The Representation of Political Education and Coalition of Power in Indonesia in the Novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan

Eko Triono¹, Andayani², Nugrahaeni Eko Wardani³

{ekotrionopbis3@student.uns.ac.id¹, andayani@staff.uns.ac.id², nugraheniekowardani 99@staff.uns.ac.id³}

Sebelas Maret University Ir. Sutami Street, No. 36, Jebres, Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia^{1,2,3}

Abstract. As a literary work, novel is often used by its authors to criticize how reign is gained and obtained within a certain social system. The novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan contains a representation of reign in Halimunda, the imaginary area stated in the novel as part of the territory of the Republic of Indonesia. This research's goals is to describe and explain the representation of (1) political education and (2) power coalitions in Eka Kurniawan's *Cantik Itu Luka*. This is qualitative descriptive research with literature study. The data in this study is the information related to the subject matter sourced from books, articles and similar media. Data analysis was done descriptively.Results of this study show that in Eka Kurniawan's *Cantik Itu Luka*, (1) a critical attitude towards political education; ideologicalization, regeneration, mass mobilization, and partisan participation and (2) a depiction of power coalition which includes military power, civil power, and economic power whose its characteristic of relations is unstableunstable.

Keywords: novel, political education, coalition of power, Cantik Itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan

1 Introduction

A society without power will run into chaos [14] and political power without community involvement results an imbalance in the social situation. The participation of the Indonesian people in politics, especially in general elections which are held once every five years, is still meet problems with the high rate of independent voter (abstentions) in the 2019 election. The Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) stated that there were people who did not vote in the presidential election that year 19,27% and in legislative elections by 30.5% [12]. To increase people's political participation, political education is needed from various sides. Political education can be understood as education about political ideology, morality, and the structure of social groups to achieve certain goals [15]. The people are seen as having to know and participate in the political system[10]. Participation means participation which determining decisions [9]. Actively involvement in electing rulers, supervising government policies, voting,

attending meetings, or being a member of a party is part of participation [5]. Thus, in general, political education means educating citizens about their rights and obligations as citizens in politics, especially in the younger generation. The younger generation has a different political expression from the previous generation and faces the challenges of advances in information technology [3]. Social media, for example, has been used as an expression of politics and ideology by the young generation, which has both positive and negative impacts [6]. To minimize these negative impacts, for example it used for campaigns not to vote or political radicalism, education of politics is needed for the young generation. The political education curriculum contains knowledge, abilities, and attitudes as well as value procedures in politics [4]. One of the materials source that can be used is literary works, especially those containing content about political education and power.

Power is closely related to politics. The conception of power relations used in this study is Michael Foucault's power, especially on the criteria of relations and restrictions. In its connectedness, power cannot be separated from resistance [7]. The conception of power grouping in this study uses the basic concept of Max Weber's social stratification indicator which divides based on social power, social privileges (social privileges), and social prestige [16]. These views are in conflict with other power theorists such as Karl Marx who focused on humans and saw power as a function of the domination of an economic and ideological class or with Antonio Gramsci who saw power from the point of view of cultural hegemony.

Literary works, especially novels, often record how this power problem occurs in a society. Several novel writers document, criticize, and express their views on power through the conflicts of the story characters in it. One of the novels that contains the theme of how power is gained and obtained is the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan [11]. By recording the long journey of an imaginary area called Halimunda, which was represented as a part of the Dutch East Indies and the Republic of Indonesia, this novel becomes important to examine (1) the representation of political education and (2) the power coalition that exists within it as a source of reflection on power and politics in Indonesia.

