

## Representation of human rights violation in the novels by Leila S. Chudori

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### ABSTRACT

Many authors use the theme of human rights in literature to highlight and address social issues. Similarly, Leila S. Chudori explores human rights violations in her novels *Pulang* (2012), *Laut Bercerita* (2017), and *Namaku Alam* (2023). This study analyzes the depiction of human rights abuses in these works as reflections of social realities during Indonesia's New Order era, employing new historicism theory. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through reading, recording, and literature review. To ensure validity, semantic checks were applied, while reliability was confirmed through intrarater and interrater methods. Data analysis combined archaeological method and thick description techniques. The findings reveal that Chudori's novels effectively depict various human rights violations experienced during the New Order period, such as political imprisonment, enforced disappearances, censorship, or state violence to give readers a clearer understanding of the study's scope offering critical insight into the era's social and political context. This study contributes by illuminating how Indonesian literary narratives reinterpret New Order history, thereby bridging historical memory dan cultural expression.

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## Introduction

Many authors have raised the theme of human rights in literary works as a way to voice and convey relevant and important social issues. Through literary works, authors can explore various aspects of human rights, such as freedom, justice, and equality. Authors can show how human rights violations affect individuals and society. The author also influenced the reader to reflect on the importance of respecting and protecting human rights. Thus, literary works can be a powerful medium to inspire social change in the fight for human rights.

In addition, the theme of human rights in literary works allows authors to explore the human values and justice that enriches human life. By creating the characters and storylines about human rights violations, the author can invite the readers to reflect on the attitude that should be taken if they experienced or find a case of human rights violations. As a result, readers can develop empathy and a deeper understanding of the importance of human rights. Through literary works, authors can inspire readers to move their hearts and minds to stand up for human rights, as well as contribute themselves to create a better world.

Likewise, Indonesian author Leila S. Chudori raises the theme of human rights in her novels, namely *Pulang* (2012), *Laut Bercerita* (2017), and *Namaku Alam* (2023). Leila S. Chudori's expertise in writing is undoubtedly good. As a journalist, writing is her usual habit. Her reliability in writing is also proven by writing screenplays, namely the television drama "Dunia Tanpa Koma" (2006), the short film "Drupadi"

(2008), and the screenplay of the film "Maaf Terakhir" (2009). "Dunia Tanpa Koma" won the Best and Commendable Television Drama screenplay awards at the 2007 Bandung Film Festival (Efgeni, 2017). Based on her experiences as a journalist, Leila S. Chudori's used the journalistic methodology and ethos as a medium to write her books. While writing a novel titled *Pulang*, she spent six years reading, researching, and interviewing exiles living in Paris such as Oemar Said and Sobron Aidit (Apriyani & Nalurita, 2023). Research on human rights represented in the novels by Leila S. Chudori is very important because it can provide a perspective from those who are often silenced by the government. Leila S. Chudori novels tells the story of those people who experienced discrimination, oppression, and injustice due to the authoritarian New Order regime. During the authoritarian New Order regime (1966–1998), Indonesia experienced systematic human rights violations that shaped both political realities and cultural memory. One of the most significant historical backdrops is the 1965–66 mass killings, in which an estimated 500,000 to one million suspected communists, leftist sympathizers, and ethnic Chinese were executed. This state-sponsored violence was followed by the mass imprisonment of political detainees, many of whom were held without trial for decades. The regime also institutionalized censorship practices, particularly through the banning of books, blacklisting of authors, and the tight control of media and publishing industries. These policies sought not only to suppress dissenting voices but also to construct a singular narrative of national identity aligned with state ideology. Furthermore, the exile policies targeting intellectuals, artists, and activists forced many Indonesians abroad, creating a "diaspora of silence" that further reflected the regime's attempt to erase critical perspectives from the public sphere. By situating Leila S. Chudori's novels within this historical framework, the analysis highlights how their literary works serve as counter-narratives to the state's silencing of traumatic pasts. Chudori, in particular, foregrounds experiences of discrimination, oppression, and injustice through the lens of characters who endure imprisonment, censorship, or forced exile.

