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**SPOKEN AND SILENT WITNESS:
REPRESENTATIONS
OF THE 1965 TRAGEDY
IN INDONESIAN COLLECTIVE MEMORY**

YOSEPH YAPI TAUM

SEJARAH BERBASIS KONTINUITAS

H. PURWANTA

**IMPLEMENTASI PEMBELAJARAN
BAHASA DAN SASTRA INDONESIA
BERBASIS KOMPETENSI:
SUATU ANALISIS DESKRIPTIF**

DARSITI



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DAN PENGABDIAN KEPADA MASYARAKAT
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KATA PENGANTAR

Dalam masyarakat yang diwarnai oleh budaya informasi dan komunikasi saat ini, seakan tak ada yang terlepas dari perubahan. Berbagai perubahan tengah berlangsung di mana-mana. Apa yang menjadi faktor pendukung berlangsungnya perubahan? Salah satunya adalah komunikasi yang didukung oleh sarana ICT (*information and communication technology*..... teknologi informasi dan komunikasi). Sarana tersebut memungkinkan proses komunikasi dapat berlangsung secara mudah dan cepat. Tidak mengherankan bahwa berbagai institusi baik pemerintah, pendidikan, apalagi bisnis, mau tak mau perlu melengkapi diri dengan prasarana yang memadai di bidang teknologi informasi dan komunikasi ini; kalau tidak akan dianggap sebagai ketinggalan zaman. Namun, kemudahan dan kecepatan komunikasi tanpa diimbangi dengan isi yang bermutu, kualitas komunikasi menjadi dipertanyakan. Isi komunikasi menjadi satu hal yang tidak bisa diabaikan. Dalam hal isi komunikasi inilah, ARI edisi ini mengetengahkan beberapa tema tulisannya.

Sampai berakhirnya rejim Orde Baru, telah berlangsung tafsir tunggal atas sejarah yang berlangsung di tengah bangsa Indonesia. Ada bagian sejarah tertentu yang sama sekali tidak bisa diberi tafsir baru berdasar hasil penelitian yang telah dilakukan. Hal ini secara nyata terkait dengan periode tahun 1965 dan sekitarnya. Di balik tafsir tunggal yang berlangsung, sebenarnya ada wajah buram yang tidak pernah diperlihatkan. Sebuah peristiwa tragedi nasional yang telah merengut ratusan ribu nyawa dari warga negara republik ini. Terkait dengan periode tersebut, tulisan Yoseph Yapi Taum mengetengahkan sejumlah karya dari dunia sastra yang menampilkan saksi bisu sebagai pihak yang berani berbicara terkait

dengan periode masa gelap tersebut. Sebenarnya peristiwa-peristiwa yang berlangsung pada masa itu telah menjadi ingatan kolektif anggota masyarakat yang selama ini tak pernah mendapat kesempatan bersuara. Ternyata dalam periode diam tersebut sejumlah karya sastra berusaha menyuarakannya.

Berkaitan dengan sejarah, tulisan H. Purwanta menempatkan bagaimana suatu prinsip sejarah salah satunya ditempatkan dalam kaitannya dengan kontinuitas. Historisitas akan berkaitan dengan tiga periode, masa lalu yang membentuk, masa sekarang yang dilibati, dan masa depan yang akan ditentukan dari keterlibatannya masa sekarang. Pada arus inilah kontinuitas ditempatkan. Subjek penulis sejarah menjadi figur penentu bagaimana menjalin kontinuitas tersebut. Pertanyaannya siapa menjadi subjek penulis sejarah ini? Tantangannya bagaimana subjek penulis sejarah perlu melengkapi dirinya sehingga prinsip kontinuitas tersebut dapat ditegakkan. Dan memang masyarakat pemilik sejarah itu yang perlu terlibat untuk menulis dan membaca sejarahnya sendiri. Tanpa hal itu tetap akan ada pertanyaan sejarah menjadi milik siapa.

Bahan-bahan baru hasil pergulatan pemikiran, jerih payah penelitian, dan yang telah diformulasikan, sudah barang tentu menemui tahap yang lain ketika akan dibawakan di dalam kelas sebagai materi pembelajaran. Tulisan Darsiti menjabarkan analisisnya atas pembelajaran bahasa dan sastra Indonesia yang menerapkan metode pembelajaran berbasis kompetensi. Istilah kompetensi sebenarnya menimbulkan permasalahan tersendiri; atukah kompetensi guru, atau kompetensi siswa? Bisakah diharapkan seorang siswa sekolah umum memiliki kompetensi? Ada berbagai tulisan telah menyinggung masalah ini. Tulisan Darsiti memperlihatkan untuk sampai tujuan pada sasaran dalam membekali siswa, metode, pendekatan, teknik, strategi dari pihak guru akan sangat menentukan capaiannya. Dengan pilihan-pilihan yang dilakukan guru, murid akan dirangsang untuk turut serta terlibat dalam proses pencapaian sasaran tersebut. Tanpa pelibatan itu, proses pembelajaran hanya akan berlangsung satu arah. Diperlihatkan bahwa metode pembelajaran ini bermuara dari pihak guru beserta semua pihak lain dan faktor pendukungnya. Termasuk di dalamnya, faktor gurulah yang menentukan untuk mampu mengundang keterlibatan siswa. Terlebih ketika hal ini terkait dengan penguasaan dan penggunaan bahasa Indonesia yang merupakan praktik keseharian.