2 Research Methods

Qualitative descriptive is used as a method in this study because it aims to describe problems in a type of literary work [13]. The research was done by means of a library study, namely collecting library data, reading, recording, and processing it. The data in this study is related information with the representation of political education and power coalitions contained in the primary source the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan. Data analysis was done descriptively to produce conclusions which is an answer of research problems related to educational representation and power coalitions in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Representation of Indonesia in the Novel Cantik Itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan

Representation in human culture involves an exchange of meaning either through linguistic or non-linguistic signs. In linguistics, Stuart Hall thought that the view that representation produces meanings from concepts that reach from one human to another through language forms [8]. Representation can be reflective, intentional, or constructive. In a literary work, an author

produces his views on a theme that is represented and produces certain cultural meanings in the type of literary work he chooses. Some things that are often represented in cultural products such as ideological representations [2], representations of views on politics and power which can be shown through literary elements either showing support, criticizing, or rejecting a certain thing. In the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan, the first representation of Indonesia that must be marked is geographical representation. This is necessary to know the sociological context of the author and his work. Although not a historical document, literature is seen as a social document, that is, it intersects with a certain social environment. The problem found is when the author uses an imaginary last name in his work such as Eka Kurniawan uses the last name Halimunda in *Cantik Itu Luka*; while the name cannot be found on official geographic maps to identify its sociological representation.

In identifying the geographical information around the imaginary area of Halimunda, important clues about the location of Halimunda were found as a way to understand the area where the sociological depiction is the setting for the novel *Cantik Itu Luka*. Halimunda was originally described as a port city with "the only largest seaport along the south coast of Java Island" (p.44) [11]. Its position in the south of Java Island was repeatedly mentioned as "their southern border was ignored, because nature had helped them: the rough south sea" (p.138) and "...the back door where they could evacuate to Australia without going through the Sunda and Bali Straits. if a big war erupts (p.46) [11]. The geographical information confirms Halimunda's position as an imaginary area in the south of Java Island, facing the South Sea or Indian Ocean, the only large port on the south coast of Java Island, and from this port shipping can be made to Australia.

Geographical location is closely related to administrative location. The difference lies in stability. The geographical position will never change, but the administrative position depends on the power dynamics that occur. During the royal period, Halimunda was described as a refuge for the daughter of the last generation of the Pajajaran Kingdom and a place where dissident princes were exiled during the Mataram Kingdom (p.45) [11]. The Kingdom of Pajajaran and the Kingdom of Mataram are kingdoms that have a central government on the island of Java. Colonial administrative power over Halimunda began when the ship of British on the Royal George stopped by and the Dutch, as colonial rulers in the Dutch East Indies, suspected that Britain was smuggling weapons for Prince Diponegoro, a prince who was famous for carrying out the Java War against the Dutch colonials, and since then the Dutch East Indies government included Halimunda into the administrative map of his power. Halimunda was under Japanese occupation during the Asia Pacific War and in the war of independence was involved as part of Indonesia with their depiction of heroism lowering the Hinoramu flag and replacing it with the Red and White flag and singing Indonesia Raya in the ceremony (p.144) [11]. Eka Kurniawan's critical and humorous description of information on independence in Indonesia which was delayed in reaching the regions due to the difficulty of communication at that time can be seen in the following quotation.

Shodancho managed to rob a truck and with several people, they drove around the city shouting, "Indonesia is free August 17, Halimunda will follow September 23" (p.143) [11].

The geographic and administrative position of Halimunda is clear as part of Indonesia. Thus, representing the social and cultural conditions that exist in Indonesia, especially in the southern part of Java Island. The description of traditional culture in Halimunda is characterized by: "*they play sintren with a beautiful girl who can disappear in a chicken coop and when she reappears*

she is already prettier and prettier"(p.301) [11]. Sintren is a folk art that was popular between the 1950s and 1960s on the coasts of Central and West Java [16]. After obtaining information about the Halimunda area in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* which represents the geographical, administrative and cultural conditions that exist in Indonesia, then it is necessary to know the representation of political education and the power coalition in the opus.