This analysis for the representation of human rights violations in Leila S. Chudori's novels can provide a deeper understanding of the humanitarian issues, so that it can be used as a material of critical discussion for the public and academics. The representation of human rights violations in the three novels by Leila S. Chudori will be analyzed using the theory of *New Historicism*. Greenblatt's *New Historicism* theory (1980) emphasizes the importance of understanding literary texts in relation to the historical, social, and cultural context at the time those texts is produced and read (Dean, 2016; Hickling, 2018; Payne, 2005). The *New Historicism* theory views that literary and non-literary texts influenced each others, so in order to understand the meaning of a literary work it is necessary to consider the interaction between the texts and its context. In this case, literary texts works in a wider network of discourses covering political, economic, and cultural aspects. In this study, the *New historicism* theory is being used as an analysis method in order to understand the function of literary texts as a representation of weaknesses or strengths for an existing power structure. Besides that, the *New historicism* theory can be used to provide space for contextual and interdisciplinary analysis.

Literary research focusing on human rights studies was conducted by Ekawati & Purwaningsih (2015); Ningsih (2020); Lestari (2021); Azizah et al. (2022); Purba et al. (2022); Syahputri & Dewi (2023); Putri & Sukmawan (2024). Ekawati & Purwaningsih (2015) examined Pramoedya Ananta Toer's human rights defense for ethnic Chinese in the *Hoakiau Indonesia* novel. Ningsih (2020) examined the forms of violations on women's human rights in Seno Gumira Ajidarma's novel *Drupadi* from a liberal feminist perspective. Lestari (2021) discussed the forms of human rights violations in Leila S. Chudori's novel called *Laut Bercerita* using a sociological literary approach. Azizah et al. (2022) examined the human rights violations experienced by Ahmadiyah adherents in Okky Madasari's novel *Maryam*. Purba et al. (2022) conducted a critical discourse analysis by using the Fairclough methods in the *Orang-Orang Oetimu* novel and found that there is a human rights violations against Anak Dalam tribe. Using Warren and Wellek's extrinsic approach. Syahputri & Dewi (2023) found human rights violations in Angie Thomas' novel *The Hate U Give*. Putri & Sukmawan (2024) found serious human rights violations in Iksaka Banu's novel *Rasina* by using an approach from sociology of literature. Nobody has ever been done a research about human rights in all of the Leila S. Chudori's works. The research conducted by Lestari (2021) only examined one novel by Leila S. Chudori and did not use the New Historicism theory as its analytical tool. From all of the researches that I have been found, there was no literary research that is focused on human rights topic which used the New Historicism theory as its analytical tool. For that reason, this research aims to analyze various forms of human rights violations represented in Leila S. Chudori's novels as a reflection of social reality during the New Order era.

## Method

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive design adjusted to the characteristics of literary studies, particularly the necessity of situating literary works within the socio-historical and cultural context in which they were produced. The primary aim of this methodology is to uncover how Leila S. Chudori's novels *Pulang*, *Laut Bercerita*, and *Namaku Alam* narratively represent human rights violations and how these representations interact with historical realities of modern Indonesian history. Since the essence of this research lies in the interrelationship between text and context, the methodological framework emphasizes a systematic identification of textual representations of human rights violations, the establishment of analytical criteria for categorization, and a structured three-stage archaeological process leading to historical contextualization.

The data of this research consist of textual fragments in the three novels that explicitly or implicitly depict human rights violations. To ensure specificity and replicability, the identification of such fragments follows a set of operational criteria. A fragment is categorized as a representation of human rights violation if it includes one or more of the following features: first, explicit reference to acts such as arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, censorship, restrictions on freedom of expression, or other violations recognized in international human rights discourse; second, implicit narrative construction that points to systemic injustice, silenced voices, or state violence even without explicit naming; and third, symbolic or metaphorical representation of oppression, where characters' experiences allegorically refer to political violence or repression. These criteria allow for both literal and figurative dimensions of representation to be captured, in line with the interpretative nature of literary analysis.

