

***Bissu* in Between Religious Puritanism and State: The Study of Hegemony in The *Tiba Sebelum Berangkat* Novel By Faisal Oddang**

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ABSTRACT

This research is meant to find out the truth about the cause of *Bissu's* existence that began to disappear or be broken by the presence of hegemony in the novel *Tiba Sebelum Berangkat* by Faisal Oddang's. The reason behind that incident is: (1) the puritanism of the religion which *Bissu* firmly assumed as the principal character in *Tiba Sebelum Berangkat* novel, and (2) the form of hegemony carried out by the DI/TII political movement with religious instruments. This study is qualitative descriptive with studies of hegemony and religious puritanism. Primary data sources in this research are *the Tiba Sebelum Berangkat novel by Faisal Oddang* published by PT Gramedia in 2018, while secondary data sources in this research are literature, documentation, or video from the Internet or other responsible sources. In addition, the data analysis technique used is interactive analysis, because in this model there are four analytical components suitable for the research, which are namely: (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data teaching, and (4) conclusions drawing. This study explains that *Bissu*, a religious figure influential in ancient Bugis religious beliefs, is considered an infidel by the authorities. This is because their religion, and teachings are not included in the official religion recognized by DI/TII. Then, it also underlies *Bissu* to forced the adhere of the teachings in the majority religion, by taking advantage of the existence of hegemony, both dominant and intellectual and moral.

Keywords: *Hegemony, Religious puritanism, Bissu, DI/TII.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tiba Sebelum Berangkat (TSB), is a novel by Faisal Oddang that published in 2018. *TSB* is a novel that departs from the problems of the past that happened to a person, and is associated with the history that exists in South Sulawesi. The central theme in the *TSB* novel, is to told the story of ancient Bugis religious figures whose existence was marginalized, and how they lost their existence due to the presence of religious puritans that they applied in their daily lives. So, in this case Faisal Oddang is try to lift the history of Eastern Indonesia through narratives with different perspective through the story from the religious figures in ancient Bugis belief that is *Bissu*. It's really suit Faisal Oddang work, cause his prose is mostly themed on traditions and customs [1].

The content of the story in *TSB* novel is about Mapata and his journey to become a *Bissu* or a religious figure in the ancient Bugis religion. The

TSB novel by Faisal Oddang has an exciting story topic to study, because it discusses various problems experienced by the *Bissu*, especially issues regarding gender, and religious teachings that are considered deviant by a powerful organization. They (*Bissu*) are considered genderless by the ancient Bugis people. According to Christian Pelras in Bugis People or *Manusia Bugis*, quoted by Ulfah in the news portal Good News From Indonesia in 2016, that the gender relations of the Bugis society are relatively fluid [13]. The description of gender flexibility among the Bugis is reflected in the Bugis expression which in Indonesian means "even though he is a man, if he has a female character, he is a woman, and a woman who has a male character is a man". Unfortunately, on several occasions there was a historical event called "*Operasi Toba* or repentance" carried out by representatives of DI/TII leaders in the South Sulawesi area, assuming that *Bissu* and their followers are infidels because their teachings, and

gender are not in accordance with beliefs held by the majority.

This is related to the bold discrimination that afflicts minorities and women, especially in terms of access to and control over the sources of life, opportunities or opportunity, status, roles, rights and rewards. For the *Bissu* who are the representatives of *Dewata Sewwae* and have the task of being able to equalize gender for minorities, especially for followers of the ancient Bugis religion in South Sulawesi, of course their existence will also be vulnerable to being eliminated by sensitive issues such as gender and religion as already mention. From that thing, we can agree if the novel *TSB* by Faisal Oddang, has an exciting story to studied, because it discusses the various problems experienced by the *Bissu*, especially gender issues, and religious teachings considered impaired by a powerful organization. They are considered to genderless by the ancient Bugis religious community. Through dialogue, monologue or hegemonic-translated narrative, and gender issues in religious puritanism in *TSB* novels, will reinforce the evidence of its decline in the number of *Bissu* who have marginalized and can be the recorder of traces of past movements reported by the media public so that it will require reasonable and reasonable arguments. More than that, Faisal Oddang, through his novel, also appeared in a lively sensitive issues. Through his eyes, this novel captures traces to matters of gender, religion, and the movement of a powerful organization, which are unknown and rarely reported. The useful of literature then appears in this novel, namely as a recorder of history and traces of new regulations.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

