arme uitgevers. In feite steunde censuur onder de Nieuwe Orde zwaar op collusie, collaboratie en compliciteit, die door een groot netwerk van actoren en instituten werden gehandhaafd. In samenhang met het grotere debat op het gebied van censuurstudies, stemt de kwestie van censuur in het Indonesië van de Nieuwe Orde overeen met de New Censorship Theory die de nadruk legt op de multipliciteit en het generatieve effect van censuur, een activiteit die tot op heden wordt gezien als puur repressief.

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Taufiq Hanafi was born in Bandung, Indonesia on 8 June 1980. He obtained his B.A. in English from Universitas Padjadjaran Bandung in 2002. Subsequently he worked as an assistant in the Department of English, Faculty of Letters of Universitas Padjadjaran. In 2006, he was endowed Fulbright Scholarship to study in the United States and obtained his M.A. in Comparative Literature from University of Oregon. Later, in 2016, Taufiq began his PhD journey in the Graduate School of Humanities, Leiden University supported by the Indonesia Endowment Fund (LPDP) from the Ministry of Finance Republic of Indonesia. In addition to his formal education, from 2003 to 2011, Taufiq worked intermittently for a London-based filmmaker in making documentaries about trade union, plantation workers in North Sumatra, and their political-cum-historical activism, which led to the writing of this dissertation. Taufiq is currently affiliated with the Leiden Institute for Areas Studies (LIAS) and the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV).