

# THE WORLD OF SIMULACRA AND ROMANTICS IN THE DI KAKI BUKIT CIBALAK- A NOVEL WRITTEN BY AHMAD TOHARI

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Hyperreality is a tool of the world of simulakra. This tool is used by the author of the novel In the Bukit Cibalak to invite the reader toward real events that actually happened. One of the nature of literature is fictional. Through the creation of excess fiction, the storyline becomes as real as possible. On the contrary, between the real and the desired (the ideal) needs to be fought for to make it happen. Therefore, the idea or ideology of the text becomes a tool (tool) as well as an ideological site of various interests. The problem studied first needs to be seen from the structure of the text from an ideological point of view in order to find a worldview model of the text. The second problem is how the romantic worldview and the world of simulacra in the text. Through Goldmann's dialectical method, it was found that the structure of the text was built through pairs of opposition between rural-urban, male-female, poor-rich, real and ideal. Romantic worldview, which is the union between the real and the ideal can be realized through the character Pambudi as an agent. The world of simulacra is an interesting tool as a media for ideas such as intermingling in interethnic marriages.*

**Keywords:** *worldview, romantic, simulacra, hyperreality.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Novel in Kaki Bukit Cibalak (hereinafter abbreviated as DKBC) by Ahmad Tohari is very likely a representation of the state of society in which the text was produced. It could be that the event depicted in a literary work is a record of the past which enable the present of the author to be involved in it. Gadamer (1976) has warned that the present historicity of the interpreter cannot be ignored in interpreting a literary work. The

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interpreter experiences what is called self transposition, that is the self-transposition of the interpreter in the hermeneutic circle (see also in Nursahid, 1998).

In that case, the interpreter or respondent to the events around him, namely the author of DKBC when reading an interesting event in the past, is processed and adjusted, bent, and even recreated according to current tastes. Literature is not only a cultural document of its time as Grebstein's view (1977., see also in Damono, 1978: 3) but can also be an opportunity according to Ian Watt (1969) as a reflection of its society, namely the community, not only when the work was published but the historicity of the present becomes determinant factor.

As an example, it is depicted in the stories in DKBC. Tanggir Village which is depicted in the DKBC story, is located at the foot of the Cibalak hill. The hill is in the Tinggarjaya region, although conditions are very different now. In the Tinggarjaya region, the village where the author lives adjacent to a hill called the Cibalak hill. It was said that the choice of the village head with all the local political intrigues occurred in the Tanggir village. This event is very likely to depict the conditions at each stage of the choice of leaders in the surrounding village even in parts of the former Banyumas residency. As the following quote.

Pati police station intensively combed the practice of gambling ahead of the election of the village head simultaneously this Saturday (12/12). So far the authorities have carried out arrest operations (OTT) of at least 10 cases of the election gambling along with evidence of a total money of up to Rp.100 million ...

The quotation taken from the Madura Tribun Daily, Com illustrates how in the real world the election of village heads is always cheating, as illustrated in the DKBC novel. In fact, the cheating has started before the village head's choice including the gambling, the selection of prospective candidates and the stages of the device selection stage.

The former apparatus of Pacewetan village, Pace sub-district, Nganjuk Regency, Imam Mughni came to Nganjuk District Government. The arrival of Imam Mughni with a number of his supporters demanded that Nganjuk Regency Government put his name as one of the candidates or implementers of the Pilkades be postponed ... "We feel cheated and persecuted by being removed as one of the candidates before fighting in the village head election of Pacewetan. Mughni said at the Nganjuk district government, Wednesday (11/20/2019) ...

Meanwhile, in the Kebumen area, dozens of cases of alleged violations of the Kebumen Pilkades were reported as reported by the Detik News Daily on Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

The simultaneous election of 346 villages in 26 sub-districts in Kebumen Central Java on June 25 did not run smoothly. A dozen of them were reported cheating...

Some excerpts of social phenomena above raise a fundamental problem, namely how far literary works are able to reflect society outside the text. It is how relevant the DKBC novel portrays the social reality in the text area that was raised, how true is the story the author described as a social picture of the community around the Tanggir and Banyumas areas.

The second issue is the extent to which DKBC's literary works record events that exist in the area being told and outside the text. Do the events depicted in the text have something in common with the things or events outside the text? In his other work, the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (RDK), he described a disaster of *tempe bongkreng* poisoning, a type of *tempe* made from *bungkil* (coconut oil residue).

...If anyone in Dukuh Paruk ever attended school, he could have guessed it was almost twelve o'clock at midnight, 1946. All the inhabitants of the hamlet had slept soundly, except Santayib, Srintil's father. He was finishing his work that night... but everything changed by midday. A child ran from the rice field while holding the stomach. At the front door of his house he vomited, staggered, and fell out... (Tohari, RDP, 2003: 21-24).

The quote above illustrates that around 1946 in the Banyumas region, the *tempe bongkreng* poisoning disaster occurred and took dozens of lives. Can the RDP novel be said to be a work capable of recording and becoming a cultural document of the surrounding community? To what extent is the work capable of recording such a heartbreaking event?

The third problem, regarding the content that exists in the intrinsic structure of the text in this case the novel. Although each novel genre is different as stated by Martin (1986: 18). In full, in its introduction the *Recent Theories of Narrative* states as follows.

...*The novel was distinguished from other genres by its content and subject matter—the representation of life is all its diversity...It was in fact by breaking away from conventional forms and imaginary situations that the novel came into existence; thus the freedom from formal constraints can be seen as defining characteristic...*

The structure contains complex elements. These elements can be obtained, among others, through understanding words, sentences, or discourse in the text of the story. Such elements, for example moral values, social values such as didactic values contained in the elements of the story become very valuable lessons.

Pambudi's behavior is an example of good behavior, caring and empathic for disadvantaged people. The DKBC novel tells the story of a kindhearted young man as a hero in fighting for humanity named Pambudi. He got many opponents when fighting for the truth he believed. The setting of the place chosen by the author is around the village or rural areas that are still underdeveloped and simple. The story of DKBC along with the struggle of its character set in a romantic worldview which needs to be proven.

Researcher is suspicious whether this event is related to the author's compassionate behavior. Lest Pambudi is a fictional character used as a tool to accommodate the author's ideas or ideology. Outside the text, that is in the real world, the events experienced by Pambudi are very difficult to find now.

The Pambudi character is well-behaved. This can be read from the beginning to the end of the story. He is a young man who keens to and likes to help people so that this character always finds luck, for example he is being helped a lot by other characters. Pak Barkah's character, for example, as in the following quote, helped Pambudi by loading advertisements as well as writing the editors.

"How is it, Dik Pambudi? Do you agree?" "Wow, don't ask my approval. I don't know anything about advertising, even though I listen to it all the time from radio and television. "Oh, alright, alright ... (Tohari, 2019: 39).

In the DKBC story, the character Barkah also helped Pambudi to make him a journalist by giving concessions while studying.

In short, literary works are the result of a long process of contemplation of their authors as members of society who care about their environment (Wellek and Waren, 1978., see also Teeuw, 1984). Literary works are thus the result of observations of the author of the life around him. The following excerpt can be used as an example that the author must have observed his environment before writing his work.

In a discussion at the Indonesian Language and Literature Department in 2015 Tohari stated that in the process of creating his work a preliminary study is needed, namely understanding whether his writing is a personal experience or the experience of others to be digested intellectually.

To write a serious work requires serious knowledge.  
Decades of settling and wrestling to portray  
Srintil. I have to do a field study about ronggeng. I meet  
some *kamituwa* to ask questions and enjoy the arts.

In line with Ahmad Tohari's opinion, other novelist such as NH Dini in a discussion at SMA 5 Semarang a few months before her passing stated as follows.

Writing is a prolonged repetition process. Starting from doing scientific research and through the author's sensory experience itself. Many reading books of knowledge will enrich... (Early, 2018)

Triwikromo (2017) has the same opinion,

...the ideas of my short stories and poetries I got abroad were not only for one day, but for days and through deposition and subsequent processes...

However, the author is very likely to manipulate recorded events so that the story becomes more interesting. Hyperreality becomes inevitable to describe events from the real world to the image of the unreal world.