First, the *TSB* novel is tells the story of *Bissu* as a religious figure of the ancient Bugis belief, whose existence is prone to being eliminated due to sensitive issues such as religion, and gender. At that time, their faith or their teachings which were taken directly from the scripture in pure or called religious puritanism were not recognized by the ruling or powerful organization namely DI/TII, nor were the *Bissu* genders. As we know, the people in the Bugis belief that *Bissu* are genderless and had a role as the mouthpiece (*penyambung lidah*) with God or *Dewata Sewwae*. From this, the postcolonial theory will be suitable for use as an analysis because postcolonial studies literary works and other fields related to colonialism and imperialism, both synchronously and diachronically [14]. Colonialism itself, is a moment where the colonizer tries to control or taken down what is owned by the colonized. The colonizer takes the area or place of the colonized residence, economy, politics, culture, and even resources. This suits the momen and the story from the novel, where

the *Bissu* and the follower as a colonized or the marginal, and DI/TII as a colonizer or the powerful.

Second, postcolonial in the form of hegemony proclaimed by Antonio Gramsci is even more appropriate when narrowed down, because it explains in detail the types of hegemony based on the actions or behavior of the ruler to marginalized parties, in this case DI/TII with the aim of fulfilling their wishes as the ruler and the powerfull. On the other hand, the marginalized party in this case *Bissu*, will not be able to fight because of his powerlessness. Thus, the theory of postcolonialism in the form of hegemony will be suitable for use.

The last, hegemony itself, consists of two kinds, namely through domination or coercion and intellectual and moral leadership to specific groups to show the dominance of positions claimed by a state, organization or individual [2]. This will be explained more clearly in the results and discussion section, adding the proof from the *TSB* novel.

3. METHODS

The research method chosen in this study is descriptive qualitative, because it provides an explanation of the life by the character in the form of data obtained from dialogue, narration, events and all meanings related to the nature *Bissu*. Furthermore, the primary data contained in this study is the *TSB* novel, while the secondary data sources come from literature, documentation and videos from the internet or other sources that can be accounted for [3]. This study used three data collection techniques: reading and identifying the novel, followed by placing the data results. In addition, the data analysis technique used is interactive analysis. This is done because this model has four components of study that are in accordance with the research according to Miles and Huberman, namely: (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data presentation, and (4) drawing conclusions [4].

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 *Bissu*

Bissu is the fifth gender believed by the Bugis people in South Sulawesi. Davies [5] states that there are five recognized categories of gender in Bugis society: (1) *Oroane* is a men, both physically and in their daily life roles. He appears masculine and able to establish relationships with a women. (2) *Makkunrai* is a women, both physically and naturally as a women, who can fall in love and marry a men, give birth and take care of children and their families and so on. (3) *Calalai* is a women who look like a men. They is physically female, but takes on male roles in her daily life, for example they works in a

male environment and does heavy work like men do. (4) *Calabai* is a man who looks like a woman. They was born a boy, but took part in the women jobs and do what a woman did. The general public is easier to call Calalai a tomboy, and *Calabai* is a transvestite. Although, specifically for *Calabai*, the *Bissu* have three exceptional levels in distinguishing their function, nature, and role in daily life, ceremonies, and rituals. Meanwhile, the last one is (5) *Bissu* themselves does not have a gender or is neutral, so they are neither male nor female. However, it is presented more as a mediator between the two genders, namely as a void filler and as a mouthpiece (*penyambung lidah*) between humans and *Dewata Sewwae*, the god that ancient Bugis religion people belief. The *Bissu* as a group that does not belong to the *Oroane* or male gender, and the *Makkunrai* or female gender, *Bissu* has unlimited acces to enter the both area of the gender [5]. Thus, the gender role in *Bissu* will be different from other identities, because apart from being considered a holy person, and having an essential social role in the Bugis society. *Bissu* are also not allowed to highlight one of their gender identities, be it female or male, so they are required to be neutral. *Bissu* are also required to have special skills [6].