3.2 Political Education in the Novel Cantik Itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan

Knowledge, ability, and attitude in politics are mentioned by Brownhill and Smart as a minimum standard in political education[4]. Knowledge is related to ideology and in political education ideologicalization occurs; acceptance, rejection, or not taking a stand against a particular political ideology. In a literary work, when a novelist describes ideological themes and conflicts in the narrative and dialogue that is built, there are three possibilities; explaining the bad of a particular ideology to be rejected, explaining its goodness to be accepted, or not taking a stand, in other words, just telling it. Thus, there are two layers, the first is the ideology of the characters in the novel and the second is the ideology of the author whose attitude is shown by displaying conflict, opposition, agreement, or not taking a stand through the ideology of the characters in the novel.

In the novel *Cantik Itu Luka*, political education in the form of ideology is shown in the stories of the characters involved in the development of the times in Halimunda, which is part of Indonesia. Each era has its own ideological representation. During the Dutch East Indies period, political education was demonstrated through the figure of Dewi Ayu; his political attitudes towards colonialism and international geopolitics during World War II; his views on the Netherlands which was once colonized by Germany and France; and about the Netherlands having more traders than soldiers (p.39) [11]. This view of international geopolitics and colonialism was obtained by the character Dewi Ayu from the radio and her attitude was displayed towards teachers at the Franciscan Teacher's School (p.38) [11].

Still in the colonial period in Halimunda, the presence of the figure Comrade Salim represented how communism ideologically occurred during the Dutch East Indies period. Comrade Salim is said to have become a communist because of the influence of Sneevliet, a communist figure from the Netherlands who was expelled in 1919, joined the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and knew its figures such as Semaun, "brewing milk for Tan Malaka who suffered from tuberculosis while they were in Semarang" (p.170) [11], as well as being arrested by the colonial government in January 1926 because of the resistance that was carried out against colonialism. The process of political education that occurs in Comrade Salim's character involves the existence of thoughts (Marxism), carriers of thoughts (Sneevliet), acceptance of thoughts (realizing political rights in colonized countries), cadre formation (becoming party members), resistance to colonial ideologies (rebellion against colonialism and feudalism), and was arrested for that resistance (imprisoned). At that time, the colonial government disbanded the PKI, its administrators were arrested and some went to Moscow, and ideological infiltration through political education led them to revolt in Madiun. Unlike the depiction of a structured political education experienced by Comrade Salim, Kliwon's figure got this ideologicalization overnight and at a young age, when Comrade Salim took refuge in his escape at Mina's house, Mrs. Kliwon. Mina has a husband who is also a friend of Comrade Salim. In one night, Comrade Salim got Kliwon interested in communism so he said: "Now and from today," Kliwon said while turning to face his mother, 'Call me Comrade Kliwon, Mama.'" (p.191) [11].

In the early days of independence, the depiction of political education within the party was described through the activities of Comrade Kliwon; undergo party education in Jakarta; after returning home to read the books of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Chairman Mao, pamphlets written by local people such as Semaun and Tan Malaka, even though his party forbade reading Trotsky and Tan Malaka in those years (p.267-268) [11]. This ideologicalization in turn creates cadre formation, which is demonstrated by the activities of Comrade Kliwon in Halimunda who founded the Fishermen's Union.

The Fishermen's Union was founded around that time, with Samiran and Karmin as first members and Comrade Kliwon as chairman. Within two weeks the number of members reached fifty-three people, and quickly almost all of the fishermen had joined the Fishermen's Union (p268) [11].

This cadre is able to create membership and power to mobilize the masses; The Fishermen's Union held a demonstration against the capital owners of large vessels (p.237); members of the Communist Party carry out a carnival so that if elections are held again they can win (p.298); and demonstrations when there was an uprising in Jakarta and the killing of a number of army generals (p.299), before the military cracked down on Communist Party sympathizers [11]. This stage resulted in the participation of party partisans in Halimunda which was described in a novel by Eka Kurniawan, "*The city's Communist Party has recorded one thousand sixty-seven active members paying dues, thousands of sympathizers, half of whom always regularly attend every giant meeting in the field*" (p.296) [11]. The ideology of communism, which was later banned because it conflicted with Pancasila ideology in Indonesia, experienced its last period in Halimunda after the events of 1965. On the other hand, national political education was reflected in guerrilla nationalism, and the emergence of people's army troops which became the forerunner of the national army. This novel does not fully describe the patterns of national political education and instead shows how each element of military and civil power in Halimunda appears to build its social system through realisation, coalitions and restrictions.

