

POLICY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON LITERATURE: SOEHARTO AND MAO

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Abstrak

Sastra dan kebijakan pemerintah sering dianggap tak dapat dipisahkan. Sastra memiliki fungsi untuk menyampaikan pesan atau tujuan politik, juga menjadi alat untuk menyampaikan kritik. Membandingkan antara Indonesia dengan Cina, Indonesia memiliki situasi yang berbeda dengan Cina. Pemerintah Indonesia tidak pernah menggunakan sastra sebagai alat untuk menyampaikan kebijakan, dan tidak menjadikan sastra sebagai agenda penting dalam rapat-rapat partai. Akan tetapi keputusan-keputusan politik pemerintah, atau instruksi-instruksi presiden, yang sering kali didukung kekuatan militer, juga membawa dampak pada sastra dan tren sastra. Sementara karena fungsi dari sastra yang salah satunya bisa dijadikan alat menyampaikan kritik, pemerintah Cina sangat peka terhadap sastra. Mereka sering menggunakan kekuasaan untuk mengawasi sastra, dan juga menggunakan sastra untuk menyampaikan kebijakan-kebijakannya. Situasi seperti ini membuat sastra di Cina memiliki hubungan erat dan langsung dengan pemerintah. Garis-garis politik pemerintah seringkali menentukan tren sastra di sana.

Berdasarkan kasus-kasus di kedua negara tersebut, khususnya dalam periode Soeharto dan Mao Zedong, dapat dilihat bahwa sastra dapat memiliki hubungan langsung atau tidak langsung dengan kebijakan pemerintah, dan hubungan ini membawa dampak positif dan negatif pada sastra dan tren sastra pada kurun waktu tertentu.

Kata Kunci : pemerintah, kebijakan, sastra, tren sastra

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Introduction

Literature and government's policies are often considered inseparable, as both sides have tight relations to one another. Literature has many functions, among others to convey moral and political messages; it can also become a vehicle for writers to launch their criticism to public and government. Because of these significant functions, leaders of certain countries have made literature medium to disseminate ideologies or political ideas and policies.

Such a condition helped create close and direct relationship between literature and government. In turn, the government, based on its political needs, demanded writers of their countries to produce literary works that backed up the policies made by government. With this, literary trend will of course change alternately in accordance with government policy within a certain period.

In some other countries, it is not certain yet that literature has direct relationship with government or that it becomes a political tool of the government. Nevertheless, policies made by the government on the basis of specific considerations, although not directly related to literature, have still great possibility to influence changes in literary trends.

The relation between literature and government policies, whether direct or indirect, will inevitably restrict the freedom of writers in producing literary works. Restriction has negative effects such as restriction on creativities, restriction in the selection of themes, or restriction on determining the characters of leading figure in the fiction. But, on the other hand, government policies with regard to literature may bring about positive and progressive effects (Wang, 2007: 234).

In the discussion regarding direct and indirect relationship between literature and government policies, the influence of government policies on literature, the negative and positive effects of government policies on writers and literature, spotlights will be put on the conditions prevailing in two countries, namely Indonesia and China, while highlights will be shed on the two prominent leaders of the two countries; Soeharto and Mao Zedong.

The reason why I prefer those leaders is the fact that they were very important persons in their respective country. Furthermore, the policies they made have brought about influence and great changes for

the people and literary world in their countries. In Indonesia, besides native writers, there are also Indonesian writers of Chinese descendant or *peranakan* Chinese who have shown participation in the Indonesian literary activities since a few centuries ago. In the era of Soeharto, the power and policies made by this Indonesian leader, have put restrictive effect on the creativity of Indonesian writers of Chinese descendant.

In relation with the conditions in China, this article is dealing solely with policies made by Mao prior to the Cultural Revolution and after their implementation. Many circles saw these policies as having laid a severe restriction to writers in doing their job. Detailed economic, social, and political backgrounds were not the main points in my discussion.² In this article, general conditions affiliated with politics will be utilized in explaining the influence of government policies on literature. With basic understanding towards the literary conditions in China, I will discuss literary works produced by Indonesian writers of Chinese descendant as the main topic of discussion in this article. Through comparison of conditions in the two countries, it is hoped to be understood that the relation between policy and literature, direct or indirect, will bring about more or less the same impact. What kind of changes that took place after the influence of the two prominent figures had faded out, will be discussed furthermore in this article.