Basa To ri Langi is the language of the sky or magical language that is only used and understood by *Bissu* and *Dewata Sewwae*, so *Bissu* are unique and highly respected. What's more, they (*Bissu*) are always present in ceremonies such as the election of the king's inauguration (during the kingdom still stand), starting rice planting, harvesting, occupying a new house, rituals to purify weapons or sacred heirlooms, determining a decision on various topics, both related to the king, community or individuals who need the help of the *Bissu* [7].

On several occasions there was a historic event called "*Operasi Toba* or *Taubat* (repentance)" carried out by representatives of DI/TII leaders in the South Sulawesi area, his name is Kahar Muzakkar [8]. He considers that *Bissu* and his followers are infidels (*kafir*) because their teachings and gender do not match the rules of belief held by the majority. On the other hand, for people who follow the ancient Bugis religion in South Sulawesi, the *Bissu* are considered representatives of the *Dewata Sewwae* and have the task of equalizing gender for the minorities. From this explanation, it is concluded that the existence of the *Bissu* can be vulnerable to being eliminated, especially with sensitive issues such as gender, and religion.

4.2 Religious Puritanism (Puritanisme Agama)

Puritanism is an attitude and desire always to try to practice, and present religious values and teachings that are in accordance with the scriptures in a pure, or original manner without being mixed up with sophisticated systems and behavior [9]. Religious puritanism has various types, but has one characteristic in common, namely holy, pure or original.

One of the religious puritanisms embraced by the ancient Bugis religious community, namely the existence of a tradition of transvestities in Bugis land or men playing the role of women, has been expressed in Bugis classic texts since hundreds of years ago. They are known as the priests of the ancient pre-Islamic Bugis religion with the nickname *Bissu*. Their existence as a continuous thread of the old Bugis oral tradition. BF Matthes refers to *Bissu* as *priesters en priesteresse*. Matthes describes *Bissu* as transgender priests, which is an acronym for men and women or in Bugis it is called *Calabai* [8]. Meanwhile, Bugis people believe that *Bissu* comes from the Bugis word "mabessi" which means clean, pure, do not has breast, and never menstruate (interview with Andi, 26 July 1999, in citation by [8]).

4.3 Form of State Hegemony in the Tiba Sebelum Berangkat Novel

According to Antonio Gramsci, there are two types of state hegemony in the *Tiba Sebelum Berangkat* novel, namely (1) hegemony through dominant or coercion and (2) hegemony through intellectual and moral leadership [2]. Meanwhile, between the two types of state hegemony, there will be an additional concept of puritanism that adopted by the *Bissu*.

4.3.1 Hegemony due to Dominant or Coercion

In the *TSB* novel by Faisal Oddang, there is evidence of data showing an element of hegemony due to domination or coercion. This is done by force or force, to the enemy to control a particular area or group to submit. Either because of fear, urgency, or because they do not have the power and effort to control and utilize resources. In this evidence, the cause of hegemony due to dominance or coercion experienced by *Bissu* is also vital due to the element of religious puritanism that is adhered to.

In the *TSB* novel, DI/TII shows dominant hegemony to *Bissu* through a movement called *Operasi Toba* or *Taubat* (repentance operation) carried out by the deputy regional leader in South Sulawesi, namely Qahar Muzakkar. The activity carried out by Qahar Muzakkar consisted of two

periods, if in the first period he used Pancasila as the ideology of the movement, then in the second phase he used Islam as an ideology in his direction. Van Dijk explained that the rebellion carried out by Qahar Muzakkar started from the anxiety of former by gerilya or *gurilla* (Bugis people called them *gurilla* because of their tongue and accent) fighters against the attitude of the central government which merged them into the *TNI* (Indonesian National Army) in pieces [10]. This rebellion then joined with *DI/TII* West Java in 1953 and took place in 1965. Although there are actually some information, that told if Qahar Muzakkar announced himself that already join with *DII/TII* a year before [11].