Various authors' ideas are expressed through writing in various ways. The text of the story becomes a place where various authors' ideas or ideologies reside. The text thus acts as an ideological site or ideas, both the author's ideas and the events they record. The idea needs to be conveyed to the reader. Thus, the text is also a means of conveying ideas from the author to the reader. In this context the text becomes an ideological institution or ideas (Williams, 1977., see also Gramsci, 1981 ;; in Supriyanto, 2015: 22).

Therefore, the DKBC novel needs to be dissected. It needs to be investigated, on how the ideology of the text so that it can be reconstructed to the worldview it wants to build. The worldview of the text contains ideas or ideologies that are intended to be conveyed to the reader. The research problems that must be examined are (1) how the structure of the DKBC text is seen from the ideology and (2) how the worldview is built in the text of the DKBC.

## II. METHODS

This research is a literary research included in the family of humanities. Therefore, its approaches, methods, and techniques ranging from data acquisition until data analysis is different from social science research let alone exata science research. The object of research in the form of stories that often provide the opposite picture. The most dominant features of the discourse of the story are fictitious so that the sentences do not automatically provide the truth of the information but must be understood and interpreted. Often the techniques of data acquisition and data analysis in literary research go hand in hand and together (Pradopo, 2003). That is why literary research has particularities such as structuralism theory which can be used as an approach and at the same time as a method of data analysis.

The object of this research is the text of literary works in the DKBC novel. The focus of this research is the ideology of the text that describes the world of simulacra and romantic worldview. The ideology of the text as a whole must be placed within the socio-cultural framework in which the text was produced (Goldmann, 1978., see also in Supriyanto, 2015). Thus, this research not only understands the text autonomously but is placed within its socio-cultural framework. Text is understood not only its intrinsic element but also how it plays its role outside the text.

Therefore, the approach used in this research is the sociology of literature approach. This is due to the fact that understanding the ideology in the text cannot be separated from the historical framework of the text,

both seen in its social and cultural context. The approach of the sociology of literature as stated Faruk (2004) aims to see and study literature in terms of the text and in relation to the text's society.

Data acquisition techniques with semiotic reading techniques, namely the first level of reading techniques which according to Riffaterre (Pradopo, 2003) are called heuristic readings, namely readings based on linguistic rules. In this stage the researcher examines the reading based on linguistic categories and types of words to obtain data that is thought to contain ideological data. This is possible because ideological data are abstract which can only be recognized through understanding words, sentences, or discourse with semiotic techniques namely through reading of signs.

Furthermore, the alleged data was analyzed with a second level semiotic reading technique, namely hermeneutic reading to verify the data. At this stage the researcher analyzed the data through two stages, namely interpreting the data that allegedly contained ideological data that led to simulacra signs. The next step of analysis is carried out through the dialectical method (Goldman, 1976., also see in Faruk (2004). This method is two pairs of opposition from part-whole, understanding-explanation. In the process, the researcher analyzed the intrinsic value of the text with structural analysis (part-whole) so that the mediation of texts with the community outside the text is found. The next step of the model is understood and explained based on Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality to reconstruct the text's worldview.

### **III. DISCUSSION**

#### **The Structure of The Text**

To find the ideological structure of the text, the text is analyzed based on the semiotic structural theory of Lotman (1977). Lotman's view of the structure of the text consists of three parts, namely artistic space, plot, and persona or agent. These three elements are interrelate and determine each other so that the discussion of the story line automatically discusses the persona or agent, and the results can be in the form of artistic space.

DKBC's story begins with the description of the *puyengan* forest located at the foot of the Cibalak hill that has begun to change. Tanggir village is located on the edge of the *puyengan* forest. The village atmosphere is still very underdeveloped and is beginning to know shampoo advertisements, deodorant, plastic goods, one or two motorbikes, pickup trucks, and beauty tools for make up, fragrant bath soaps, and other household appliances made of plastic. It is said that the Tanggir village will carry out the choice of the village head, who is reported and examined because of misappropriation of funds for other purposes which according to most residents is important. A candidate who has the character of cheating and cunning, Mr. Dirgo finally wins the village head election, beating the candidate who is wanted by most citizens because of his honesty and generosity. Pambudi, the youth manager of the village union finally quit after disagreeing with the new village head, Pak Dirga. Various tricks to slander and falsify the cash records of union cash are twisted. Pambudi finally quit the job. He is looking for friends in the city of Yogyakarta to find work while continuing college. Pambudi got a job as a shopkeeper.