Demikianlah sajian ARI edisi ini. Semoga bermanfaat, menambah wawasan, mengundang perbincangan, dan keterlibatan lebih lanjut serta menyumbang pembaharuan untuk waktu-waktu mendatang.

Redaksi
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Spoken And Silent Witness: Representations Of The 1965 Tragedy In Indonesian Collective Memory¹

Yoseph Yapi Taum

Abstract

The 1965 tragedy in Indonesia led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people accused of communist associations. During the New Order regime, open discussion of these events was almost impossible. As a result, little is known about the horrors of 1965 and its aftermath. This paper attempts to describe the collective memory of the 1965 tragedy, and observe how Indonesian writers have attempted to put a voice to the suffering of their fellow countrymen. An intertextual reading of literary texts and non-literary texts will be used to analyze this issue.

By closely examining several categories of significant cultural and political remembrance, this paper argues that the process of making and evoking memories of the 1965 tragedy has been highly political. Most forms of remembrance have been state-sponsored representations. These include (1) Lubang Buaya monument and Museum of the PKI Treachery (inaugurated by Suharto in 1990), (2) Student's text book of Indonesian National History and Annual commemoration day of October 1st, and (3) A film praising Suharto entitled "Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI" directed by Arifin C. Noer.

Literary works created during the New Order regime, however, opened a breathing space to discuss the tragedy at a human level. Indonesian writers have performed a negating role in refuting the official version of the events of 1965. They have attempted to come to terms with the violence to which individuals were subjected by Indonesian authorities including: 1) arrest and detention people without trial, 2) physical abuse, torture, and inhuman treatment of

victims, and 3) army organized massacre. The most disconcerted things for them were that how the civil society can only witness these atrocities without doing anything to intervene. In conclusion I argue that Indonesian writers have performed as 'voice of the voiceless' of the victims, in spite of the fact that they received intense pressure from authorities of the repressive regime.

1.1 Introduction

The bloody revolution that swept through Indonesia starting from 1965 was one of the fiercest which has been made Indonesian New Order regime as one of this century's worst mass murders.³ From October 1, 1965, Soeharto and his military machine reign of violence, terror, fighting, fear, and brutality over PKI or communist followers and turned the country into an anti-communist fever society and start their effort to create a model of 'Pancasila'⁴ way of life. The human costs of the revolution were horrific. Between mid-October 1965 and mid-January 1966, Army-directed massacres claimed somewhere between five hundred thousand and one million lives. Hundreds of thousands of other of its leaders and affiliates were imprisoned and many of these were also tortured (Anderson, 1996: 1).

The question has been what was the nature and purpose of the September 30 Movement (hereinafter G30S)? At first glance the answer to these questions seems easy enough. That night, several hundred dissident military personnel, lead by Lieutenant-Colonel Untung, commander of the palace guard, the Cakrabirawa, kidnapped and killed six influential top senior Indonesian Army Generals. Untung claimed that this movement was a preventive action designated to protect President Soekarno against the threat of an American Central Intelligence Agency backed "Council of Generals." It was believed by the Untung group that Army High Command were plotting their own reactionary *coup d' état* for Armed Forces Day on 5 October 1965 (Dommen, 1966: 144; Crouch, 1973: 1).

Since that time there has been some dispute about whether the PKI actually ordered the kidnappings and the proposal of a new presidential cabinet the next day.⁵ But whatever the truth about the

source of Untung's orders, his desire to eliminate the anti-Communist generals fitted the sympathies of PKI leaders, and the blame for the deaths was thereafter laid on the Party leadership by their opponents and the Indonesian populace. Indonesian army under command of then Major General Soeharto, Commander of the Strategic Reserve, launching a punitive purge of the left, begin with its rivals in the army's center, thus paving the way to a long planned-elimination of the civilian left throughout Indonesia. The violence was especially brutal in Java and Bali.⁶ The real tragedy of 1965 bloodbath just began and a major turning point in Indonesia's history was been commenced. G30S failure was to inaugurate drastic realignments in the country's domestic and foreign policies, and led directly to fall of President Soekarno.⁷

More than four decade has passed since the PKI was outlawed. Although the PKI was officially gone, it is not forgotten. For most Indonesian, however, the image of PKI is nothing but notorious wicked. The New Order government was constantly on the alert for signs of the revival of the PKI or for what it seemed to represent. The New Order regime constitutes the most determining force in the identity-making of the powerless subjects, and in their everyday practices. Vigorous cultural reproduction of the trauma of the events has been created by the New Order regime. In this short paper, I discuss the process of making and evoking memories of the 1965 tragedy. This paper will chiefly discuss the complex and ambiguous discourse of the tragedy that has been already firmly planted in Indonesian collective memory. The role of Indonesian writers in dealing with the tragedy will also be discussed.

1.2 A Glimpse into History: PKI and the 1965 Tragedy

Since 1960 Soekarno launched the Nasakom means the merging of the nationalist, religious and communist to combining all political power trends in Indonesian life (Wieringa, 1992: 100-101). Obviously in Soekarno opinion, PKI deserved life in the motherland of Indonesia. Between 1959 and 1965, Indonesian politics became increasingly radical and the PKI increasingly influential. In the months prior to the coup attempt, the country was politically polarized and in desperate

economic straits, a crisis reflected in rising social tensions and at times violent social unrest. In addition to Sukarno, who had assumed increasingly authoritarian powers beginning in the late 1950s, two primary political forces were jostling for power: the army and the PKI (Human Right Watch, 1989: 11).