Indonesia, Soeharto's Policy, and Writers of Chinese Descendant

Indonesia and China had to some extent different conditions in literary world. Other than China, the government of Indonesia had never made literature as a tool to convey policies. Literature was more the business of individual, art groups or literary institutions that if arousing public restlessness or conflict could be reported to the government. In some cases, although there was government ban on the publications of the literary works, or staging of dramas, the ban was not based on political decision made by the government as was the case in China.

² Discussion in detail on Cultural Revolution with special emphasis on political, social, and economical background could be seen in Song Rushan's *Cong Shanghen Wenxue dao Xungen Wenxue: Wenge hou Shiniande Dalu Wenxue Liupai* (From Wounded Literature to Root Searching Literature: Literary Streams in Mainland China after 10 years Cultural Revolution), and Wu Fengxing's *Zhongguo Dalude Shanghen Wenxue* (The Mainland China's Wounded Literature).

Soeharto and Golkar, the ruling party of that time, never included literary problems in government meeting agendas to determine special policies concerning literature. Because literature in Indonesia was not a political tool, the government never defined or gave restrictions on what kind of literary form should be created and what kind of messages should be conveyed. Government's decisions to ban a number of literary works was mostly based on consideration of whether or not those works contained criticism that could endanger government authority, stimulate restlessness among the people, and in line or not with cultural and customary traits in Indonesia.

Pramudya Ananta Toer and W.S. Rendra, two outstanding Indonesian writers, were at times banned by the government because of their works. Pramudya's works in the era of Soeharto were not circulated because he was known as a member of LEKRA (People's Art Institution) of the Indonesian Communist Party. Because of this reason Pramudya's writings were suspected to be inspired with socialism and communism. W.S. Rendra was an influential poet and playwright, and was very critical against the government. His sharp criticism and allusion made the government angry, and in turn hindered Rendra to stage dramas or read his poems (<http://thejakartaglobe.com/home/obituary-farewell-ws-rendra-poet-playwright-and-father-of-indonesian-theater/322679>).

Besides men of letters who were considered originally Indonesian, there were many prominent Indonesian writers from Chinese descendant or Peranakan Cina. Their works were "obedient" in nature, did not contain elements prohibited by the government nor criticism against the government like those of Rendra. Nevertheless, when Soeharto was in power, his policies exerted restriction to freedom of expression of the writers from Peranakan Cina.

1. Soeharto's Policies Concerning Peranakan Cina in Indonesia

On September 30, 1965 a revolt was staged by Indonesian Communist Party, known later on as "Gerakan 30 September PKI" or "G 30 S PKI" (September 30 Movement of the Indonesian Communist Party). Soeharto suspected that Indonesian Communist Party was backed up by the Chinese Communist Party and since July 1966 he closed all schools which used Chinese language as a teaching instrument. Afterwards Indonesia closed diplomatic relations with

China until 1989. At that time Soeharto actually was not yet officially declared as the second president of Republic Indonesia to replace Soekarno, but he had already had a very great influence. Soeharto officially became president on March 12, 1967.

Anti communist movement launched by the government get wider in scope, making Indonesian citizens from Chinese descendant (kaum Tionghoa) could not live peacefully. They were afraid of being involved in the flare up (Coppel, 2001: 22). During his reign, Soeharto had issued Presidential Instructions touching the problems of racial prejudices and restrictions causing Indonesian Chinese live an unpleasant life (Lindsey, 2005: 53-56). The government also carried out an assimilation policy pertaining citizen of Chinese descendant and indigenous people, persuaded Indonesian of Chinese descendant to use Indonesian name, forbade activities and matters related to Chinese culture (Subianto, 2007: 343). That was the reason why in Soeharto years there were hardly no publications were printed in Chinese characters, except *Harian Indonesia*, a bilingual, Indonesian and Mandarin, daily, published in Jakarta. It was an established newspaper with a history of more than 40 years, the only Chinese newspaper allowed to be published during the Suharto regime. Indonesian people of Chinese descendant also could not openly celebrate “Imlek” (Chinese New Year) and other activities (including art) containing Chinese cultural elements. Policies and instructions mentioned above, which were actually not related to literature, would to some extent restrict and influence literary works produced by Indonesian Chinese writers.

