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***Social Reality in the Novel Kereta Semar Lembu***

***(Georg Lukacs' Study of Socialist Realism)***

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***Abstract***

*This research aims to describe objective reality, dialectical movements and emancipatory critical expressions in the novel Kereta Semar Lembu using Georg Lukacs' socialist realism theory. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with the literary sociology approach of Georg Lukacs. Data collection techniques used include reading, taking notes and conducting literature studies. The data analysis technique in this research is descriptive analysis. The results of this research found that there is social reality 1) objective reality is reflected through the phases of oppression during colonial rule, Japanese colonialism and the era of independence, with people suffering as a result of inhumane colonial policies, 2) the dialectical movement in this novel plays a crucial role in understanding the dynamics of history and social change, seen through workers' resistance, the struggle for independence, and the difficulty of achieving peace between the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 3) emancipatory critical expressions are reflected in various forms of resistance, showing the critical spirit of the figures in facing colonialism and inequality at that time.*

***Keyword****s: Sociology of Literature, Social Reality, Kereta Semar Lembu, Georg Lukacs.*

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**Introduction**

*Kereta Semar Lembu* is a novel by Zaky Yamani (Yamani, 2022). This novel was nominated and won the 2021 Dewan Kesenian Jakarta Novel Competition. The novel attempts to encompass significant periods in Indonesian history, with its framework centered around the character Lembu. In this novel, one can observe the author's ability to connect fiction and non-fiction, resulting in a compelling narrative flow. The author also tries to describe how the hoe workers at that time lived and spent their days around the railroad and the various social problems that existed.

A novel is an exploration of life events, reflecting and portraying stories in a form that encompasses the influences, connections, outcomes, destruction, or achievements of human actions in life (Tarigan, 2015). The exploration of life events referred to here includes aspects of social reality within the novel, where significant historical events in Indonesia are depicted. The novel not only describes events but also reflects and portrays the story in a specific form. This indicates that the novel not only presents facts or chronological events but also highlights the artistic aspect in the way the story is presented.

The novel *Kereta Semar Lembu* is set in the surroundings of Java in the 1920s, with the author weaving many historical events of that time into the narrative. During this period, Indonesia was grappling with the implementation of the colonial government's forced labor policy in building railway lines. Men worked tirelessly for low wages, women resorted to prostitution, and children were abandoned in impoverished and violent environments. The story begins with the character Lembu, who possesses the extraordinary ability to live for hundreds of years, allowing him to travel by train along all the tracks in Java, witnessing historical events since his birth. Born as the child of a prostitute, Lembu had to become accustomed to the frightening adult world from a young age. Prostitution, violence, and even slavery were never far from his daily life.

Thoughts on governance in Indonesia tend to be subjective and vary from person to person. These differing perspectives can lead to the emergence of new issues within society. Disagreements regarding the government can prompt the population to take actions of dissent in the hope of liberating themselves from governmental control. In the context of literary works, Zaky Yamani's novel *Kereta Semar Lembu* creates a portrayal of social reality related to Indonesia's history, starting from the era of Dutch colonialism, followed by the Japanese occupation, and extending into the period of independence. The novel paints a picture of diverse perspectives, conflicts, or challenges faced by society in relation to government policies. This novel can serve as a means to reflect on and delve into various aspects of social reality in Indonesia, through the imaginative and creative lens of the author.

Sociology of literature is an approach or branch of study in sociology that focuses on the analysis of the interaction between literature (literary works, authors, and readers) and society (Wiyatmi., 2008). he primary goal of literary sociology is to understand and explain how literature reflects, influences, and engages with social and cultural realities. In this research, the researcher employs the literary sociology approach according to Georg Lukacs. Georg Lukacs, a Marxist theorist, discusses literary sociology with a critical and class-based approach. He introduces the concept of "socialist realism," highlighting the role of literature in reflecting and portraying social reality (Syas, 2014).

According to Georg Lukacs, realist artists have three close relationships with their social environment. Firstly, realist artists place the unity of society as their main focus. Secondly, in observing the reality of their society, realist artists use the meaning of life as their perspective. Thirdly, the present is considered the center of social movement influenced by the past and shaping the future (Karyanto, 1997). This explanation depicts the significant connection between an artist and their societal environment, where the author utilizes society as the subject in creating literary works.

Georg Lukacs' theory of socialist realism serves as the foundation for this research because its focus is on exploring the social reality depicted in the *novel Kereta Semar Lembu*. The aim of this study is to assess the extent to which the author is able to present social reality in his work. The analysis will focus on Georg Lukacs' concepts of socialist realism, such as how objective reality is reflected in the work, how dialectical movement influences the story's development, and the extent to which emancipatory critical expressions can depict and provide insights into the social conditions portrayed in the novel.

There are three relevant previous studies. Firstly, Septian Audriani's research titled *Representasi Realitas Sosial dalam Novel Tan Karya Hendri Teja: Perspektif Realisme Sosialis Georg Lukacs*. This study discusses the social reality in the novel Tan (Audriana, 2018). The similarity in this research is that both studies use Georg Lukacs's socialist realism theory. The difference in this study lies in the research object, Septian Audriani's research uses the novel Tan by Hendri Teja while this study used the *novel Kereta Semar Lembu.*

Secondly, Mega Prayitna Putri's research titled *Realitas Sosial dalam Novel Kelomang Karya Qizink La Aziva (Kajian Realisme Sosialis Georg Lukacs).* This research discusses the social reality in the novel Kelomang and its connection to the social reality of Indonesian society. (Putri, 2017). The similarity in this research is that both studies use Georg Lukacs's socialist realism theory. The difference in this study lies in the research object, Mega's research uses the novel Kelomang by Qizink La Aziva while this study used the *novel Kereta Semar Lembu.*

Thridly, Ilham Az Zilzal Bustomi's research titled Realitas Sosial Pada Novel Kami (Bukan) Jongos Berdasi Karya J. S. Khairen (Tinjauan Sosiologi Sastra). This study discusses the social reality in the novel Kami (Bukan) Jongos Berdasi and its connection to the social reality of Indonesian society. (Bustomi & Supratno, 2021). The similarity in this research is that both studies use Georg Lukacs's socialist realism theory. The difference in this study lies in the research object, Ilham's research uses the novel (Bukan) Jongos Berdasi by J. S. Khairen while this study used the *novel Kereta Semar Lembu.*

The issues in this research are (1) how is the objective reality portrayed in the novel *Kereta Semar Lembu*? (2) how is the dialectical movement in the novel *Kereta Semar Lembu*? (3) how is the emancipatory critical expression in the novel *Kereta Semar Lembu*?. From these research questions, the objectives of this study are (1) to describe the objective reality presented in the novel *Kereta Semar Lembu*, (2) to describe the dialectical movement within the novel *Kereta Semar Lembu*, and (3) to describe the critical and emancipatory expressions in the novel *Kereta Semar Lembu.*

**Method**

The research method applied in this research is descriptive qualitative method. Researchers use qualitative descriptive, which produces data in the form of sentences and dialog. In the context of this research, a qualitative approach is used to understand the reality contained in the novel. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, and data collection techniques entail combining and analyzing data inductively. (Sugiyono, 2019). The method in collecting data in this study uses literature, note-taking, and document techniques. The literature technique is used to retrieve data from written sources, while the document technique is carried out by the author using the novel as a primary data source to complete the search for information. translate in Indonesian. The use of data recording techniques, events, or quotations from the novel is an important step in this research. The data generated from the dialogues and sentences in the novel are the focus of the analysis, and this research aims to describe the social reality reflected in the literary work.

**Result and Discussion**

This research uses Georg Lukacs' social reality theory. Georg Lukacs presents a Marxist perspective that clearly defines conditions regarding the relationship between theory and practice as possible. "It is not enough if thought has to realize itself; reality must also strive towards thought." Thus, it will be realized that the world has long taken the form of a dream that only needs to be consciously mastered to be controlled in reality. (Lukacs, 2011). In the novel *Kereta Semar Lembu*, there are concepts of objective reality, dialectical movement, and expressions of emancipatory critique analyzed using the socialist realism perspective of Georg Lukacs. The analysis of social reality data in the novel "Kereta Semar Lembu" by Zaky Yamani is as follows.