In that time, political position of PKI was very strong. Observers convinced that PKI was the largest such party outside the communist block with some 2.5 million members and candidate members, and additional tens of thousands in various fronts (labor, peasants, youth, women, and other).⁸ The significant progress of the PKI, as Van der Kroef (1965: 357) noted it, partly because during 1961-1962 PKI made a vociferous criticism of various government policies, partly because of Indonesia's rigid martial-law policies of close supervision overall partisan activity, had become severely restricted in its operations.

PKI gained significant benefit from the anti-Malaysia 'confrontation', from which for the first time a communist-initiated tactic with its attendant symbols and ideology of anti neocolonialist and imperialist became an official Indonesian policy norm. *Manipol*, *Nasakom*, *konfrontasi*, and many other symbols and terms were all so many means for PKI and has been 'stabilize' by means of these devices was first and foremost the position of the expanding PKI (Van der Kroef, 1965: 359-360). Since 1957, with the accelerating imposition of 'guided democracy', the preservation of this balance power between the Army (on the right), Soekarno (in the center), and the PKI (on the left) has required an atmosphere of almost continuous, real or self-induced crisis.⁹ By 1965 the Party's gains on all political fronts seemed so impressive that it appeared inevitable that Indonesia would soon be completely in Communist hands. (Thomas, 1981: 369-370). The Indonesian power structure was widely seen as an uneasy balance, especially between the Army and the Communist Party (PKI), which President Sukarno maintained to his advantage. In the end a clash between these two organizations was inevitable.

With the passage of time, the PKI had come to dominate the public stage, purveying the thoughts and slogans of the President. The growing strength of the PKI, together with what were perceived as the 'chaos-inducing' social policies of Soekarno, were interpreted

as a direct threat to the Indonesian ruling elite of which the Army was the key active force (Goodfellow, 1975: 1). The political climate in Indonesia up until G30S was characterized by an 'ominous polarization of political forces around two outstanding rivals for the succession of Soekarno, i.e. the PKI and the Army (Crouch, 1973: 2-4). From Army perspective, the PKI was anti-order and therefore anti Indonesian expressions of popular will. Madiun affair in 1948, Unilateral Actions in 1964, and creation of a fifth armed force were among others examples of those threats. In this atmosphere of mutual fear, the attempted coup of G30S took place.

As rumors of Sukarno's ill-health gained currency, every faction began to look to their defenses. Time was running out on the PKI's patient strategy. The Party had hurdled most of the obstacles placed in the way of its climb to power, but it still had to contend with its longstanding enemies, the army generals, with their formidable machine of violence. The stage for PKI was thus set for the denouement of October 1, 1965 (Mortimer, 1969: 20).

1.3 Anticommunist Campaign as a Cornerstone of the New Order

President Soeharto rose to power in the aftermath of a failed coup attempt on September 30, 1965. Shortly after the bloody arrival of his regime of the New Order, national historiography had been subject to tight government control. New Order formulated an official foundation narrative that should be put as a base of 'official mental picture' of all Indonesian populace. This foundation narrative in question, foundation myth to put it less politely, was centered on the regime's version of events associated with what it referred to as "Gestapu"¹⁰ (Goodfellow, 1975: 2; Drakley, 2007: 12).

It is easy to reconstruct myth-making process, begin with rumors spread by army. For public accounts of the seven deaths, As Benedict Anderson (1987: 110) pointed out people must rely almost exclusively on the reporting of two military newspapers, *Angkatan Bersenjata* (The Armed Forces) and *Berita Yudha* (War News), and the ABRI information service that supplied them. The 'Getapu' myth, especially

the 'Lubang Buaya' (Crocodile Hole) myth, as it was aptly described by Drakeley (2007: 11) was a black propaganda campaign which sensationally and highly effectively detailed alleged crimes against humanity, against the Indonesian nation and state, against God, and against the normative Indonesian cosmic and social order. These alleged crimes occurred at a place called *Lubang Buaya* on the night of 30 September-1 October 1965. The official sensational stories plotted by the two news papers portraying PKI as evil as follow.

Angkatan Bersenjata described the deaths as "barbarous deeds in the form of tortures executed beyond the bounds of human feeling" *Perbuatan biadab berupa penganiayaan yang dilakukan diluar batas perikemanusiaan.* (*Angkatan Bertendjata*, 5 October 1965) and *Berita Yudha* wrote about corpses "covered with indications of torture. Traces of wounds all over the bodies, the results of tortures inflicted before they were shot, still covered our heroes' remains." *Bekas2 luka disekudjur tubuh akibat siksaan sebelum ditembak masih membalut tubuh2 pahlawan kita.* (*Berita Yudha*, 5 October 1965) Maj. Gen. Suharto himself was quoted as saying that "it was obvious for those of us who saw [the bodies] with our own eyes what savage tortures had been inflicted by the barbarous adventurers calling themselves 'The September 30th Movement.'" *Djelaslah bagi kita yang menjaksikan dengan mata kepala betapa kedjamnja aniaja yang telah dilakukan oleh petualang2 biadab dari apa yang dinamakan 'Gerakan 30 September.'* (Anderson, 1987: 111-114).

More sensational story was pertaining to Gerwani, as Goodfellow write,

After the arrival of the captured Generals at Halim, PKI-affiliated women's organization, Gerwani, had stripped naked performed the luscious 'Dance of the Fragrant Flowers' before PKI cadres and Airforce.... The frenzied women practiced ritual mutilation and eyes and genitals gouging, before engaging in sexually obscene acts with the spectators. Aidit himself awarded medals to the most depraved.