2. Literary Phenomenon in the Presence of Soeharto’s Policy

The participation of writers from Chinese descendant in producing literary works could be dated back from 1870.³ Many of them did not speak or write Chinese very well any more, because they were descendants of their fathers originating from China, while their mothers were Indonesian. The language they used in their works was unique, namely “mixed” language, it was market Malay or low Malay interpolated with vocabulary from other languages such as Chinese, Dutch, and English.

³ Profound research on Indonesian Chinese authors and their works could be seen in Claudine Salmon’s work titled *Literature in Malay by the Chinese of Indonesia*, Paris: Archipel, 1990

Until the sixties, especially before Soeharto came to power, many Indonesian readers could detect the special characteristics of the works produced by Indonesian writers of Chinese descendant. Merely by reading the title, the readers could quickly know that the writer was Tionghoa. Besides, the writers also mentioned their Chinese name, already romanized, on the cover of the novel. Coming further to the content of the story, the atmosphere of “Chinese culture” would be more tangible. There was for instance the picture of family life within *keluarga peranakan* (family of Chinese descendant), and social problem they were facing. Author also gave Chinese names for their leading figures in their novel, such as Sim Kok Nio, The Djoen-eng, etc. Indeed, in the past, other Indonesian novelists who were not Chinese descendant had hardly put on title reflecting Chinese culture characteristics for their works. These special characteristics with Chinese nuances did not appear when Soeharto was in power.

Presidential instructions and policies issued by Soeharto was the reason why many writers of Chinese descendants did not use their Chinese names. The period between 70ies-80ies was in fact advantageous to the emergence of Indonesian Chinese writers, especially women writers whose novels were popular enough among their readers. Their writings covered various topics of interest: love stories, detective, fantasy, and so on (Sidharta, 1992: 165-184). One very known writer named Marga T. never disclosed her full name Marga Tjoa, nor her Chinese name given by her parents, Cai Liangzhu. Such a name did not let the readers know her real identity (Wuryandari, 2003: 107-108).

Another writer whose name is suitable to be brought to the fore beside Marga T. is Wira Wijaya (Mira W. or M. Wijaya). Both of them had produced more than 50 novels. The titles and contents of their works were all written in standard Indonesian. Marga Tjoa's novels were among others titled: *Gema Sebuah Hati* (A Heart Echo), *Karmila* (Karmila), *Badai Pasti Berlalu* (Storm Surely Passes by), *Ranjau-ranjau Cinta* (Love Traps). Titles of Mira Wijaya novels were among others: *Kemilau Kuning Senja* (Afternoon Yellow Sheen), *Merpati Tak Pernah Ingkar Janji* (Dove Never Breaks Promise), *Relung-relung Gelap Hati Sisi* (The Dark Depths of Sisi's Heart), and some other miscellaneous titles. Having read the contents of the novels the reader would find out that bigger part of the novels were telling about life in the big cities of Indonesia, with leading figures having Indonesian

names too. In line with this, the background, setting, and almost all the problems told in the stories were inspired by conditions and interrelations within Indonesian families, not anymore highlighting the life and problem of *Tionghoa* families. Such a situation led the readers to the fact that they did not expect those writers were in reality of Chinese descendants.

The fact that Chinese names of the authors of Chinese descendant, and Chinese cultural elements should not be mentioned in the novels, were subjects of attention and consideration of writers in doing their job. They were fully aware of those restrictions and the consequences they would face. If they gave Chinese names to the leading characters of their novels and complained about their problems, then they might be entangled in difficulties.

Soeharto and his government were very sensitive about communism and very suspicious towards everything associated with Chinese cultural elements. Consequently, *Tionghoa* writers had nothing to do but submitting themselves to the prevalent conditions and obediently follow the instruction of the president in order to be able to continue their activities. The titles, name of leading characters, and story content imbued with Chinese culture which prevailed as trade mark of the Indonesian Chinese novels in the past, were replaced with standard Indonesian, Indonesian names, Indonesian family life, and situation dominated by Indonesian nuances too.

In fact, except Soeharto and his government, the readers at large were not very careful or worried, whether or not the writers were Chinese descendant, whether they were focusing on the family life of Chinese descendant or not, using Chinese names or not. What they paid more attention to was the story in the novel. Taken into deeper consideration, it could be found out that Kho Ping Hoo still withhold his Chinese name, although was lastly coupled with Indonesian name, becoming Asmaraman S. (Sukowati) Kho Ping Hoo. His works on martial art (*silat*) were unique: the title was a mixture of two languages, Fujian and Indonesian, the story was richly flavored with Chinese cultural elements (Suryadinata, 1996: 24-32), all making them very much liked by the readers.