The *Bissu* were the targets of the *Operasi Toba* or *taubat* (repentance operation), because they were considered religious leaders or figures for the ancient Bugis community, and were considered a minority. They also lack power and strength when compared to gangs or *gurilla*, who are armed and outnumbered. *Bissu* and the community, are victims who often become '*bulan-bulanan*' (month-olds) for crews or *gurilla*. Its purpose is to show the dominance of power or reinforce the ability possessed and not infrequently by coercion or torture. Here are the quote that show the evidence:

(1) "*Bissu dianggap menyimpang dari agama mayoritas orang Sulawesi Selatan atau sebutlah menyimpang dari ajaran Islam yang sangat dijunjung tinggi, maka Bissu diburu seperti musuh atau dianggap kafir dan bisa dibunuh serta darahnya halal dan tidak akan dibela oleh siapapun. Sangat bersemangat mencari Bissu untuk dikembalikan menjadi lelaki dan jika tidak mau barulah kemudian dibunuh*" [1].

"*Bissu* is considered to deviate from the religion of the majority of South Sulawesi people or say deviate from the teachings of Islam which is highly respected, then *Bissu* are hunted like enemies or considered infidels and can be killed and their blood is lawful and will not be defended by anyone. Very eager to find *Bissu* to be turned back into a man and if he doesn't want it then he will be killed" [1].

(2) "*Tentara Jawa dan TII saling serang dan menguasai kampung. Kami sebagai warga biasa yang jadi korbannya. Jika perang di Utara maka kami lari ke Selatan, perang di Barat maka kami mengungsi ke Timur. Kami meninggalkan kampung yang dihancurkan perang. Kami hidup di hutan dan sangat menderita. Suatu waktu, Tentara Islam akan turun gunung dan mencari kami, para Bissu, untuk dikembalikan jadi lelaki. Jika kami tolak, kami akan dibunuh. Tentara Jawa sama kejahannya, mereka menuduh kami*

mata-mata Tentara Islam, mereka akan menangkap lalu menyiksa bahkan membunuh beberapa warga yang berusaha melarikan diri" [1].

"Javanese soldiers and *TII* attacked each other and took control of the village. We as ordinary citizens are the victims. If there is war in the North, we flee to the South, if there is war in the West, we flee to the East. We left the war-torn village. We live in the forest and suffer a lot. One day, the Islamic Army will go down the mountain and look for us, the *Bissu*, to turn back into men. If we refuse, we will be killed. The Javanese soldiers are just as cruel, they accuse us of being spies for the Islamic Army, they will arrest and torture and even kill some people who try to escape" [1]

In the *Tiba Sebelum Berangkat* novel, the appearance or existence of the *Bissu* as a group or community of followers of the ancient Bugis religion and its adherents, it is permissible to eliminate them because of the faith they profess, and the teachings that they practice, are considered unofficial, and also considered dangerous because they can arouse *feodalisme* or feudalism [8]. Moreover, rituals and various religious teachings that they adhere to very strongly or puritanism, such as *Bissu* being a trustworthy spiritual advisor, distributing land according to customary law, carrying out various rituals, praying for salvation, and so on. This is evidence that strengthens that *Bissu*, and the community are also not allowed to perform religious practices. The religious beliefs of the proletariat, in the end, are increasingly ignored.