It is told Pambudi helped Mbok Ralem to seek medical treatment for free. Through his idea, Mbok Ralem was able to do a surgery. Through the adverts, the donors were moved to help with cost relief, even the hospital made it free because of the doctor's generosity. The news about Mbok Ralem in the newspaper angered the Regent and the District Head so that the Village Chief received a strong reprimand. Pak Dirga's hatred of Pambudi increased. Pak Dirga, in order to take revenge on Pambudi, he was given a spell, his good friend Pambudi was finally persuaded to become a model of the village head to be fed to the district officials.

Pak Barkah finally withdrew Pambudi to become a journalist by giving him free time while studying. Pambudi finally graduated and became close to his employer's son and then he was blessed to marry Pambudi.

After an initial analysis of the DKBC story structure, it was built from opposition in pairs between rural-urban, backward-modern, poor-rich, simple-luxurious, men - women, hard work - gentle. Vertically, the structure of space becomes a village - a city paired with a real one - which is ideal as an archipelago. Living in the village, a man must work hard because of the lack of everything, simple, completely underdeveloped. On the other hand, in the city there is a rich, luxurious, gentle, and modern woman.

Therefore, a life in the village is a life in the real world. On the contrary, for the people of Tanggir, living in a city like Pambudi is a dream (ideal world). The storyline that is built departs from events in the village then moves to the city and back to the village. The plot motion plays exactly the story with a romantic background (Faruk, 2001). Pambudi figures occupy the position of an agent who is able to break through various obstacles in artistic space. He was able to avoid the charge of embezzling village cooperative money, then he was also able to break through the deadlock of Mbok Ralem who could not afford the hospital fees. Pambudi was able to break through the racist partition (the semantic fields of artistic space) when his non-native girlfriend's parents were convinced.

If described, the structure of the text structure becomes as follows.

realistic	– ideal
village	- city
male	– female
poor	- rich
simple	- luxurious
underdeveloped	- modern
Hardwork	– soft work.

### **Romantic and Simulacra View**

The term romantic refers to the worldview concept of ideology which emphasizes the union of the ideal and the real (Supriyanto, 2017). According to Frus (1976: 12., See also in Faruk, 2002: 39) romance or romanticism comes from the word romance, namely the name of the people's language as opposed to Latin in the middle ages. In Indonesian literature, especially the literature work of Balai Pustaka tradition is built from a

romantic worldview as stated by Faruk (2002). Faruk (2002., also see in Supriyanto, 2017: 2) states that the authors of the Literature hall era are shackled by romantic worldview, especially in Balai Pustaka traditional works, as the following quote.

The development of Indonesian novels of the Balai Pustaka expresses a romantic worldview centered on the tension between the ideal world and the real world...

Pambudi character departs from the world of reality that is poor and comes from an underdeveloped region. He aspires to achieve an ideal world, to live in prosperity and well-being. In the beginning, he faced the tension between his dreams, and the reality he faced in his village. Therefore he ran to the city, to the world of his dreams.

Pambudi character must fight for his dream, as a scholar, succeed in living in the city and in his village, as well as fighting for the love that must be realized. The girl he dreams of is an indigenous girl, the employer's child, beautiful, smart, loyal, and rich. After going through various obstacles it turns out he was able to unite between those faced with his dreams. He is a hero in his village and a hero at work.

The romantic worldview between native (male) and non-native (female) romance is the coveted model of the author presented to the reader, the community at large. Outside the text, it is absolutely essential the union between the two. What often happens is that men are from non-indigenous circles while women are indigenous, especially in the year around the publication of the 1970s DKBC novel.

Hyperreality is a device from the world of simulacra. The world of simulacra is a simulation world where humans have lost their subjectivity (Faiz, 2015). Consumption determines social status. In the capitalist system, human relations have been transformed into object relations which are controlled by certain codes or signs. Furthermore Faiz (2015) states that the difference in status is interpreted as a difference in the consumption of marks so that wealth is measured by the number of consumption signs.