3.3. Coalition of Power in the Novel Cantik Itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan

The relationship between power in Michael Foucault's view has the nature of relations and restrictions [7] and in its structure in Max Weber's view there are indicators of stratification of social power, social privilege, and social prestige [16]. In the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan, coalitions and restrictions on power are distributed between the three most prominent principals of power, namely military power, civil power, and economic power. Military power in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan is represented through several periods, namely the colonial period, the Japanese occupation, the occupation of the Allied forces, the war of independence, and after independence. Within each period there was the involvement of transnational, national and local military powers. The first group of military troops (garrison) in Halimunda was founded by the Dutch East Indies colonial government which made the city a military enclave (p.64) [11]. During the Asia Pacific war, military power shifted into Japanese hands with the presence of the Sakaguci Brigade (p.48) [11]. When the Allied forces defeated the Japanese, military control in Halimunda shifted to British rule.

British troops came to strengthen the security of the entire city. The troops were part of the 23rd Indian Division coming to Java, some of whom were Gurkhas (p.96) [11].

The presence of the Allied troops was not alone, but brought Dutch people into NICA (*Netherlands Indies Civil Administration*) (p. 147) [11]. This transnational military rule in Halimunda shows that the Halimunda people are powerless militarily. Eka Kurniawan describes this position with wit: "Look,' he said to the woman beside him. They are confused by two foreign countries that are fighting over their land."" (p.59) [11]. The two foreign nations who fought over Halimunda land eventually began to raise resistance or restrictions from local military and semi-military forces. One of the characters in the novel who resists is Sang Shodancho. He is: "... the leader of the Daidan Halimunda rebellion during the Japanese occupation" (p.123) [11]. This information indicates that the military capabilities possessed by Shodancho and his troops were obtained through training by the Japanese beforehand, before they rebelled. Japan needed local troops to help them in the Asia Pacific War. In the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan, not only Japan has military guidance or military relations from the colonial areas, but also the Netherlands, namely through the KNIL (Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger), namely native people who were educated by the Dutch military (p.97) [11].

The indigenous military power that resisted Japanese colonialism and Dutch military aggression was incorporated into the guerrilla people's army and paramilitary fighters, in which the central character represented in this novel is Maman Gendeng. The characters Sang Shodancho and Maman Gendeng were both involved in the resistance against Japanese colonialism, the Allied troops and the KNIL. The difference is, when this paramilitary guerrilla enclave was dismantled, there were dismissals and Mamang Gendeng returned to the streets, leaving his position in military power (p.110) [11], while Sang Shondacho led the Halimunda District Military Commander (p.122)[12]. Not only that, for his services which are highly regarded by the Republic of Indonesia, in the novel it is told that President Soekarno wanted to appoint Sang Shondacho to become the Great Commander of the People's Security Army with the rank of general, but he refused, and the position was given to General Soedirman (p.146) [11]. In official military history, of course this story did not happen. Eka Kurniawan added variations on the fictitious relationship between Halimunda's military and the Republic of Indonesia to confirm his desire to represent an incident at a certain time in Indonesia in the form of a work of fiction. The fictional rigor is felt when Shodancho confers the rank of colonel on himself, an act that would be impossible in a real military structure. Besides Sang Shodancho, military rule in Halimunda also involved a figure named Major Sadrah. These military powers mentioned above have relations and restrictions with civil power and economic power.

Civil power in Halimunda for public affairs or public officials in the novel is not clearly stated other than the disclosure of the existence of mayors and regents. The power that is more widely displayed is traditional power based on previlise or privilege and prestige or honor. The privileges of the Dutch during the colonial period made them dominate the native servants: "... *cooks, laundresses, plantation workers, warlords*" (p.48) [11]. They also supervise the warriors or warriors: "There are several champions, that's what they call the keepers of the goat stables, house keepers, and garden keepers" (p57) [11]. In terms of respect, during the Japanese occupation, the Halimunda people had to respect the Japanese Emperor.