4.3.2 Hegemony due to Intellectual and Moral Leadership

Concept of hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci is based on 'intellectual and moral' leadership. This leadership occurs because of the voluntary approval of the lower class or society towards the upper class who leads. Intellectually and morally leadership is also divided into two types: organic administration, which means siding with the upper class or those in power, and traditional leadership, which means siding with the lower class to create class equality. Here is a quote that proves this:

(1) "*Nama Cappa Kanuku berarti ujung-ujung kuku dalam bahasa Indonesia, jika Tuan mau tahu. Nama itu berarti pejuang dan perjuangan yang tak akan pernah habis, kata Andi Upe suatu waktu, ketika bercerita kepada Puang Matua Rusmi. Cappa Kanuku tidak akan pernah habis, bahkan jika dipotong setiap hari, dia akan terus tumbuh. Begitulah perjuangan*

kami melawan penjajah, entah penjajah dari negara jauh atau penjajah dari bangsa sendiri, kami akan menjadi Cappa Kanuku yang tidak mungkin habis” [1].

“The name of *Cappa Kanuku* means the tips of the nails in Indonesian, if Sir want to know. The name means fighters and struggles that will never end, said Andi Upe one time, when he told the story to Puang Matua Rusmi. *Cappa Kanuku* will never run out, even if it is cut every day, it will continue to grow. That is our struggle against invaders, whether invaders from far away or outside the countries or invaders from own nation, we will become *Cappa Kanuku* that cannot be exhausted” [1].

Data evidence shows that there is a discussion about the differences between two time settings in the novel, namely Puang Matua Rusmi (1952-1965) and Mapata (post 65). It also shows, if the struggle is being carried out continuously and has not ended until now. This also emphasizes, if the defenders come from the lower class, and stand or are formed independently of the community itself. Priyono [12] explained that the reason for this is because the community is an important part, and it is profitable when *gurilla*, such as when looking for or getting information on enemy's whereabouts, logistics and also safe hiding places by posing as residents who are not *gurilla* or *gerilyawan*, with a combination of dynamic and covert movements. , the existence of support from the residents and control of the battlefield. With a variety of these elements, a victory will be readily obtained because it is carried out simultaneously, suddenly and compactly, even though for example the enemy is superior in terms of weapons and the number of troops. Thus, the *gurilla* are fighters who come from the people and are returned to the people, so those who fight are similiary to *Cappa Kanuku* which in Indonesian means the tips of the nails, so that they will never run out even if they are cut continuously, because the *gurilla* defend and fight voluntarily even without reason to protect their place of birth and residence, as well as the integrity of their resources, usually often referred to in general as a sense of nationalism. According to Gramsci's opinion, this is in accordance with the type of traditional intellectuals, namely, scholars who can be categorized as autonomous and independent intellectuals from dominant social groups. Traditional brains are those who carry intellectual leadership tasks in a given society [2].

5. CONCLUSION

The elements of hegemony and puritanism experienced by *Bissu*, an ancient Bugis religious figure, in the novel *TSB* by Faisal Oddang, can be

found in two sub-elements of hegemony, namely in the form of hegemony through domination or coercion, as well as through intellectual and moral leadership. The two postcolonial elements in the form of hegemony were carried out by DI/TII in South Sulawesi led by Qahar Muzakkar. The two sub-elements also find each component of religious puritanism applied by *Bissu*, and ancient Bugis religion which is used in everyday life.

In *TSB's* novel, there is a lot of evidence showing that the appearance or existence of *Bissu* as a religious figure for people who adhere to the ancient Bugis religion has begun to disappear and is prone to extinction. This can happen, because the existence of *Bissu* is related to the phenomenon of gender, and religious puritanism that is adhered to, is not in accordance with and is not recognized by the teachings, as well as religious rules adopted by the majority, especially by DI/TII. This organization wants the establishment of a state based on Islam. Those who agreed to call it NII (*Negara Islam Indonesia*) or the Islamic State of Indonesia. This, became one of the main reasons the *Bissu*, and their followers did not get the rights that exist in every human being. Protection, security, and freedom of religion are rights that are deprived of him. So, in this case DI/TII is a movement that has proven to be the cause of the extinction of the emergence or existence of *Bissu*.

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