To make this propaganda look more convincingly, *Berita Yudha*, 4 October 1965 published "honest confession" of fifteen-year-old, three months' pregnant Djamilah, nicknamed the "Srikandi of Lubang Buaya" who is reported to have confessed the following story:

There were some 500 people collected there, 100 of whom were women. Small knives and razor blades were distributed. I only got a razor blade. From far we saw a short fat person entering; he was in his pajamas. His hands were tied with a red cloth and red cloth was also tied over his eyes. Our leader Dan Ton ordered to beat up this person, and then they started stabbing with those small knives at his genitals. The first one, as we noticed, to beat and stab the genitals of that person was the chair of Gerwani Tandjung Priok. Then other friends followed... after that we ourselves joined in torturing that person. All the hundred women did like wise and were witnesses. (Aveling, 1975: iii; Wieringa, 2003: 80).

The black propaganda were completely successful and the effects were horrific, provoke and raise an anti-communist frenzy, a mindless urge to kill PKI. PKI were publicly vilified as traitors, devils, and sexual dissolute child murderers (Goodfellows, 1975: 5). Lubang Buaya myth as first disseminated warrants serious attention because of the important role it played in mobilizing and motivating the Army-civilian coalition which crushed the PKI through the mass killings and mass detentions (Drakeley, 2007: 14-15). In Indonesian collective memory, as shaped by Soeharto regime, G30S was a pretext for mass murder (Roosa, 2006: 21-33).

In 1987, however, surprised with the objective description of the autopsy reports on the bodies of the murdered Generals, Benedict Anderson concludes convincingly that there were absolutely no ghastly mutilations of eyes and genitals as had been reported in the press. He decided to translate the autopsy reports in full for the scholarly community. All the stories about torture and mutilation in Lubang Buaya complete fabrications.

Additionally there were no strong indications that PKI officially masterminded the coup. Three researchers at the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project-Ruth McVey, Frederick Bunnell, and Benedict Anderson, in their well-known document namely 'Cornell Paper' (January 10, 1966), entitled "A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965 Coup in Indonesia," which seriously questioned the view that the Communists had masterminded the coup, suggesting instead that the evidence pointed to severe intra-Army conflicts as the most likely cause. (Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, 1996b). Professor W. F. Wertheim,

of the University of Amsterdam, a leading specialist on modern Indonesia, has also regarded it a “highly probable” that the coup was “an internal army affair” (Van der Kroef, 1971: 557).

1.4 Making and Evoking Memory

The army successfully blamed the coup attempt on the PKI and proceeded with a campaign to eliminate communism and leftist thinking in Indonesia. Anti-communism, together with emphasis on the Five Principle of the nation (Pancasila) and the 1945 Constitution, became transcendent basis of the state (see Vickers and McGregor, 2005: 44; Wood, 2005: 123-125). The new regime emphasized the centrality of these ideas through indoctrination program that operate through educational and work-place institutions, and through media and education systems.

Heryanto (1999: 151) notes that Indonesia’s New Order authoritarianism would not have existed nor survived so well without the magical power of the discursive phantom of the ‘Communist threat’. That powerful discourse was, in turn, only possible because of the devastating 1965 mass killings that took around one million lives in less than four months, ranking it as one of the bloodiest murders in modern history.

The New Order State making and evoking memory through a campaign that depicted the army under General Soeharto as the great saviors of a nation on the brink of destruction. For the Suharto regime not only justified its rise to power in terms of suppression of the Communist movement, but deliberately maintained a sense of danger, and fuelled fears of the recurrence of the events of 1965-66, as a mechanism of social control. The term “Communist”, as Ariel Heryanto explains, became a “floating signifier” which could become attached to anyone or anything, undermining the legitimacy of their existence (Heatley, 2006). Citizens set up hyper-obedient practices, reproducing the fear of Communist threat and reflecting it back to state authorities.

The milestone of the remembrances that contributed greatly in anti-communist fever will be discussed briefly below.

1.4.1 Lubang Buaya Monument and the PKI Treachery Museum

Lubang Buaya Monument and the PKI Treachery Museum became cornerstones for New Order government in the making and evoking collective memory of Indonesian people. The places have become the central site for the construction of memories is an official warning about danger of resurgent communism to convince the heinous of PKI. The idea to evoke memories was raised in 1981 because of the emergence of a young generation born after 1965. Two projects emerged for which Nugroho Notosusanto¹¹ was responsible, namely a museum and a film about the coup attempt. Museum and Monumen Pancasila Sakti, in which Nugroho personally curated includes diorama representations of the prelude to the coup attempt, the actual event and its aftermath, as well as portraits of the heroes and displays of their original blood-stained clothes and personal artifacts.

The imagination of ‘horrific episodes’ in the night of 30 September movement experienced in Lubang Buaya have been reconstructed to exclude the PKI from the nation and even from perceptions of human culture. The well itself has been turned into a marble shrine complete with a temple roof intended for the veneration of anti-communism. The museum boasts two vast stories. Models of wood and papier mache behind glass walls depict every incident in which the PKI was involved since 1945. It is the museum of the victors of 1965 and 1966, intended to create the impression of a treacherous, murderous, and thieving PKI being confronted by the sincere, invincible army –the true defender of the people (Wieringa, 2003: 83-84). It also contains photographic murals, composed of pictures taken at Lubang Buaya as well as other places. The pictures of the bodies of the generals remarkably show no signs of razor-blade cuts, and there are no bloody patches around the men’s genital areas. The uniforms displayed in another room also show no signs of the atrocities the young women supposedly committed at Lubang Buaya.