The sampling strategy for selecting relevant passages is grounded in purposive sampling, whereby only those fragments meeting the criteria above are extracted from the novels. The unit of analysis ranges from a single sentence or descriptive passage to longer narrative episodes, depending on the density and intensity of human rights-related content. The sampling process is iterative and recursive: initial readings generate a preliminary corpus of fragments, which are then re-examined in light of historical sources to confirm their relevance. Data collection employs three primary techniques: intensive reading of the novels to identify candidate fragments, systematic recording through annotation and coding, and an extensive literature review of historical documents, scholarly works, and archival materials. The historical sources used include John Roosa's *Dalih Pembunuhan Massal: Gerakan 30 September dan Kudeta Suharto* (2008), *Indonesia dalam Arus Sejarah* (2012) edited by Taufik Abdullah and A.B. Lopian, and M.C. Ricklefs's *Sejarah Indonesia Modern 1200–2004* (2005), in addition to archival news reports from *Kompas*, *Tempo*, *Berita Yudha*, and *Angkatan Bersenjata*. These sources provide both macro-historical perspectives and micro-historical accounts that are essential for contextualizing the literary narratives. The intertextual dialogue between the novels and historical materials is carefully mediated by thematic coding and cross-referencing of events, actors, and discourses.

To guarantee data validity, this study employs semantic validity, ensuring that the meaning of the identified fragments aligns with the conceptual boundaries of human rights violations as defined by historical and legal discourse (García-Carpintero, 2023). Data reliability is secured through intra-rater reliability, by re-checking the consistency of coding across multiple readings, and inter-rater reliability, by engaging an external reviewer familiar with Indonesian history and literature to cross-validate the categorization of selected passages. This dual strategy minimizes subjective bias and enhances the trustworthiness of the findings.

The analytical framework is based on a modified archaeological method combined with thick description. The archaeological method, derived from Michel Foucault's conception of discourse excavation, is operationalized here in three concrete stages. The first stage, identification, involves systematic coding of textual fragments that meet the criteria of human rights violations. Each fragment is catalogued with metadata including page number, narrative context, type of violation, and its potential symbolic resonance. The second stage, critical analysis, examines each fragment intertextually against historical sources. This stage requires close reading not only of the narrative strategies. The third stage, narrative compilation, synthesizes the fragment-level analysis into a coherent historical-literary narrative. At this stage, the textual findings are assembled into thematic clusters, such as state violence, exile and displacement, silenced memory, and intergenerational trauma, each of which is contextualized with historical events and discourses.

The thick description method complements the archaeological approach by ensuring that the compiled narrative does not reduce the text to a mere reflection of history but instead foregrounds the complex cultural codes embedded in it. Through thick description, this research reconstructs the layered meanings of narrative episodes by situating them within webs of cultural significance. By employing thick description, the analysis avoids superficial historicism and instead demonstrates how literary texts encode

lived experiences and cultural memory of repression. Moreover, the archaeological method is not applied in isolation but is integrated with critical theories of literature and history. Following Foucault's principle that discourses are both enabling and constraining, the analysis interrogates not only what is said in the texts but also what remains unsaid or unsayable. The novels are treated as cultural artifacts that both draw upon and reshape historical discourses (Nwosu & Adeshina, 2021). By excavating these discursive layers, the study contributes to understanding how literature mediates the memory of human rights violations in Indonesia.

## Results and Discussion

In Indonesia, the Human Rights is recognized as a basic rights owned by every individual since birth, which is being regulated in the UUD 1945 (1945 Constitution) as the basic principles of Indonesian state and more specifically regulated in Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights. Article 28A to 28J of the 1945 Constitution states that human rights includes the right to life, the right to freedom of religion, the right to education, the right to work, and the right to associate and assemble. Meanwhile, Law No. 39 of 1999 explains that human rights violations are acts of a person or group of people including state officials, whether intentional or unintentional or negligence that unlawfully reduces, hinders, limits, and/or revokes the human rights of a person or group of people guaranteed by this Law, and does not receive, or is feared not to receive a fair and correct legal resolution, based on the applicable legal mechanism. In the law, the basic rights of individuals are regulated again in detail including the right to personal freedom, the right to security, the right to welfare, the right to participate in government, women's rights, and children's rights along with the state's obligations in protecting these rights. The description of the human rights violations found and represented in Leila S. Chudori's works are a violations of the right to personal freedom, the right to security, and the right to welfare.