1. **Objective Reality in the Novel Kereta Semar Lembu by Zaky Yaman**

The objective reality in the novel "Kereta Semar Lembu" by Zaky Yamani is reflected in several stages, starting from the Dutch colonial period, continuing through the Japanese colonial period, and extending to the post-independence period. In this novel, various forms of oppression are depicted, involving several aspects, including economics, politics, religion, and physical oppression.

“Ibuku mendapatkan banyak teman senasib, para perempuan yang mengundi nasib di ratusan buruh cangkul, para mandor dan semua lelaki yang terlibat dalam pembangunan jalan kereta itu. Para perempuan itu sebagian besar jadi pelacur di malam hari.” (Yamani, 2022:29).

In the given data excerpt, it can be proven that there existed challenging social conditions where women during the Dutch colonial rule faced limitations in job choices, forcing them to take morally inappropriate professions. Ibu Lembu, as one of the Javanese women during that period, was compelled to undertake degrading work as a means to earn a living and meet her needs. She had to serve the hoes, foremen, and all the men involved in the railroad construction project by becoming a prostitute. This constitutes a form of oppression, as Ibu Lembu was forced to sacrifice her integrity and dignity for survival.In this context, the quoted data deeply illustrates the objective reality faced by women during that era, where economic and moral oppression became a bitter reality they had to confront.

“Tiba-tiba saja jalan desa penuh pedagang dan orang linglung berkeliaran, tidur disembarang tempat, mengais sisa-sisa makanan yang tercecer di jongko-jongko.” (Yamani, 2022:45).

In the given data excerpt, the clear impact of the construction of the railroad in the village of Kedungjati can be observed. Initially, this village was simple with a few teak forest huts. However, when a group of laborers arrived to build the railroad, the structure changed abruptly. Then, after the completion of the railroad construction, some newcomers decided to settle in Kedungjati, creating changes in the social structure of the village. The influx of population without a corresponding increase in job opportunities can lead to economic pressure. The group of laborers and new arrivals create competition for resources and jobs. This is reflected in the emergence of street vendors and people sleeping in the open, trying to scrape together leftover food. The uneven economic impact can be considered a form of oppression against the local community. The emergence of people sleeping anywhere and wandering aimlessly indicates the loss of balance and social control in Kedungjati. This creates an uncontrolled neighborhood atmosphere and can be a form of social oppression against the local community.

“Orang-orang ramai berbicara tentang berakhirnya pemaksaan terhadap petani Jawa untuk menanam tebu dan kopi. Orang-orang bingung menghadapi situasi baru itu karena mereka tidak tahu apakah dengan berakhirnya tanam paksa itu akan berakhir pula penderitaan mereka dari perbudakan para Bupati dan pangeran Jawa.” (Yamani,. 2022:72)

In the given data excerpt, evidence can be found of political oppression emerging as a result of policy changes related to forced cultivation. Although these policy changes were initially seen as progress, they turned out to have complex impacts on Javanese farmers during that time. Furthermore, the phrase"perbudakan para Bupati dan pangeran Jawa" indicates that societal concerns were not only focused on forced cultivation but also on broader forms of social and economic oppression that may still persist. Liberation from one aspect of oppression does not guarantee freedom from another.

“Bawakan kepadaku pelacur anak-anak tiga atau empat orang, kalau bisa campur perempuan dan laki-laki. Bawa mereka diam-diam kesamping stasiun ini, di dekat kandang-kandang merpati. Mengerti?.” (Yamani, 2022:116).

In the given data excerpt, it can be proven that there was oppression carried out by the character Meneer Jansen. Meneer Jansen's request to Lembu creates an inhumane act and violates the child's right to be protected from sexual exploitation. Involving boys and girls in such requests not only violates humanitarian principles, but also goes against the law and religious values. Even though he claims to be an ethical person, this can be proven in the following quotation

*“*Tapi aku orang etis,” katanya dengan tersenyum. (Yamani, 2022:113)

In the given data excerpt, Meneer Jansen claims to be an ethical person, someone who believes in human values. However, his actions contradict his statement. He violates humanitarian principles by engaging in inappropriate actions towards children, as explained in the previous quotation."