The monument on the same site, *Monumen Pancasila Sakti Lubang Buaya* (The Monument of the Holy Pancasila), is a large, semi-circular construction in front of a pillar and a statue of the Garuda, the national eagle, and a bas-relief presenting the story of the events

leading up to the general's murders covers its massive pentagonal pedestal.¹² Statues of the slain generals and lieutenant in full military attire and militaristic poses are prominently displayed on a platform. Beneath the statues is a retelling of Soeharto's account of Indonesia's history since 1945. In describing the central part of the mural Saskia E. Wieringa provides an excellent social and historical overview of the slander campaign against Gerwani and the PKI in 1965, which goes some way to facilitating the ideological foundation for the New Order military rule:

The generals are being clubbed and thrown into the well. They are surrounded by representations of women. To the left three women are standing. One of them is dressed in a very sexual way and argues defiantly with a man. Next to her are two dancing women, one of whom is acting out the so-called "*tarian harum bunga*" (dance of the fragrant flower), which symbolizes the young women allegedly seducing the kidnapped generals. Above the well, another woman is leaning against a tree. She is clad in uniform trousers and a blouse, which clearly reveals her full breasts. A knife hangs on her belt. Her posture is similarly defiant. The next scene in the mural is dominated by overpowering figure of General Soeharto. Under his left arm, two women are standing, heads down, and one of them is carrying a baby. The figure of General Soeharto has turned those defiant, seductive, dangerous, and castrating women into symbols of obedience and motherhood. The last scene shows the all-powerful General and President Soeharto in front of what is presumably a courtroom. Absolute military and legal power is his (Wieringa, 2003: 84).

During the New Order regime, the monument and museum were routinely included in school history tour. Not surprisingly, nothing was said about the murders of hundreds of communist's and others that followed this event.

1.4.2 School Text Book and Annual Ceremony

After the crackdowns of the G30S in 1965, political controls over academic life in Indonesia were among the most intrusive in the world (Human Right Watch, 1998: 15). The major organized power behind the New Order government was the armed forces.¹³ As noted earlier,

the major strategies were reviewed under two headings, restricting/controlling and indoctrinating.

In 1975, Department for Culture and Education published six-part official national history text *the Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*.¹⁴ It mandarin was Nugroho Notokusanto, who directed the military historical center (*Pusat Sejarah ABRI*) before becoming education minister in the early 1980s. The official version of the 1965 tragedy found in this authorized national history was the army's version of the course of events. The thesis is the coup attempt on the eve of October 1 was actually masterminded by the PKI, and that the army role has been the savior of the nation when it crushed by PKI. As it was accurately described by Hoadly (2005: 10-11), a continual theme is that the party had acted traitorously. Representations of the torture allegedly carried out at Lubang Buaya also replicated in school texts. The book does not make any mention of the extensive massacre, detained, torture, and purging of great number of PKI leaders and allies without trial.

During New Order regime, 1 October was renowned as the *Hari Kesaktian Pancasila* (The Supernatural Efficacy of Pancasila Day) in which Indonesia 'saved' from the treachery of PKI. This state-sponsored representation is a national holiday to commemorate the fall of the PKI, when Indonesia was saved from communism. President Soeharto used to lead a solemn ceremony at Lubang Buaya.

1.4.3 Film "Pengkhiranatan G30S/PKI"

As it was mentioned above, Nugroho Notokusanto was also the person in charge of the film project entitled *Pengkhiranatan G30S/PKI* ("The Treachery of the 30 September Movement/Indonesian Communist Party). Although the film was made by Brigadier General Dwipayana and directed by Arifin C. Noer, the film script was based on Nugroho's historiography and he, as editor, also made final decisions on the film content (McGregor, 2005: 218).

The story of the film was official version of New Order regime about what happened in September 30 and October 1, 1965 in Jakarta. Soeharto played the central role. Some observer even asserted that Soeharto's role had been elevated to almost a 'personality cult'.¹⁵ For

more than one decade (1984 to 1997) the film was shown constantly to groups of school children, and broadcast yearly on television in primetime. School children were also obligated to see it at the local cinema.

This is the regime's propaganda film of the G30S affair. During this four-hour epic "reconstruction", this film account the way Soeharto decisively took over the reins of power in the days following the coup attempt on 1 October 1965 highlighted the "treacherous" role of the PKI. The film depicting in grisly detail the kidnapping, torturing and killing of each of the army generals by vicious communists in the September 30th attempted coup. Gerwani and Pemuda Rakyat were portrayed as frenzied killers at Lubang Buaya. Gerwani also performing the "dance of fragrant flower" while torturing the generals.