In 1976, Marga T. published a novel titled *Gema Sebuah Hati* (A Heart Echo) which told about the love story of two students of Chinese descendants in Jakarta, Monik and Martin, at the time when

struggle for power took place in the 60-ies. The end of the story was indecisive. It was making the readers feel embittered, very dissatisfied with the open ending of this novel. More than ten years later, in 1987 Marga T. published *Setangkai Edelweiss* (A Stalk of Edelweiss) as the sequel of *Gema Sebuah Hati*. The story of Monik and Martin was concluded with happy ending in *Setangkai Edelweiss*. Another author named Basuki Soedjatmiko (Lim Hok Liong) mentioned *Sinyo Sipit* (Small Eyed Master). Even though the writer used Indonesian name, the title of his novel indicated that the author was Chinese descendant.

The examples cited above were only a minor exception of a great number of works which followed the guidelines of Soeharto. It was to be noted that there was hardly none of the stories told in the novels depicted the hardship experienced by Chinese descendants in Indonesia during Soeharto regime.

Having followed disadvantageous effects felt by *Tionghoa* writers as a consequence of Soeharto's policy, a question might arise about the positive sides of the matter. Following the September 30 Movement, one step taken by the government was to close schools that used Chinese language as a teaching instrument. This action had indirectly pushed the Indonesian Chinese to learn and use Indonesian language properly in various events. The positive impact of the policy could be seen from the response of the readers. Since the authors wrote in standard Indonesian, and told stories close to the life of common people of Indonesia, their novels became more attractive to the readers, and reached wider audience, not limited only to Chinese descendant. Some of popular works became bestseller, while well known authors of Chinese descendants, especially Marga T., and Mira Wijaya remained in the heartfelt memory of their fans. The readers would remember that their novels such as *Karmila* (1973), *Badai Pasti Berlalu* (1974), *Bukan Impian Semusim* (Not A Dream of One Season, 1977), and *Ranjau-ranjau Cinta* (1984) did not only appear in repeated editions, but also shown on wide screens. Furthermore, *Karmila* was shown on television series.

Naturally, the success of Marga T., Mira W., and other authors were not solely made by using the Indonesian language, and highlighting the urban life of the Indonesian people. Their ability to tell story very enticingly, and their educational background would also contribute to success.

3. Literary Condition Following Soeharto's Fall

Prior to Soeharto's fall on May 21, 1998, Jakarta and other big cities were caught in riot, known as "May riot". Many of the casualties were Chinese descendants. When the riot was over, Indonesia was starting to implement democratization in political life. Since that moment Indonesian citizens began to have freedom of opinion and political right. This was clearly a change to the better for the writers of Chinese descendant, because freedom of expression was again their own. At the end of 1990, *peranakan* Chinese writers who mentioned their Chinese names, and novels containing Chinese cultural elements reappeared significantly to the public. Novels reiterating the real conditions of Tionghoa families and their day to day life become more open to public interest. When more than thirty years of restrictions had elapsed, writers regained the opportunity to express their many-sided feelings relating to fear, anxiety, poignancy, painfulness, etc, they had experienced before but could not express them.

As a sample of discussion, I would like to point out a poet named Wilson Tjandinegara who openly mentioned his Chinese name, Chen Donglong, given by his parents. Wilson actively wrote poems since 1990-ies. He translated Chinese poems into Indonesian, wrote his own poems, and recommended other poets of *peranakan* Chinese to publish collection of poems. In September 1999, he published a collection of poems in two languages, Indonesian and Chinese, titled *Rumah Panggung di Kampung Halaman* (A Stage House in the Village). One of 25 poems of the collection, titled "Balada Seorang Lelaki di Nanyang" (A Ballade of Man in Nanyang) told about the struggle of a man from China after he was settled in Indonesia, and the last three poems in the collection were noted as commemoration of May 1998 tragedy. Those four poems could be said as a symbol of the come back of freedom in expression by the authors, in this case the freedom of expression of opinion and poignancy experienced by the *peranakan* Chinese.