“Kenyataannya kami tidak dipekerjakan. Kami diperbudak. Kami dipaksa membangun jalan kereta baru dari Saketi ke Bayah sepanjang 83 kilometer. Tenaga kami benar-benar diperas dan dipekerjakan bagai binatang. Siapapun yang dianggap tak becus bekerja akan dihukum keras, dicambuki, dipukuli, kadang-kadang sampai mati.” (Yamani, 2022:196).

In the given data excerpt, it can be proven that there is oppression in various aspects, such as economic and physical, carried out by the Japanese against the natives. At the time, native manual laborers were promised decent jobs so they could support their families. Lembu was one of those promised a job and sent to Banten. However, the reality was very different; they were regarded as slaves or forced laborers by the Japanese. These promises were fulfilled with torture such as whipping and other forms of physical violence, even resulting in fatalities. This created extremely difficult and detrimental conditions for the natives involved, hurting not only physically but also economically and emotionally. As time went on, the intensity of the oppression increased. It was not only Javanese men who were targeted, but Javanese women also experienced inappropriate treatment from the Japanese. This can be proven through the following quotation.

“ Hari demi hari aku melihat lelaki jawa dikumpulkan dan dibawa pergi untuk kerja paksa. Sementara Perempuan-perempuan dibawa untuk dijadikan pemuas nafsu para serdadu Jepang itu. “ (Yamani, 2022:202)

In the given data excerpt, it can be proven that Javanese women not only face economic pressures but also endure cruel sexual harassment by the Japanese. Unlike in the past, where wage-related work such as prostitution was the primary source of suffering, they have now become victims of violence and sexual exploitation. This creates conditions of deeper suffering and violates the human rights of women.

“Anak-anak menangis menderita busung lapar dan menangis menjerit-jerit menahan lapar. Sementara orang-orang cacat akibat pertempuran hanya bisa termangu menahan lapar di tengah kemerdekaan yang baru saja diproklamasikan.” (Yamani, 2022:211).

In the given data excerpt, it is evident that there was oppression involving various aspects of people's lives at the beginning of Indonesia's independence. Complex challenges emerged along with new hope, but with lingering suffering. The complex social reality is reflected in the starvation of children and the heavy burden on those directly affected by the fighting. Communities directly involved in the conflict face severe challenges in restoring their daily lives. The battered and uncertain economy creates economic oppression, making it difficult to meet basic daily needs and further exacerbating the situation. Child hunger becomes a poignant portrayal of the uncertainty and hardship faced by the younger generation at that time. As inheritors of the recently gained independence, they must navigate an uncertain future in challenging circumstances.

1. **Dialectical Motion in the Novel *Kereta Semar Lembu* by Zaky Yamani**

Dialectical motion in the novel *Kereta Semar Lembu* by Zaky Yaman has the main focus of opposition and defense, which can be proven by the following data

“Meener Jansen yang paling bersemangat diantara kelompok yang menyatakan pribumi harus mendapat lebih banyak keuntungan, berupa pendidikan dan pekerjaan yang layak. Menurutnya, orang-orang Eropa telah menangguk keuntungan yang sangat banyak dengan menjajah orang-orang pribumi, dan kini saatnya pribumi mendapatkan yang seharsunya mereka terima : pendidikan dan kesempatan bekerja yang lebih baik di dalam sistem kolonial.” (Yamani, 2022:117).

In the given data excerpt, Meener Jansen defends the natives. His statement reflects a progressive view and emphasizes the importance of justice in the colonial system. Meneer Jansen recognizes the inequalities that exist and pushes for change so that the natives can gain equal rights with the Dutch. His focus on education and employment reflects an awareness of the importance of empowering the natives through improving qualifications and providing economic opportunities with the aim of reducing existing social inequalities. The statement can be considered a defense of indigenous rights and an effort to resist the injustice of the colonial system at that time.

“Entah sudah berapa lama aku tinggal di Batavia. Belakangan aku merasakan kegelisahan di kalangan buruh kereta api. Kata mereka sudah terlalu lama buruh kereta api diperlakukan tidak adil oleh perusahaan-perusahaan kereta api yang beroperasi diseluruh Jawa. Aku juga membaca kegelisahan itu di koran-koran. Sampai akhirnya kegelisahan itu membuat para buruh sering berkumpul dan berdiskusi. Aku mendengar mereka akan membuat serikat khusus untuk buruh kereta api.” (Yamani, 2022:122).