The medium of film played a powerful role in the New Order era in instilling the regime's version of this history. To this day the film still has a powerfully influential propaganda in telling the official story. This film also didn't portray the mass arrests and killings. Ariel Heryanto (2006: 16) aptly described this film as a product of state terrorism.¹⁶

1.5 Against the Amnesia: The Role of Indonesian Writers

One of the most important consequences of the rise of Soeharto was the progressive militarization of Indonesian society. Under the New Order, the chief function of ABRI became internal security. As one observer of the Indonesian military stated it: Indonesia in the New Order period under President Soeharto, capitulated three distinctive and institutionalized pattern of control of the Indonesian population: *militarization, comprehensive domestic political surveillance, and intermittent but persistent state terror* (Tanter, 1990). Therefore, the vilification of the radical left in the aftermath of the coup attempt and the increasing political prominence of ABRI had important long-term consequences for art production, intellectual and academic life. One important legacy of 1965 was what Indonesia sociologist Franz Magnis-Suseno called the authorities a despicable habit of accusing

dissidents and individuals involved in human rights advocacy of being infected with communism.¹⁷

Individuals suspected of having leftist affiliations, including large numbers of teachers, writers, and student activists, were among roughly one million citizens imprisoned in the wake of the coup attempt. Well-known writers Pramoedya Anata Toer and Rivai Apin were those who exile to Buru Island. Those accused of having been members of an organization banned in the mid-1960s are under constant surveillance, often face restrictions on their freedom of movement, have no right to vote, have to report regularly to the police, and are banned from holding jobs in the civil service, which includes all teachers in government schools and universities, and from became the government's chief ideological weapon against political opponents and dissenters.

In this difficult situation, however, small numbers of Indonesian writers have confronted the need to construct alternative paradigm in an effort to circumvent official perspectives.

1.5.1 False Consciousness

During 1970 and 1980, there were about 210 novels published in Indonesia, consisting of 60 serious novels and 150 popular novels (Sumarjo, 1981: 38). However only 4 novels (1.9%) dealing with 1965 tragedy.

The representations of the 1965 tragedy in literature were more than mere human mimesis and more than the aesthetic remains. They have a certain attitude or range of attitude toward 'ideology,' a term that describes the ways in which texts and institutions conceal or rationalize motives of domination. Its principal current meaning can be abbreviated as "false consciousness" (Goodheart, 1997: 2). It is the text, whatever form it takes in cultural and intellectual life, that exhibit false consciousness; it is the ideology critic who discovers the truth that the text conceals.

In the specific case of Indonesia, amidst the repressive military regime, almost all Indonesian writers in fact begin to employ similar tactics. These writers set their narratives primarily within the context of the official government perception of history of 1965 tragedy.

In "A Women and Her Children", Gerson Poyk (1966) haunted by his memories of those left behind after the Coup of September 1965, undertakes a personal inventory of the victims through a parody of the personal, political, and literary spheres of exile. By chronicling the daily activities of the protagonist and her children through the use of memory, Gerson Poyk "re-presents" official line-policy that all PKI allies are deserved to die. "I have sinned against Pancasila and deserved to die. Hadijah and children do not. Forgive them" (p. 139). In this short story, we can find the dreadful effect of black propaganda of Lubang Buaya.

"One man can't stop the lava pouring out of a volcano."

"People aren't lava."

"The lava from Lubang Buaya," he replied quietly. "A strange lava, full of cause-and-effect and action-and-reaction. It was all unplanned. The holes spewed up the lava, it spread in a chain-reaction pattern like an atomic bomb. Thousands of people have died. Your husband too. I watched him die last night." (Poyk, 1966: 140).

In "Death," Mohammad Sjoekoer (1969: 27-28), prejudice that was built by army has been spread nation wide, that should 'we' do not kill 'them', then 'they' will certainly kill 'us' even more cruelty.

"Huh!" You are all a lot of stupid fairies. We should be grateful that it's not us there. They failed. They could have taken over, then we'd be the ones to suffer. Maybe something even worse."

"They've sinned. They beat and fought everyone who wasn't on their side. Their teachings changed them into a pack of wild animals, ready to take power any way they could. And they tried to. But God is merciful. Truth and justice will always prevail at the right time. Tonight is the right time" (Soekoer, 1969: 27).

In "War and Humanity", Usamah (1969) asserts the need of being fearless without worrying to kill communist followers.

It was war and had the PKI won, what happened to Sri might have happened to me. Such things may have been necessary and common, but I couldn't watch them happen. Without the commandant, the team, the soldiers who taught the communist the same lesson they taught Sri, Mrs. Y and Dr. X, we might still be fighting the 30th September Movement (Usamah, 1969: 234).

The current varieties of criticism share a mistrust of the text's explicit claims. If, for example, the text affirms a set of ideas, the critic will try to elicit the underlying motives that may compromise or contradict these ideas (Goodheart, 1997: 2). Ideological interpretation pays a particular attention to the silences and gap in discourse.

1.5.2 Silent Witness of the 1965 Horror

Almost all literary works that represent 1965 tragedy tell us about the particular violence with a general history of brutality and repression. Facts that people are innocence is ignoring by authorities. In Ahmad Tohari (1885), the inhabitants of "Dukuh Paruk", who do not know what has happened to them should be taken prisoner in 1966 and Dukuh Paruk should be burned down. Tohari gives a witness about their innocence.

(Sakarya, an elder or *kamitua* of Dukuh Paruk) "Wait a minute. According to you, we are the oppressed. But aren't you mistaken? We don't feel at all oppressed, really we don't. We have been living here in peace since long ago"

"That's just it. You don't know how they oppress the people. Even in the time of your forefathers the oppressors were most unjust..."

"But who were the oppressors?"

"The imperialists, capitalists, colonialists, and their accomplices. Who else?!"

"Now, that's what we don't understand. We've never known them. Your story sounds crazy to us" (Ahmad Tohari, *The Dancer of Dukuh Paruk*, 1985: 117).

In "A Women and Her Children", Gerson Poyk (1966) express his objection on the perpetrators attitude that he figures out as 'animal viciousness'. Killing people without any human consideration is the effect of the 30th September Movement. Trying to protect children was also very dangerous.

"Don't be too hasty, brothers. I was trying to help the children." His voice shook before the animal viciousness which lured behind their every action.