Consuming certain objects indicates that we are different or considered to be the same as certain social groups. Human become the objects of objects. Fashion, taste, style, are tools of consumerism. Consumers drive us in our daily lives. Prominent features in the world of simulacra are the superficial trust in what is seen and the loss of public space due to ecstasy of communication (Faiz's term: the intoxication of communication) and the disappearance of private space. Public space and private space are mixed and not maintained.

The world of simulakra is able to create and shift the real into virtual. Hyperreality is the main characteristic of this world. Hyperreality can also be seen in fiction such as novels. All events that caught the attention of the writer were then pondered. Then the ideas emerge. By that, there exists a world of literary works that is similar to the world of simulacra. These ideas can be empathic to condone or deny the reality they see and feel.

The idea is processed through literary means. In the language of formalism the literary means are called *literary divices* (Propp, 1968., see also Nuryatin, 2004). The idea is very likely to respond to a text that has

long appeared (a story or a past event) or something new with the aim of wanting to deny it. The idea is encapsulated through the means of hyperreality to make the world of simulacra or simulachrom (Pourebrahim, 2018) into a form of story.

Signs of hyperreality in the DKBC novel occur when the election of village head event in the Tanggir village is littered by the work of a shaman who is portrayed as being real. The work of a shaman is a work that is very confidential so that not everyone knows. The act of making use of shaman is seen by the community as very taboo because it is contrary to Islamic values and sharia.

It is no secret that a prospective village head must fight to win choices in ways that are not morally and religiously justified. Candidates going to the shaman, as did the character in the DKBC story, is a picture that exists in the social reality of today's society. Pak Dirga, the leader, is a picture of the village head candidates mostly in each election of village head.

...And suddenly everyone's attention was fixed under the johar tree in the corner of the Village Hall yard. There a grandfather was casting a spell. Of course he has been paid by a candidate so that "revelations" come to candidates who have given money. A piece of rattan was being swung on his head... (Tohari, DKBC, 2019: 14)

Hundreds of millions have been gone to bribe voters, even though there are rules to ban it, the practice of distribution is done in secret.

Each candidate has several *botoh* people who have the job of voting. The 'how' is not really considered. So these *botohs* almost always bring trouble on every election of the village administrator. In fact, the slogans did not deserve any trust. They want to work with one goal, money! They can betray the candidate who has paid him if they see more money. The *Botohs* have a partner that is very suitable. They are the bettors ... (Tohari, DKBC, 2019: 14).

Symptoms of *botoh* gambling depicted in the DKBC novel can be explained and seen in the current condition of society. As reported by Suara Merdeka Daily newspaper on Saturday December 21, 2019 reported cases of pilkades gambling. Headline "OTT Botoh Village Election, Secure hundreds of millions of Rupiah" .

By the description of the *puyengan* shrub, is suspected that the author has experienced it sensually. The sensory record he experienced was then contemplated, imagined, developed so that it impresses for the reader. The author's imagination is created to reach the reader's shadow. The reader feels that he has experienced it. The imagination the reader when doing the reading process follows the storyline as if he enters in the context of the reality of the text.

It is very possible that the author of the past saw a real incident at a shrub in Bukit Cibalak, an area in Jati Lawang where the author was born. That region is the author's playing area so it is not strange for the author to be able to describe in such detail when describing and describing the situation of the bush and it is very possible to see and experience it. Childhood and adolescence are the wanderings in life experience, the age of the imaginary world that is able to break through space and time.

Bukit Cibalak. Human thought can prove that in the past, the hill was a layer of the earth's crust at the bottom of the sea. The mighty nature, with the power of tectonists, lifts the layer of the earth's crust above the surface of the sea and even higher. Remnants of a colony of animal shells that used to thrive under sea water, provide the basic material for the formation of a limestone layer that colored Cibalak .. (Tohari , 2019: 67).

From the above quotation, the information obtained is that the author must have read knowledge about the formation of a layer of lime in the world. Then the author observes the Cibalak hills around him.

The representation of past events which is excessively illustrated and reaches the reader's shadow as if the reality being faced is hyperreality.