He explained, they had to bow like that to all the Japanese soldiers as soon as the order was said, Keirei!, and only be able to stand straight again when Naore's command was heard! "It's a tribute to the Japanese Empire," he explained, through the translator" (p 64) [11].

Civil power on the streets was held by thuggery and prostitution. In thuggery, the characters Maman Gendeng and Edi Idiot become their representations in the novel. Maman Gendeng is described: "With dozens of followers, he terrorized the towns along the coast. The police and soldiers were looking for him" (p.110) [11]. In prostitution, the position of Mama Kalong as the owner of the brothel and Dewi Ayu as the prostitute as well as the main character in this novel occupies a position: "If Mama Kalong is like the queen of the city, then Dewi Ayu is the princess" (p.10) [11]. Meanwhile, civil power in political parties in Halimunda was represented by the figure of Comrade Kliwon who led the party and the figure of Comrade Yono. Comrade Kliwon also leads the Fishermen's Union (p235) [11]. These civil powers influence and are influenced by the economic powers that surround them.

Economic power in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan is represented through several groups. In the colonial period, described by Ted Stammler, Dewi Ayu's parents, "owned cocoa and coconut plantations, the largest in the area" (p.42) [11]. The first company that was established in Halimunda was "Nederlandsch Indisch Stoomvaartmaatschappij, which operated several sailing ships" (p.46) [11]. In addition, during the Japanese occupation, companies such as "Maatschappij's Mataafsche Petrolium oil refineries, Mexolie Olvado coconut oil factory" (p48) [11] were still standing before the bombing and besides that there were also cocoa and coconut plantations. The most prominent economic power in this novel is the power over brothels. Her description dates back to the colonial era: "the Mama Kalong brothel has existed since the time when the colonial army barracks were opened on a large scale" (p.81) [11]. The figure of Mama Kalong became rich by owning land and plantation assets. The description of his power can be seen in the following quote.

"When the other kingdoms collapsed, a new kingdom was built in Halimunda,' said a Dutch soldier who was drunk at his tavern, That is the Kingdom of Mama Kalong." (p.83) [11].

The novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan also describes how military power was involved in taking positions of economic power. The character Sang Shodancho participates in the teak wood smuggling business in collaboration with a prominent trader named Bendo (p.135-137) [11]. Due to their private nature, they didn't want others to interfere: "*We just hope he doesn't meddle with military business*" (p.122) [11]. In collaboration with character of Bendo, they develop a bigger business of smuggling goods Eka Kurniawan describes the path of economic power involving military power in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* that Sang Shodancho gives rations to the generals in the capital, so that his business activities are protected, including his business in in the fishing shipping sector which later faced restrictions from traditional fishermen whose economic interests were disrupted. The description of the neglect of what was done by the figure Sang Shodancho can be seen in the following quotation.

"That's right. Everyone in the city, civilians and military alike, was aware of all their smuggling activities. Everything went in and out through the small harbor built at the head of the headland" (p.149) [11].

Military power, civil power, and economic power, as has been alluded to in the explanation of each power, are interconnected with one another through coalitions and resistance. The coalition of transnational military powers was the emergence of American-led Allied troops to Halimunda to expel the Japanese: "However, rumors of American victory and German defeat circulated word of mouth in the camp"(p.70) [11]. The initial coalition between economic and military power occurred when the Japanese colonel ordered the military post to "build a more permanent

brothel" (p.82) [11] thus cooperating with Mama Kalong (p.84) [11]. Mama Kalong, as the owner of the brothel, also formed a coalition with guerrillas, KNIL soldiers, and even with Maman Gendeng as the ruler of thuggery. Mama Kalong said: "Knowing the guerrillas as well as I know KNIL soldiers. They are both my customers" (p.102) [11]. This privileged position in the power coalition made Mama Kalong apart from the bad image of the brothel owner in Halimunda, instead she occupied an important position described: "On each independence day commemoration, he sat with Major Sadrah, the mayor, the regent, and of course Sang Shodancho when he was out of the forest" (p.105) [11].