"Who are you?" one man asked.

"K was my enemy."

"Why are you so worried about his kids?"

"My enemy was an idea and the consequences of that idea. The person was separate." (Poyk, 1966. p. 144).

Kipanjikusmin (1968) in "Cain's Lamb" reports that the killings were absolutely brutal and the civil society can only witness these atrocities without doing anything to intervene.

Suddenly he began to cry hysterically. The world seemed barren. The words began to pour out. "Instead I found a hell. The whole family dead. The house reduced to rubble. Why did you do it? All right, so my father had a position in the Communist Party. Only this town could kill a whole family and burn its house as well. And the rest of you just stood by and watched."

The facts that mass killing was horrific without any mercy could be found in Martin Aleida's "Dark Night" (1970: 39). We could only imagine how life turn became disaster for those who got in touch with PKI followers.

"The people don't discriminate at a time like that. They have borne their anger and bitterness a long time. When it finally explodes, one cannot expect them to be rational. We can both understand that. When anger and bitterness are king, intellect goes under. They were all killed. Partini, her mother, and other children, were hiding their uncle; he was a communist. The families of communists in other areas have disappeared as well, you know. The fact that Mrs. Mulyo couldn't read and that her children knew nothing about politics made no difference. Politics is blind. They all went into the river." (Martin Aleida's "Dark Night" (1970: 39).

The black propaganda of Lubang Buaya and the description of what Gerwani done at that place have a horrific effect in killing women of PKI allies.

"It was awful, my son. They killed women too. It was said that the Gerwani had been involved in Lubang Buaya: the people showed them no mercy. I found some of their bodies on the side of the river south of Kuta. Their guts hung out; their backs were full of knife wounds, carvings of open-mouthed crocodiles." Wayan shook his

head and dragged on his palm-leaf cigarette (Kipanjikusmin, 1967. "Star of Death").

In fact, the massacre was not a spontaneous deed. Some of the mass killings were well organized by army. For army, killing of woman, especially those who were member of Gerwani, are a punitive purge because of what they did in Lubang Buaya. As Roosa (2006: 21) has pointed out, it is common in Indonesian political discourse to conflate the movement and the subsequent mass violence as if both constituted a single event.

I can still remember how the soldiers reacted. They had probably seen the mutilated corpses. Several of them came to the town hall in a truck, shooting into the air and yelling cynically: "Long live Bung Karno and the Gerwani! Long live Bung Karno and the Gerwani!" I was startled by the noise and even more surprised when they crowded into the guard house shouting "Good night!" My anxiety gradually diminished when I realized that it was the army. They asked for the usual thing: a list of names, information about the prisoners.... Sri and Mrs. Y were on the list.... I couldn't objectively report that Sri had been imprisoned and executed without even being interrogated first (Usamah, 1969. "War and Humanity").

The chief purpose of literature is telling a story (Bressler, 2007:14). Literature does not define facts or bits and pieces of information, for example the world courage, rather, it shows us a courageous character acting courageously. By doing so, literature concretizes an array of human values, emotions, actions, and ideas in story form. What Indonesian writers said, however, emphasized that the practice of mass killing were a legalized form of human abuse, a violation of human rights.

1.6 Concluding Remarks

The mass killing of PKI and its affiliated organizations following the failed coup of 30 September Movement and the severe discrimination policy on job market and else where for years has left sincere sufferings to their family. It is clear that PKI was a scapegoat of Soeharto systematic social and political engineering to gain political power (Purwanto, 2001: 115).

Returning to my discussion on the distinction Indonesian writers made between literary representation and state-sponsored representation of the 1965 tragedy, I must conclude that Indonesian writers have carried out a similar range of expression based on the human perceived needs of man. However, both representations have worked towards different goals. Politically state-sponsored representations fought for a transformation of society from what they perceived it as unordered to new order society. New Order regime consolidated its power, however, it progressively tightened controls on expression. In doing so, they have deliberately created a forged history and built monument, museum and film as a powerful tools for fostering national unity. Since those state-sponsored representation were used by the New Order regime in official propaganda, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the memory of the 1965 tragedy is an endeavor caught between the push of politics and the pull of people emotion.

Literary works, as a tool of people emotion, reflect social realities of 1965 tragedy. Their imagery combines the conventions of behavior and appearance appropriate to the authorities at New Order time. The works, however, have some sensitivity to the social implications of its representational modes, to the documentary value as aspects of social history, and to the subtle interaction between social and artistic conventions.

Memory of the past is not a fixed and independent entity but a construction - the way an individual or collective remember what has happened to them or around them. I want to sum up by underlining the theory of Halbwachs (1992) that memory needs continuous feeding from collective sources. If certain memories are inconvenient or burden them, they can always oppose to them —the sense of reality inseparable from their present life. New Order ideology and anticommunism fever may never die. But that should not stop us from trying to see what we can do to fade them away.