### 1. Right to Personal Liberty

During the New Order era, freedom of expression, freedom of opinion, and freedom of assembly were not viewed as basic human rights that must be fully possessed by humans (Legowo et al., 2013; McGregor & Setiawan, 2019; Pertiwi, 2021; Rajab, 2022). If President Soekarno during the Old Order period was known as a political ruler, then President Soeharto during the New Order period was better known as a political, economic, and military ruler (Hadi & Kasuma, 2012). The use of military force to suppress dissent resulted in the military becoming dominant in social and political life (Kosandi & Wahono, 2020; Lee, 2009; Syam, 2012). This restriction on the right to personal freedom was carried out on the grounds of protecting the state from various subversive disturbances (Rajab, 2022). Leila S. Chudori expressed the form of democracy that was used by the New Order regime in her *Laut Bercerita* novel as in the following quote.

"According to Alex, during the New Order, Indonesia was like a large river with a calm surface, there was no typical democratic chaos because political parties were determined, the law could be bought, the economy belonged only to the rulers and their cronies, and the people lived in fear. Now we are not yet accustomed to the noise, the crowds and so many questions (both intelligent and stupid) that comments on the government's behavior." (Chudori, 2017)

The terms of commotion and crowd used by the author in the quote above showed that the New Order regime did not accept criticism, let alone opposition from any party that did not conform to its wishes. In fact, an ideal democratic system should provide a wider discussion space to express the opinions of its people. As a result, the Indonesian society was not yet accustomed to a true democratic climate.

During the New Order, the people's right to express opinions, assemble and express themselves was not provided by the state (McGregor & Setiawan, 2019). The New Order regime always used the excuse of "maintaining the stability of the country from various subversive disturbances" to limit the right to personal freedom (Rajab, 2022). Violations of the right to personal freedom related to freedom of expression and expression are found in *Laut Bercerita*, namely a dialogue about the Minister's reactions in criticizing the media that do not comply with the Minister's policies. These medias are *Tera* magazine, *Harian Jakarta*, and *Harian Demokrasi* which still employ political prisoners and children of political prisoners (Chudori, 2017). If the mass media still insists on not dismissing these workers, then the next action taken by the government is to ban them (Chudori, 2017).

The *Tera* magazine, *Harian Jakarta*, and *Harian Demokrasi* mentioned in the *Laut Bercerita* novel are based on the real *Tempo*, *Editor*, and *Detik* magazines. In 1998, the *Tempo* magazine once sharply criticized the New Order government for its involvement in using the Golkar party as its political vehicle. Prasetyo (2019) found the dominance of the New Order regime in the *Laut Bercerita* novel in the form of restrictions on press freedom which was only allowed to report on the successes achieved by the New Order regime.

The impact of this criticism was the banning or revocation of *Tempo* magazine's issuance permit letter. This action Editor was also applied to and *Detik* magazine for similar reasons.

Another effort by the New Order regime to maintain political stability was to supervise reading materials circulating in the society. In the *Namaku Alam* novel it tells the story of the conditions in 1981 through the Attorney General's Office, the government announced a few books that were banned on the grounds that they were "disturbing for the society" (Chudori, 2023). The "disturbing for the society" term more specifically refers to reading the books that contained communist ideology (Tim Peneliti PR2Media, 2010; Yusuf, 2010). Among the dozens of banned book titles, among them are literary works by Pramoedya Ananta Toer (Kartikasari & Andayani, 2014; Wahyuni & Banda, 2020). As a form of resistance to the ban, people secretly read those banned books. For those who duplicate or distribute prohibited books, they will receive legal consequences in the form of arrest and imprisonment (Tim Peneliti PR2Media, 2010; Wahyuni & Banda, 2020; Yusuf, 2010). This is also described in the work of Leila S. Chudori (Chudori, 2023).