Now, a new phenomenon emerged: the author issued titles of their novels containing Chinese cultural elements, such as *Gelang Giok Naga* (Dragon Jade Bracelet), *Dimsum Terakhir* (The Last Dimsum), *Pai Yin*, *Yang Liu*, and so on. In line with such titles of their novels, the content of the story was also richly illustrated with elements tightly related with Chinese descendants' customs in Indonesia, and places

located in China as their background. Well known authors with Chinese names in the nineties were Clara Ng, and Lan Fang. Similar to Marga T. and Mira W. in the seventies, they also produced many works which received enthusiastic acceptance among the readers (Sulistiawan, 2007; Junaidi, 2008).

Clara Ng is a very productive author, whose works were varied and aimed at different groups of readers. Many readers identified her as author who wrote stories for children, youth, and women. One of her novels that was much in demand, titled *Dimsum Terakhir*, told about the life of a Chinese descendant family who lived in the midst of Indonesian society, with quadruplet girls playing the leading role. The interesting side of this novel was the depiction of the character difference of the quadruplet girls, which was in fact the representation of the diversified characteristics and characters of the Chinese descendants themselves. Although the girls were born from the same mother's womb (indicating the same Chinese ethnic), their interests, professions, beliefs they followed, and visions, all different however among each of them. Consequently, when they were facing problems of life, each had her own vision and solution, all being different from one another. It was said that this novel was going to be filmed (Junaidi, 2008).

Chinese descendants had settled in Indonesia for hundred of years, but that long span of time did not give any guarantee that they would easily acquire Indonesian citizenship. A work that expressed poignant feeling related to this fact was titled *Puteri Cina* (Chinese Princess), written by Sindhunata. This author of Chinese descendant was very familiar with Javanese culture. Through this work, in satire style, he showed to the readers his profound knowledge and understanding towards Javanese and Chinese culture. This work was full with examples and metaphors about the sweetness and bitterness of life experienced by the Chinese descendants during their stay in Indonesia. In this work, a lot of criticisms were also launched by the author towards indigenous Indonesians as well as Indonesians of Chinese descendants themselves.

Titles that brought along special Chinese cultural elements were not solely the possession of authors of Chinese descendants anymore. Other Indonesian authors, especially those who had sympathy with the fate of Chinese descendants or peranakan Chinese, also used similar titles. Veven Sp. Wardhana had published a collection of short stories

titled *Panggil Aku Peng-hwa* (Call Me Peng-hwa).⁴ Various stories were told in his work concerning Indonesians, Chinese, as well as *peranakan* Chinese, and one of them told about May 1998 Tragedy. Other authors, such as Seno Gumira Aji Darma, Putu Wijaya, and others also wrote their works which showed sympathy to Indonesian Chinese.

Based on this phenomenon, it was hard to differentiate any longer, which works were made by authors of *peranakan* Chinese, which ones were not. Furthermore, those writers were in reality Indonesian authors, who were indeed born and grown up in Indonesia. Their works and performance had enriched Indonesian literature. The authors and their works altogether played an important role in the development of Indonesian literature.

China, Cultural Revolution, and Literature

Observers on Chinese literature are definitely aware that literature in China since the reign of Dynasties was not separable from the role of government in power. Each era had its specific trait or trend in literature, all these being related to policies made by government at that time (Wuryandari, 2006: 170-172). Shortly after the establishment of People's Republic of China, this phenomenon became more apparent. Certain policies concerning literature should also be formulated in order to achieve certain objectives. Policies on literature contained important stipulations on the development process of modern Chinese literature. They constituted a form of literary system, with the main task of framing a political blueprint for literary actualization. This was an important way to bind the relation between literature and politics (Wang, 2007: 222). The importance of the position of literature in China was reflected in the presence of dignitaries in literary meetings and decisions they took in the meetings. General policies at that time were decided by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and leaders of the state such as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Lu Dingyi, and others who determined policies and guiding principles of great importance in literature (Wang, 2007: 226). At this point, one could see that literature, government policies, and politics in China were interwoven, and had direct and tight relations. It seemed that literary meetings in China enjoyed a great attention and became a "business like" agenda of the government.

⁴This title actually was a title of a short story that published in *Kompas* daily, not long after the downfall of Soeharto in 1998.