In the past, the path was a tunnel through a thicket of shrubs. When a buffalo motorcade passed by, their bodies sank under the bush tunnel. Only the sound of cheats hanging on their necks could be heard with a clanging sound, the rhythm was fixed and flat. The surprised kurcica birds flew to squeak. They still did not understand why the buffaloes liked to disturb the peace of the shrub where the little birds nest. Even though the buffaloes have gone deep into the Bukit Cibalak teak forest, the sound of their choruses is still heard ... (Tokari, 2019: 5)

Through the creation of characters and events, the reality that is seen is understood and then presented in the form of a story. The background element can also be used as a means to convey ideas. Likewise, other elements, style of language, theme, and point of view. Thus, literary work is actually a simulation of reality. This is no exception to DKBC novels. This novel cannot be separated from that event.

When the events written in the novel turn out to be beyond real events or conditions it is called hyperreality. Through simulachrome, reality can be shifted into hyperreality and in fact it is a false reality (Baudrilard, 1986). Hyperreality can be interpreted as a product of pseudo reality. In political language the term can be likened to imaging (though not exactly).

Today pseudo reality products obtain fertile ground in social media and other arts media such as through literary works. As a means, literary works are formed through pseudo reality created by the author to convey certain ideas or ideologies. Through the structure of texts such as through the aesthetics of language and other story structures pseudo reality often goes beyond the actual reality. Pseudo reality can only be used through the character elements that are briefly understood as a means of asserting the character of the story. Pseudo media can also be displayed through literary tools or other means. Signs as in semiotics become shifted. What

was the most important (conceptual) marker to be dissected sought its conceptual meaning now shifted precisely to its formal marker or form.

When we drink a glass of coffee, drinking in a stall worth three thousand and one glass is not more valuable compared to drinking coffee in a cafe like *starbuck* which is one cup for fifty thousand. It is not the expensive and not the coffee (the quality) that is desired but the brand (marker) that symbolizes social status. The more branded and expensive, the higher degree of social status in today's simulacra world. The marker is more important than the sign. Quality is unbeatable only because of the brand and place of sale. Mbok Jum village fried chicken, although it is more delicious because it is sold in a warangan at a cheap price, will not be as busy as fried chicken outlet in a mall like CFC.

This kind of symptom can be seen in the DKBC novel, when Mr. Danu returns from his employer with a can of deodorant sprayers, even though the tube is empty. Pak Danu proudly announced to his neighbor that he was the first in his village to know the item.

One afternoon Pak Danu came home from his taukese house. He deliberately stopped several times to the homes of people he knew. Pak Danu wants to show off a tube he stole from Akiat's house, while propaganda with pride. "Yes, this is the armpit medicine that is often broadcasted by the radio and television. This is the item. You just saw the picture or just heard the name, right? But now I have it! In this village I must be the first to have this expensive stuff" ... (Tohari, 2019: 7)

The author of DKBC and his other works certainly uses the means of hyperreality to look for publishers with known trademarks. From a glance the publisher selected by the author pointed to the Gramedia publishers, a publisher who has a rich market share. Gramedia bookstores is famous in big malls in big cities or even in special buildings in big cities.

The world of simulakra is an attractive bargaining value for authors. The choice of the publisher, how to paint the setting of the place, the tools, the time shows the use of the means of hyperreality.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Based on the understanding and analysis of the data it can be concluded that the DKBC novel has an ideological structure built through real opposition pairs - ideal and villages paired with urban opposition as its archipelago. It is through these two archives that the structure of the artistic space is built with the agent of the main character Pambudi (male) trying to break through the semantic terrain of the artistic space in the story. Living in the village of a man must work hard because of the lack of everything, simple, completely backward. On the other hand, in the city there is a rich, luxurious, gentle, and modern woman.

The real must fight for the ideal world. Pambudi tried to unite the two ideals into reality. The romantic worldview between native (male) and non-native (female) romance is the coveted model of the author presented to the reader, the community at large. Outside the text, it is absolutely essential the union between the two. What

often happens is that men are from non-indigenous circles while women are indigenous, especially in the year around the publication of the 1970s DKBC novel.

The world of simulacra is important for authors. It becomes a way to reach the ideological reach of the author's ideas to the reading public. Through the means of hyperreality, bargaining is taken into account. The choice of the publisher, how to paint the setting of the place, tools, time shows the use of hyperreality.

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