The tight government control is not only told by banning books, but also in film screenings in cinemas. The government established censorship agencies to supervise shows that are worthy of public enjoyment (Chudori, 2023). The show in question is a show that does not criticize the New Order regime or does not spread ideas that are contrary to the ideology of the New Order regime (Erwanto, 2011; Herlambang, 2013; Jusuf, 2016). Meanwhile, the screening of films that can legitimize the position of the New Order regime as a figure to save the nation and a new order, has become a mandatory spectacle for all Indonesian people in that period. During the New Order period, the *G-30-S* film became a film that must be watched, especially by students, and the said film became aired annually on national television every September 30th (Chudori, 2012).

Restrictions on freedom of expression (Chudori, 2017), restrictions freedom of opinion (Chudori, 2017); restrictions of books (Chudori, 2023), and entertainment (Chudori, 2023) ultimately led to various criticisms from critical groups in society such as student groups as told in the *Laut Bercerita* novel. According to my findings on studies that examine the works of Leila S. Chudori such as those conducted by Andani et al. (2022); Barus et al. (2023); Githa et al. (2023); Muzzayyanah (2019); Ningrum (2018); Pamuji (2021); Prasetyo (2019); Rahmi (2021); Safitri et al. (2022); and Sembada & Andalas (2019), the theme of human rights violations is often found in the *Laut Bercerita* novel (2017). The human rights violations are told around the student movement that was dissatisfied with various policies of the New Order regime, including restrictions on various rights to personal freedom.

The resistance against restricting the right to personal freedom policies was carried out by establishing discussion groups in the late 1980s, which was initiated by the student movements (Chudori, 2017). This movement then developed into a demonstration movements. The demonstration movements, which was initially only carried out by students, eventually spread to various levels of society. The research results of Ibrahim & Nur (2023), and Nofrima & Qodir (2021) stated that the establishment of these discussion groups was motivated by the implementation of the Campus Life Normalization/Student Coordination Body (NKK/BKK) policy which limited student participation in practical politics.

Leila S. Chudori tells the New Order regime's efforts to quell student unrest by deploying the State Intelligence Agency to monitor student activities so as not to provoke unrest in society.

"You have to be careful, nowadays intelligence agents often infiltrates student and activist discussion events." (Chudori, 2017)

The deployment of the State Intelligence Agency according to Mengko (2022) was an intensive surveillance effort carried out by the New Order regime in dealing with the increasing demonstrations in various major cities in Indonesia. The tight surveillance carried out by the intelligence agency was expected to suppress students' freedom of movement so that their activities could be controlled and not lead to radical actions that threatened the stability of the country (Priambodo, 2016). In its implementation, these efforts actually gave rise to various forms of human rights violations.

Many student activists experienced arrests, torture, and even forced disappearances. The struggle of these students is represented by the author through the character *Biru Laut* in the *Laut Bercerita* novel; and *Alam* and *Bimo* in the *Pulang* novel. The character *Biru Laut* is described as having courage and determination in carrying out his struggle even though he had to run, live in hiding, and only stayed in for two or three months and then move again (Chudori, 2017). In the end, *Biru Laut*'s struggle had to stop because he lost his life.

The except of the story of the revocation of the passport experienced by the character *Dimas* is a representation of a form of violation of the right to personal freedom, related to the right to enter or return to Indonesian territory which is already in accordance with the 1945 Constitution. For decades, the characters *Dimas Suryo*, *Nugroho Dewantoro*, *Risjaf*, and *Tjahjadi Sukarna* (*Tjai Sin Soe*) lost their citizenship rights and become stateless as the result. *Dimas* had to let go of being separated from his family and could not return to his homeland because their passports were revoked. Even though at that time not

everyone who was abroad was necessarily in the interests of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI). Dimas's trip to Havana was because he was assigned by the Berita Nusantara office to attend a conference. Dimas was also accused of being part of the PKI only because many workers at the Berita Nusantara office were PKI sympathizers or active in organizations affiliated with the communists. Dimas continued his efforts to return to his homeland by applying for a visa every year even though it was always rejected.