1. Background of Policy Ignition in Cultural Revolution

Since Mao Zedong became leader of the Communist Party of China, he had made policies and statements concerning literature. Concerning the background that ignited the Cultural Revolution, there had been various opinions. One assumed that Cultural Revolution was ignited by power rivalry between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi; other opinions said that Cultural Revolution planned by Mao was for the first time openly made public and to be launched following the discussion and preparation of the drama reform. The appeal to launch Cultural Revolution was announced through *Jiefangjun Bao* (Liberation Army Daily). Not less important was another opinion which said that on November 10, 1956, Mao secretly asked Yao Wenyuan to publish a critic on historical drama *Hai Rui Baguan* (Hai Rui Dismissed from His Post) made by Prof. Wu Huan. The critic of Yao Wenyuan was subsequently published by *Wenyi Bao* (Literature and Art Daily) in Shanghai. This was a first step as planned before, and was actually the main trigger of Cultural Revolution. Mao Zedong himself had a convincing explanation on this matter; Cultural Revolution of the Proletariat Class, as seen from political view point and implementation guidelines, can in general be divided into four steps; the time between the publication of comrade Yao Wenyuan's article until the convening of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the Eight Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party was considered as the first of the initial stage (Sima, 1977: 13-14).

As Mao Zedong assumed that Wu Huan's article with the heading *Hai Rui Baguan* had alluded Mao in the case of Peng Dehuai's dismissal, and resulting to the ignition of Cultural Revolution, then a literary work could be considered as having a certain power that could endanger someone or government authority. That was why Mao had taken action to clean up the situation and to prevent the deterioration of the case. In fact, following a number of events that had Mao cornered, from power conflict between internal party leaders, the issuance of "baihua" (one hundred flowers) policy⁵ inviting the people of China to bring forward advice and critics (Wu, 1982: 13), "fan youpai douzheng"

⁵ Policy brought forward by Mao Zedong on February 1957 was fully named "baihua qifang, baijia zhengming" (one hundred flowers blossoms, one hundred streams sound), this policy was designed as a guideline for the development of literature, art, and science

(anti rightist movements), *Hai Rui Baguan* drama, and so on; Mao began to launch Cultural Revolution in various places in China. In order to smoothen the process of the revolution, Mao had asked his wife, Jiang Qing, to go to Shanghai and work together with Lin Biao to formulate main guidelines for a symposium on Literature and Art for Army Troops.

The main objective of the formulation of these guidelines was to ascertain a grip on literature by utilizing the power of Shanghai army. Mao was quite aware that Liu Shaoqi had better power than he himself in the Party Central Committee in Beijing so that Mao had merely to rely upon Shanghai army power to let know his stance. Besides, Mao also launched mass actions to give pressure on the Red Guard to retaliate (Wu: 1982: 18-19). When Cultural Revolution was launched, Mao was backed up by Lin Biao, “the gang of four”,⁶ Shanghai Army, and the Red Guard.

2. Policies on Literature and Art during Cultural Revolution

The era of Cultural Revolution was identical with the time period of the functioning of policies on literature and art initiated by the critic of Yao Wenyan on historical drama *Hai Rui Baguan*, followed by partnership of Mao, Lin Biao, and Jiang Qing in designing more rigid policies on literature and art with tighter ways of implementation. Literary master pieces must be in line with the main guidelines of the Symposium on Literature and Art of the Army, and must participate in the dissemination of *yangbanxi* (model drama) (Song, 2006: 18, 32). Even in the creation of literary works, one must follow the guidelines of Mao. Because of such demands, writers had to work on very tight basis. They had to depend on predetermined ways of writing, along with tight design and given theme too.

Literary works representing this genre were two novelettes written by Hao Run (pen name of Liang Jinhuan) titled *Jinguang Dadao* (Golden Way) and *Yanyangtian* (Bright Sun Sky). These works had rural setting, and the main figures were created based on idealism steered by Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, and Yao Wenyan.

⁶ “The gang of four” referring to four persons with quite important positions in Chinese Communist Party, namely: Jiang Qing, Yao Wenyan, Zhang Chunqiao, and Wang Hongwen

When Mao Zedong had launched Cultural Revolution and implemented policies on literature and art as a whole, then literature and art in China at that time was assumed to be fully part of politics and underwent ups and downs in accordance with the fluctuating political power of Mao. In such a situation where restrictions prevailed, Chinese literature was labeled as tool of struggle, servant of politics, and submissive to policies of the ruling elite, and was consequently becoming stagnant for approximately one decade (Song, 2006: 36-37).