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Footnotes

- ¹ First draft of this paper was the conference paper submitted to the 3rd Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asia Studies, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore in Singapore 28-29 July 2008.
- ² I would like to express his gratitude to Prof. Dr. Lily Kong and Dr. Gavin Jones, the director and former director of the Asia Research Institute of National University of Singapore for providing me with the opportunity to conduct research in Singapore in May to July 2008. I would also like to thank Dr. Vedi Hafiz (my mentor) and Dr. Kay Mohlman for their helpful suggestions and comments, which have contributed to my work on this paper. I also owe much inspiration to my colleague and friend at Cohort 3 of Asia Graduate Scholarship, Marco Mahin and Mohammad Feriansyah, to whose memory this paper is lovingly dedicated.
- ³ Bertrand Russell as quoted by Heryanto (1999: 151) suggested that in four months, five times as many people died in Indonesia as in Vietnam in twelve years' or as much as 500 times the number killed in 1989 in Tiananmen Square, Beijing.
- ⁴ Pancasila means five basic principles of Indonesia's political philosophy, which consist of religion, humanism, nationalism, democracy, and socialism.
- ⁵ Peter Dale Scott, "The United States and the Overthrow of Soekarno, 1965-1967", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.58, No.2, (Summer, 1985), pp.239-264 aptly described this period as 'ill-understood period'. Much of what happened can never be documented; and of the document that survives much both controversial and unverifiable. The events surrounding the coup attempt remain unclear and some participants themselves described it as an internal military affair, but the government subsequently maintained that it was exclusively the work of the PKI. The existence of a CIA sponsored 'Council of Generals' has never been proven.
- ⁶ Claiming that the original "coup" had been masterminded by the PKI the enormous bloodshed military had engineered possibly justified as punishment for a murderous Communist plot.
- ⁷ For detailed and sophisticated analysis of the complexities of the movement, see Leslie Palmier, 1971 "The 30 September Movement in Indonesia" in: *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.5, No.1, (1971), pp. 1-20, Cambridge University Press. And Justus M. van der Kroef, 1977. "Interpretations of the 1965 Indonesian Coup: A Review of the Literature Author(s)" in *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.43, No.4, (Winter, 1970-1971), pp.557-577. *Pacific Affairs*, University of British Columbia.
- ⁸ Antoine C. A. Dake (1973: 320-323) and Rob Goodfellow (1995: 1-2) even noted that by August 1965, the PKI estimated that its strength consisted of approximately 20 million members and affiliates of the following: PKI membership 3.5 million, Pemuda Rakjat (youth) 3 million, SOBSI (unions) 3.5 million, BTI (peasants), Gerwani (women) 3 million, Lekra (writers and artists) 5 million, HIS (scholars)

- 70 thousand. Under its chairman, Dipa Nusantara Aidit, the PKI developed a vast organizational structure with 'formidable energies and a high degree of internal coherence'.
- ⁹ For more detailed discussion about 'konfrontasi', the fifth Armed Forced, and balance of political power in Indonesia, see John O. Sutter, *Two Faces of Konfrontasi: "Crush Malaysia" and the Gestapu* in *Asian Survey*, Vol.6, No.10, (Oct., 1966), pp.523-546. University of California Press.
- ¹⁰ This term was coined by the Director of the Armed Forces news paper *Angkatan Bersenjata*, Brig-Gen Sugandhi with the intention of 'investing it with the aura of evil' (Goodfellow, 1975: 2). The acronym "Gestapu", with obvious similarity with the term "Gestapo" (itself an acronym for the infamous political police of Nazi Germany). Using selected letters it was constructed from the Indonesian for 30 September Movement (*Gerakan September Tiga Puluh*). (See Drakery, 2007; Goodfellow, 1995).
- ¹¹ About the central importance of Nugroho Notosusanto and official narrative to the legitimacy of New Order regime, see Katharine E. McGregor, 2005. "Nugroho Notosusanto: The Legacy of a Historian in the Service of an Authoritarian Regime" (pp.209-232) in Mary S. Zurbuchen (Ed.), 2005. *Beginning to Remember: The Past in the Indonesian Present*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- ¹² For detailed description about Lubang Buaya as asite of memory, see Klaus H.Schreiner, 2005 "Lubang Buaya: Histories of Trauma and Sites of Memory (pp.261-277) in Mary S. Zurbuchen (Ed.), 2005. *Beginning to Remember: The Past in the Indonesian Present*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- ¹³ For detailed account pertaining to the strategies of political control by army by formed BAKIN (State Intelligence Coordination Board), KOPKAMTIB (the central agency for in telligence operations), and broader to Ministry of Education., see Thomas, R. Murray, 1981. "Indonesian Education: Communist Strategies (1950-1965) and Governmental Counter Strategies (1966-1980)" in *Asian Survey*, Vol.21, No.3, (Mar., 1981), pp.369-392. University of California Press.
- ¹⁴ New editions appearing in 1977, 1981-83 and 1984. In the preface to the fourth and fifth editions the minister of culture and education stated that the book had become standard work on the subject and that it should set the norms for instruction in the nation's history by providing the factual basis for school textbooks on all levels. See Anna-Greta Nilsson Hoadley, 2005. *Indonesian Literature vs. New Order Orthodoxy: The Aftermath of 1965-1966*. pp 5-11. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.
- ¹⁵ See for example, Gerry van Klinken, 2001. "The Battle for History after Suharto: Beyond Sacred Dates, Great Men and Legal Milestones", in *Critical Asian Studies*, 33: 3 pp.323-350.

- ¹⁶ The film begins with depicting of a peaceful atmosphere of nature: the rhythm of eternal tranquil nature. Inside a mosque, there were clean faces that became one with the morning atmosphere. They were reciting the Subuh prayer. Suddenly, without any clear reasons, appear a number of killers. Door were smashed, reflections of weapons flashing. Blood splashed, spurted in all directions.
- ¹⁷ See Human Right Watch, 1998, pp.11-13. *Academic Freedom in Indonesia: Dismantling Soeharto-Era Barriers*. New York, Washington, London, Brussels: Human Right Watch.