This action was motivated by the attitude of exiles who refused to undergo examinations and declarations of loyalty to the New Order regime. Many exiles do not understand or even realized the existence of this system, and suddenly their passports are revoked (Chambert-Loir, 2016; Hill, 2010, 2020, 2022; Saptari, 2019). This incomprehension was also described by Leila S. Chudori when the character of Dimas in the *Pulang* novel, which applied for a visa to Indonesia every year even though he was always rejected. The lack of clarity on the reasons for the denial of visas is a representation of the New Order regime's non-transparent policies (Chudori, 2017).

## 2. Right to Security

In the *Pulang* novel (Chudori, 2012), Leila S. Chudori describes the suffering experienced by the families of political prisoners who has to experience detention and inhumane treatment. This detention is not only a restriction of physical freedom, but also a form of systematic violence that violates the right to a sense of security. This inhumane treatment includes psychological and physical torture that causes prolonged trauma (Chudori, 2012) so that the lives of the families of political prisoners are full of fear and uncertainty. The traumatic impact experienced by the families of political prisoners in the *Pulang* novel shows how violations of the right to life are not only affected the main victims, but also extend to their closest social environment. This trauma disrupts their mental and emotional well-being, and can even affect their descendants.

The freedom given to political prisoners and exiles cannot be said to be completely free. Political prisoners or exiles and their descendants are still under the supervision of the New Order regime. Although they are no longer behind bars, the shadow of the dark past still haunts their daily lives. Many of them still feel a strong social stigma, namely a negative stigma such as a traitor to the state or an enemy of the state. Difficulty in finding work and access to education are major challenges that they must face, as if their sentence is not over even though they have served their sentence or exile (Saptari, 2019; Setyagama, 2015).

Moreover, strict supervision by government officials made political prisoners like Mr. Razak in the quote above, always feel watched and restricted in various aspects of life. Freedom of speech and assembly is often limited by threats or subtle intimidation. Those who try to reveal the truth or simply voice injustice are often faced with the risk of re-arrest or greater pressure. This shows that the freedom granted by the New Order regime is only superficial, while strict control and supervision continue, restricting the lives of former political prisoners and exiles and their descendants in the shadow of fear and uncertainty (Ahmad, 2013; Setyagama, 2015; Sumarwan, 2007).

In social life, political prisoners and their families will bear the stigma of enemies of the state (Chudori, 2012) and vile families (Chudori, 2012). The negative stigma refers to a group or entity that is considered a serious threat to the security, stability, and sovereignty of a country.

"Like when we invited Mr. Razak to talk about his experiences on Buru Island for dozens of years and returning to Jakarta to still be considered an enemy of the state," (Chudori, 2017)

Political prisoners who have served their sentences for dozens of years still have to accept the negative stigma of being enemies of the state. The exiles who are abroad and cannot return to Indonesia because their passports have been revoked also shared the same fate. They also bear the stigma of being traitors to the state (Chudori, 2012, 2023). This stigma was maintained and even strengthened by the New Order regime to maintain power and achieve its political goals. Through the narrative constructed by Leila S. Chudori, the New Order regime was able to maintain the perception that political prisoners were still a threat to national security. They were a group of people who had made big mistakes against the Indonesian nation and state, even though they did nothing. Under the pretext of wanting to avoid negative stigma, people who had family ties with political prisoners or exiles chose to give up their family names, hide their identities, or even break off their ties of kinship (Ahmad, 2013).

Leila S. Chudori presents the character of Bunga Kenanga who is angry because Alam is fighting. For Bunga Kenanga, the society is highlighting and waits for the descendants of political prisoners to make mistakes. The consequences not only affect themselves, but also the entire family of political prisoners (Chudori, 2023). The actions taken by Bunga Kenanga are a representation of the political prisoners' strategy to protect their families from the additional negative impacts of the negative stigma that is already attached to them. This representation acts as a social critique as well as an effort to revive the collective memory of suffering that is often ignored by the official history. Using poetic language and strong symbolism, Leila S. Chudori highlights the psychological trauma, loss of identity, and systemic injustice

experienced by the victims, so that readers are invited to feel not only sadness but also courage in facing the oppression. This strengthens the function of literature as a medium of resistance, and a moral reminder of the importance of respecting human rights in the socio-political context of Indonesia (Apriyani & Daulay, 2023).