In the given data excerpt, it is evident that the character Lembu illustrates the dissatisfaction of railroad workers with the unfair treatment they receive from railway companies. This awareness motivates them to plan the formation of a specific union in response to their grievances.

“Banyak sekali alasan untuk melakukan aksi pemogokan ini. Kami mencoba melawan perusahaan-perusahaan milik Belanda. Kami menuntut tunjangan hari raya satu kali gaji kotor. Dan paling utama, kami menuntut agar para kapitalis itu hengkang dari Indonesia, dan semua perusahaan harus dinasionalisasi oleh negara.” (Yamani, 2022 :261)

In the given data excerpt, it can be inferred that the character Lembu meets someone named Soedarno, who, at that time, was a member of the Railroad Workers' Union preparing a series of strike actions to oust capitalists and take over ownership of the company.

“Semakin lama, massa buruh kereta api yang menjadi pengikut Soedarno semakin besar, dan mereka semakin bersemangat untuk bergabung di serikat buruh kereta api. Sampai waktunya soedarno yang didukung Partai Komunis Indonesia, melancarkan serangkaian aksi mogok buruh yang melumpukan banyak industri, dan membuat parah pengusaha Belanda angkat kaki dari Indonesia.” (Yamani, 2022:265).

In the given data excerpt, it can be proven that there is a development from the previous data, which explains that there will be a strike action carried out by the laborers. Soedarno is portrayed as the leader of the strike action at that time. The conflict between the labor masses and Dutch employers arises due to dissatisfaction with working conditions and economic inequality. The labor strike not only affects the industry but also prompts Dutch entrepreneurs to leave Indonesia. This is a result of the tensions and conflicts between the interests of the laborers and the entrepreneurs that create change.

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“Perundingan demi perundingan kita tempuh. Perdamaian ini tidak datang tiba-tiba, Lembu. Kita mengusahakan perdamaian ini dengan darah dan air mata. Kau mungkin tahu, banyak orang yang kecewa dan harus masti di tangan bangsa kita sendiri karena perjanjian itu. Kita saling culik dan saling bunuh hanya karena kekecewaan disetiap perundingan. dan sekarang kita telah mencapai perundingan terakhir, pengakuan atas negara kita.” (Yamani, 2022:244).

In the given data excerpt, it can be proven that achieving peace between the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands was not easy; negotiations had to be conducted repeatedly. The phrase "Kita mengusahakan perdamaian ini dengan darah dan air" can be interpreted as indicating that the peace process involved sacrifices, conflicts, and profound emotions. In the end, after going through a series of challenging processes, the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands reached a final negotiation: a peace agreement and recognition of the Republic of Indonesia as a sovereign state. This peace agreement and recognition of the Republic of Indonesia serve as concrete evidence that the lengthy and difficult process ultimately yielded the desired outcome, marking a significant change.

1. **Critical Emancipatory Expressions**

The critical emancipatory expressions in the novel *Kereta Semar Lembu* by Zaky Yamani emphasize forms of resistance that can be identified explicitly and implicitly as follows.

“Kemudian para buruh kereta api ramai membincangkan sesuatu yang mereka sebut sebagai perjuangan kelas. Buruh pribumi dan Belanda bersatu merancang sebuah pemberotakan, yang akan dimulai dengan mogok kerja.” (Yamani, 2022:162).

In the given data excerpt, there is strong evidence of resistance from the laborers at that time. The expression "perjuangan kelas" indicates that the workers are aware of the inequality in society, particularly in terms of treatment, rights, and working conditions between those who work as laborers and those who control resources, such as company owners or rulers. Native and Dutch laborers unite in solidarity to address common issues and oppose conditions deemed detrimental. This effort materializes in the planning of a rebellion, scheduled to begin with a work strike. The work strike is considered an effective protest tool that can exert pressure on the ruling power, namely the Dutch.