The military power cooperated with the civil power during the guerrilla war to expel colonialism. Military power cooperates with economic power in: "Smuggling of textiles into Australia and bringing in vehicles and electronic goods" (p.123) [11] and capital owners of modern ships and both are involved in the battle. The power of thuggery cooperates with the military through good relations between the figures Maman Gendeng and Sang Shodancho before the two of them engage in battle again, so their coalition is unstable. "The strange friendship between Maman Gendeng and Sang Shodancho occurs at the table trump card game in the middle of the market" (p.257) [11]. Thus, each power in Halimunda, in the novel Cantik Itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan faces relations and restrictions against other powers.

4 Conclusion

Political education and reflection on power coalitions in a social system are needed to build community political participation in order to achieve common prosperity. The novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan represents political education and power coalitions through the conflicts and characters in the story. By using an imaginary area called Halimunda, which represents a part of Indonesia both geographically, sociologically and culturally, Eka Kurniawan presents a critical reflection on how power is acquired and exercised. Through the characters in the novel, Eka Kurniawan presents the processes of political education during the Dutch colonial period, the Japanese occupation, the Allied occupation, the struggle for independence, until after Indonesian independence. Political education is displayed in the form of ideology, regeneration, mass mobilization, and partisan participation. The powers that exist in Halimunda are described as having coalitions and restrictions. This power consists of military power, civil power, and economic power.

References

- [1] Aditama, Luthfi Deska: Kesenian Sintren sebagai Kearifan Lokal Ditinjau dari Metafisika Anton Baker. Vol. 21, No. 1, April 2016: 57-72. Jurnal Penelitian Humaniora, Indonesia (2016)
- [2] Baker, Chris: Cultural Studies, Teori dan Praktik. Kreasi Wacana, Yogyakarta. (2019)
- [3] Bennett, L: The Uncivic Culture: Communication, identity, and the rise of lifestyle politics. 31(4), 740–761. Political Science and Politics, PS (1998)
- [4] Brownhiil, R. & Smart, P.: Political Education. Routledge, London and New York. (1989)
- [5] Budiardjo, Miriam: Partisipasi dan Partai Politik. Gramedia, Jakarta (2002)

- [6] Dong, Wangnan, et.al.: Effectiveness of Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities under the Outbreak of Internet Media. Eurasia: Journal of Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education. ISSN: 1305-8223 (online). DOI:10.12973/ejmste/80305(2017)
- [7] Foucault, Michel: Seks dan Kekuasaan. PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta. (1997)
- [8] Hall, Stuart: Representation Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices. Sage Publication Ltd., London (1997)
- [9] Huntington, Samuel P. dan Joan Nelson: Partisipasi Politik di Negara Berkembang. Rineka Cipta, Jakarta (1990)
- [10] Kantaprawira, Rusadi: Sistem Politik Indonesia (Model Suatu Pengantar). Sinar Baru Algensindo, Bandung (2006)
- [11] Kurniawan, Eka: Cantik Itu Luka. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta (2002)
- [12] Safitri, Eva: "LSI Denny JA: Golput Pilpres 19,27%, Golput Pileg 30,05%". https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4516324/lsi-denny-ja-golput-pilpres-1927-golput-pileg-3005. (2019)
- [13] Semi, M. Atar: Metode Penelitian Sastra. Angkasa, Bandung (2012)
- [14] Shokri, M.: What is Political Power? (Theory of Political Consciousness and Integrated Concept of Power). Arts Social Sci J 8: 269. doi:10.4172/2151-6200.1000269 (2017)
- [15] Wang, D. and Zhong, R.S: A Comparative Study of Political Education in Chinese Universities and American Universities. Open Access Library Journal, 7: e6973. https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1106973) (2020)
- [16] Weber, M: Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology. University of California Press, California (1978).