The Laut character in the *Laut Bercerita* novel experienced various forms of violations on the right to a sense of security, in the form of moving from location to location to escape intelligence pursuit (Chudori, 2017); experienced kidnapping (Chudori, 2017); torture (Chudori, 2017); and have to be separated from the people they love (Chudori, 2017). Laut's efforts to avoid intelligence pursuit by moving places show how the New Order regime used fear and intimidation as a tool of domination against individuals or groups which they considered as a threat. Likewise, the kidnapping and torture experienced by the Laut character were not just individual incidents but were systematic manifestations of an oppressive power structure. From the perspective of New Historicism theory, the narrative presented by Leila S. Chudori represents a critique of human rights violation practices during the New Order regime. Of course, the New Order regime could carry out covert violence to maintain political stability at the expense of basic human rights such as a sense of security and freedom of movement

### 3. Right to Welfare

The ideal life of the nation and state according to the New Order regime must be reorganized based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. This arrangement begins with eradicating all forms of deviation and abuse that occurred during the Old Order, including the G 30 S tragedy. The New Order regime considered that communism was a danger to the state and had the potential to reappear. For that reason, the New Order regime's agenda was to eradicate communism to its roots, as quoted below.

"That was the government's first step towards implementing a policy to "cleanse communist elements down to the roots". And what they considered "roots" were all descendants of political prisoners even though we were born years after the 1965 Tragedy" (Chudori, 2023)

The quote above shows that the communist ideology is considered by the New Order regime to have penetrated the minds of the descendants and families of the PKI. Therefore, the existence of the families of political prisoners should be watched out for. The international community's demands for the unconditional release of political prisoners were not accommodated by the New Order regime (Eickhoff et al., 2017; Ricklefs, 2005). In the *Laut Bercerita* novel, Leila S. Chudori also presents the story of the character Pak Razak who was exiled to Buru Island because he was a member of the PKI (Chudori, 2017). Even though he had served his sentence on Buru Island, Pak Razak is said to still received discriminatory treatment towards his family. His children were not given the opportunity to get decent jobs because their Identity Cards (KTP) had been given an "ET" (ex-political prisoners) mark as a family of political prisoners.

Likewise, the story of the lives of political prisoners and their families is also described in the *Pulang* novel. The "ET" (Eks Tapol/ex-political prisoners) code (Chudori, 2012) made it difficult for them to find work or education. Not only that, but those difficulties was also exacerbated by the condition of their ostracization by their surrounding neighbourhood due to the negative stigma as traitors to the country.

The New Order regime considered it necessary to be wary of political prisoners because they were potentially considered to spread communist ideology. The description of the categorization of political prisoners is mentioned in all of Leila S. Chudori's works. In the *Pulang* novel, the description of the category of political prisoners is told in more detail. The author states that the New Order regime issued a Presidential Decree No. 28/1975 concerning the labeling of former political prisoners as Group C and included the ET mark on the identity cards of political prisoners and their families (Chudori, 2012). This policy was implemented regardless of a person's age or status (Chudori, 2012). For identity card holders with the ET mark, if they want to apply for a job, they must obtain a "Certificate of Not Being Involved in G 30 S" through a series of exclusive research processes (Litsus) (Ahmad, 2013; Setyagama, 2015; Sumarwan, 2007; YLBHI, 1998).

The Litsus policy is narrated by Leila S. Chudori as a policy that tends to be far-fetched and irrational. In order to work at a state-owned company, a person must go through a long and multi-layered bureaucracy. A person's eligibility to work at a government-owned company does not consider their abilities, but rather their relationship to the political sins committed by their family. Of course, this is a form of violation of human rights, specifically the right to welfare.