The strike action was harshly responded to by the Dutch government. The harsh measures involved mass arrests, restrictions on many indigenous organizations, and the dissolution and arrest of any meetings deemed to discuss independence. People involved in protest actions or meetings were thrown into prison, and some of them were even exiled to remote locations.

Some time ago, Lembu was in Tasikmalaya and read the Sipatahoenan newspaper. The paper reported that Amsterdam had been bombarded by German troops. The Dutch panicked and tried to hide this information from the natives for fear that it might spark a spirit of independence among them. However, the Dutch fears were not substantiated, as at the time the natives may not have been fully prepared to proclaim independence or they may have been in a dilemma between wanting to be independent and being prepared to face threats from foreign forces, such as Germany and Japan. This led the natives to consider uniting with the Dutch colonizers in the face of the threat of new invaders. Unfortunately, just two years later, the Japanese successfully colonized Java, realizing the fears that had previously been avoided. The Japanese colonial period was basically quite short, but for those who experienced it, those years felt like an endless series of suffering. They had to endure various torments, from disease outbreaks to famine. Villagers suffered from being enslaved on their own land, while their agricultural produce was taken by the Japanese army.

“Aku melihat seorang Jepang dikejar-kejar massa di sepan stasiun Semarang. Dan setelah orang itu tertangkap, dia digebuki. Tentara Jepang tidak ada yang bertindak. Mereka semua terdiam dan menjaga diri mereka sendiri.” (Yamani, 2022:206).

In the given data excerpt, there is evident resistance from the indigenous people. The occurrences of mob violence serve as expressions of anger and dissatisfaction with the occupying government. The suffering experienced by the population, such as disease outbreaks and famine, along with their treatment as slaves on their own land, further complicates the social structure during the occupation. This situation reflects the growing social tension, where feelings of dissatisfaction and the spirit of resistance become increasingly evident amid the suffering and injustice felt by the indigenous people.

“Para pegawai kereta api semakin sering melakukan kumpul-kumpul dan rapat. Mereka berencana akan merebut stasiun-stasiun dari tangan Jepang, dan akan mengoperasikan jalur kereta api tanpa campur tangan lagi dari orang-orang Jepang.” (Yamani, 2022:207).

In the given data excerpt, there is evidence of resistance from the railway employees. The gatherings escalated into a battle, with a group identifying themselves as the Railway Moeda Force attacking Semarang Station and seizing weapons from the Japanese military. The battle extended into the city of Semarang. This action reflects the desire of the railway employees to actively participate in the change of power and play a role in managing a crucial sector of society at that time, namely the railway lines. Not only in Semarang, but resistance also occurred in other regions such as Yogyakarta and Surabaya. This can be proven through the following quotation.

“Aku menumpangi kereta api ke Yogyakarta. Suasana disana tak kalah semrawutnya. Para pemuda sedang terbakar amarahnya untuk merebut pos-pos Jepang, sehingga kerusuhan dan bentrokan terjadi dimana-mana.” (Yamani, 2022:207).

“Setiba di stasiun Wonokromo, aku melihat para pemuda bergegas turun ke arah kota, dan baku tembak terdengar dimana-mana. Rupanya, para pemuda itu juga menyerang pos-pos tentara Jepang dan merebut senjata mereka.” (Yamani, 2022:207).

In the given data excerpt, there is strong evidence of resistance from the indigenous youth in various regions. The actions of attacking Japanese military posts and seizing weapons demonstrate the determination and courage of the youth to resist Japanese occupation. This atmosphere reflects the intense momentum of resistance and the strong desire to be free and reclaim control from the occupation.

“Kau tolonglah dia, kami harus bertempur lagi.” (Yamani, 2022:208).

In the given data excerpt, there is evidence of the resistance of the Indonesian people against the British forces, which at that time posed a threat to the people of Indonesia. The threat from the British forces related to the surrender of weapons through leaflets dropped from airplanes created high tension among the population, who responded with anger and determination to fight for independence. On November 18, 1945, Surabaya witnessed intense battles where British bombs flattened the city, causing fires and leaving corpses in the streets. The Battle of Surabaya created a significant turning point in the journey toward Indonesian independence, marking a fierce resistance against colonialism and providing a boost to the spirit of nationalism.