From those Litsus policy, the terms "clean self" and "clean environment" emerged (Abdullah & Lapian, 2012; Ricklefs, 2005; Roosa, 2008, 2016). The "clean self" term is applied to former political prisoners such as the character Hananto and clean environment is applied to the families or descendants of political prisoners such as the characters Segara Alam, Bimo, Rama, and Kenanga in the *Pulang* and *Namaku Alam* novels. According to Munsu (2016), those terms are the society's interpretation of the ideological mental screening policy issued by the Minister of Home Affairs.

This bitter reality made the descendants of political prisoners and exiles choose to let go of the family tree that was attached to them by throwing away their family name. Throwing away the surname “Suryo” behind his name, made Rama believe that it could help him avoid prejudice and bad treatment around him including in getting a job or education (Chudori, 2012).

The act of discarding one's family name is not merely a personal decision, but rather a response to systematic socio-political pressure. The Suryo family name becomes a symbol of historical burden and social stigma due to its association with a political past that is considered negative by the ruling regime or the surrounding society. This shows how the power structure not only restricts physical freedom but also affects the identity and psychological well-being of individuals and their families. Rama's struggle to free himself from the shadow of his family's past is not merely a personal effort but a broad representation of the long-term impact of human rights violations on the lives of structurally marginalized communities.

One of the crucial contributions of New Historicism in analyzing literary works lies in its ability to reveal the complex interplay between literary representation and historical discourse. Literature, in this perspective, does not merely reflect historical reality, nor does it stand as an autonomous aesthetic object detached from its socio-political context (Ehterami & Marzban, 2021; Nurcahyadi et al., 2025; Shen, 2024). Rather, it participates actively in shaping, contesting, and circulating historical meanings. By situating a text within the web of cultural practices, institutional power, and historical events that surround its production, New Historicism underscores how literary narratives both absorb and transform the discourses of their time. This theoretical lens illuminates the dialogic relationship between history and literature: while literature draws from prevailing ideologies, social conflicts, and collective memories, it also offers alternative visions and critiques that reshape how history itself is remembered and interpreted. Thus, New Historicism provides a critical framework for understanding literature as an active site where historical consciousness is negotiated and continually reconfigured.

## Conclusion

This research aims to analyze various forms of human rights violations represented in Leila S. Chudori's novels as a reflection of social reality during the New Order era. The three novels by Leila S. Chudori successfully represent various forms of human rights violations that occurred during the New Order era, namely violations of the right to personal freedom, the right to security and the right to welfare. This representation not only depicts the cruelty of the New Order regime, but also highlights the psychological and social impacts experienced by individuals and families of victims. The *New Historicism* approach helps reveal how literature can be a tool to challenge and revise official historical narratives that tend to cover up human rights violations. Leila S. Chudori's novels play an important role in the process of restoring the collective memory of the Indonesian nation. By presenting the stories of victims of human rights violations in a humanistic and critical manner, these works help society to remember and reflect on the dark days of the New Order. This shows that literature does not only function as entertainment or aesthetics, but also as a medium for education and social awareness. The representation of forms of human rights violations in Leila S. Chudori's novels through the lens of *New Historicism* makes a significant contribution to the study of Indonesian literature and history. These works not only reflect the societal reality of the New Order era, but also invite readers to think critically about the relationship between power, history, and humanity. Of course, this research opens up opportunities for further research that examines the role of literature in other historical and political contexts. Leila S. Chudori's novels can become an important medium in raising the sensitive and complex humanitarian issues. Those novels do not stand alone as works of fiction, but rather as part of a dynamic historical discourse, where power and resistance interact with each other.

## Declarations

- Author contribution** : Trisanti Apriyani was responsible for the entire research project. She also led the writing of the manuscript and collaborated with the second author. Xiao Lixian and Resneri Daulay participated in the data collection, transcription, and analysis. They also revised the manuscript. All the authors approved the final manuscript.
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- Conflict of interest** : Both authors declare that they have no competing interests.



- Ethics Approval** : Information on Ethics Approval and informed consent statements are required for all articles published in BAHASTRA since 2025.
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