“Setidaknya kau harus bangga, yang memimpin pasukan kita untuk mengambil alih Jakarta adalah si Buyung sahabatmu itu!.” (Yamani, 2022:253).

In the given excerpt, it can be proven that there is a form of resistance led by the figure Buyung. After the Battle of Surabaya ended, Jakarta fell back into the hands of the Dutch through a sudden attack during peace negotiations. In mid-December 1949, there were rumors that Indonesian forces planned to recapture Jakarta. The entire situation reflects the spirit of resistance and determination to achieve Indonesia's independence from the grip of Dutch colonialism. Around the year 1950, Lembu met someone named Soedarno, who was a member of the railroad workers' union at that time. Lembu shared his life experiences with Soedarno, who had lived for over 100 years, spanning various historical events, including joining the railroad workers' union during the Dutch colonial era. He also explained in detail the process of constructing the first railway in Java and narrated various remarkable events he had experienced from that time until the present.

"Kau akan jadi simbol perlawanan kereta api, ya ini bagus untuk propaganda." Ucap Soedarno. (Yamani, 2022:264).

In the given data excerpt, it is evident that Lembu's life story is considered to have symbolic value and potential for use as a propaganda tool. The use of Lembu's life story as a propaganda tool indicates an effort to emphasize the values of resistance, struggle, and the spirit of independence in the context of labor during that time. Lembu's role as a symbol of resistance reflects an emancipatory spirit, where workers strive to free themselves from the oppression they face in the workplace, especially in relation to the railway system.

“Aku sendiri tidak mearasa bahwa kami kaum perusuh. Kami kaum yang berjuang dengan segala cara untuk menegakan keadilan dan keseteraan. Kalau cara kami dianggap terlalu keras, itu karena kami merasa itulah jalan satu-satunya ketika berhadapan dengan penguasa dan pengusaha yang tidak adil.”

In the given data excerpt, there is an expression as a manifestation of Lembu's feelings, who is part of the labor group labeled as "communist workers." They perceive themselves as individuals fighting for justice and equality. The expression that they do not see themselves as troublemakers but as a group fighting in every way to uphold these values reflects a critical spirit against the negative stereotypes that may be attached to them. The perception that their methods, considered too harsh, are a response to the harsh actions of authorities and employers deemed unfair. This reflects an emancipatory spirit to resist oppression and injustice.

**Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the data and discussion, Zaky Yamani's novel *Kereta Semar Lembu* strongly reflects social reality through the lens of Georg Lukacs' socialist realism. Concepts such as objective reality, dialectical motion, and critical emancipatory expressions prove to be elements in depicting the historical journey of Indonesia. Objective reality is reflected through the phases of oppression during colonial occupation, Japanese colonization, and the independence era, with people suffering as a result of inhumane colonial policies. In the social analysis, inequality during the Dutch colonial rule is shown through the difficult conditions of women like Mrs. Lembu, who is forced to become a prostitute as a way to survive. The character of Meneer Jansen, while defending native rights, is also involved in the negative treatment of children, highlighting the contradictions in his ethical stance. During the Japanese colonial period, systematic and cruel sexual abuse occurred, creating deep suffering for women. New hope in the era of independence was met with complex challenges, reflecting complicated social realities through the starving conditions of children and the heavy burden for those directly affected by the fighting. The dialectical motion in this novel plays a crucial role in understanding the dynamics of history and social change, evident through the labor resistance, the struggle for independence, and the difficulties in achieving peace between the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Critical emancipatory expressions are reflected in various forms of resistance, demonstrating the critical spirit of the characters in confronting colonization and inequality during that period.

In the novel *Kereta Semar Lembu*, struggle, inequality, and resistance are not just important elements but also the main core shaping the characteristics of the story. With a powerful narrative, this work successfully delves into the lives of the society of its time, providing a sharp focus on the social and political issues faced by its characters. Inequality and the spirit of the struggle for justice are not merely presented as supplementary elements but are reflected in every chapter, depicting the life experiences of the characters. Thus, *Kereta Semar Lembu* not only serves as a mere work of fiction but also as a profound reflection of the social reality of the past, where struggle, inequality, and the spirit of resistance become deeply ingrained elements that shape and portray its characteristics.

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