Scholars in China themselves were aware of this situation, they were not apathetic in their attitude, and they acknowledged that literature and art in China at that time were not in normal condition. Organizations of literature and art were dissolved, publication offices of literature and art were closed, and their workers and authors were assigned to do labourer's job, resulting to the absence of Chinese literary works. This extreme phenomenon had never taken place in history before, whether in Chinese literary history or outside. This caused politicization of the literary content, and generalization from the art view point (Qian & Xiong, 2003: 456).

In a condition like this, it could be predicted that literary works of high quality were rare. Writers did not have freedom in expressing their creative works because of tight restrictions. In the beginning stage of Cultural Revolution, art or literary works that could be made public or published were those in line with Mao's policies, namely those in the category of "Red Army Literature" and "model drama". In the final stage of the Cultural Revolution, along with the emergence of people's consciousness and feeling of dissatisfaction against "left" trend, publication of magazines or periodicals on literature and art, began slowly to resume its activity. In the other hand, the interferences of "the gang of four" in literature and art had caused the emergence of the phenomenon "disguised" or "misleading and tricky" literature. The creation of literary works in the final stage of the Cultural Revolution gave rise to parallel and at the same time face to face trends in literature, the one being open, and the other one underground in nature. The whole condition told above could be depicted as the negative side brought about by politics towards literature. But, there was also positive side that brought about forwarding effect to literature. In a condition where literature could be viewed as stagnant, what could then be done to keep the situation on the move?

The era of Cultural Revolution had in fact opened up ample opportunity to “Red Army Literature”, and “Model Drama” to flourish, and this had apparently shown afterwards that literature and art were in reality not stagnant or extinct. To have a clearer picture of what had happened, we had to scrutinize on the trends of both sides, and the impact of Mao’s policies. One positive influence brought about indirectly by Mao was the fact that amateur writers were inspired to produce literary works. Actually they did not belong to professional writers and the quality of the works was assumed to be inferior, but they did their job very vividly and made expressions in very special ways. By so doing, they had great influence among the people.

“Model drama” during Cultural Revolution was very popular. Eight hundred million spectators had watched “Eight Model Dramas.”⁷ It was a pity that very few observers studied the two kinds (genres) of literature, and literary historians had paid little attention to this phenomenon, while literary works of this era had become more scarce (Quan & Xiong, 2003: 456-457). In fact, in order to have better understanding towards social condition in China at that time, literary observers should not have ignored those works which were assumed to be vanishing nowadays. A number of researches need to be made to get a complete picture of it.

3. Literary Trend after Cultural Revolution

Mao Zedong died in September 1976. The era of his reign as a leader and his steady influence had come to an end. Hua Guofeng, Deng Xiaoping, and other moderate leaders quickly took action to arrest “the gang of four”. The fall of this gang and disappearance of its influence enjoyed enthusiastic response from many sides and were regarded as the second freedom of China (Spence, 1983: xxxii-xxxiii). Intellectuals and scholars sent to rural areas for ideological reform in the era of Cultural Revolution were allowed to join their families in their home towns. The government rehabilitated their name and let them return to their old positions.

⁷Eight Model Dramas referring to **Modern Beijing Opera**: *Hongdeng Ji* (Record of the Red Lampion), *Shajiabin* (Shajiabin), *Zhiqiu Weihu Shan* (Conquest the Weihu Hill), *Qixi Baihutuan* (The Ambush of White Tiger Regiment), *Haigang* (Sea Harbor); **Modern Ballet**: *Hongse Niangzijing* (Red Women Detachment), *Baimaonu* (The White Haired Girl); and *Shajiabin Symphony Orchestra*.

In the joy of freedom and enthusiasm with the step down of “the gang of four”, works criticizing the “gang of four” were emerging. This period was seen as the first era of the emergence of a new literature trend after the Cultural Revolution. In January 1977 *Renmin Wenxue* (People’s Literature) Magazine published a short story entitled *Ban Zhuren* (Teacher) written by Liu Xinwu. Speaking about the theme and problem discussed, this piece of work had broken through the restrictions laid down during Cultural Revolution. After its publication, this work quickly got public attention and was widely discussed. In the initial stage, the name of “Wounded Literature” for this genre of literature was not known yet. This terminology came to the fore following the publication of a short story by Lu Xinhua titled *Shanghen* (The Wounded) in *Wenhuibao* Magazine in 1978. Freedom without restriction was a condition that opened up a new opportunity to writers to depict the chaos and feeling to be wounded physically and mentally by “the gang of four” during the Cultural Revolution.⁸ The emergence of realist literature in this new form actually had made influential leaders in China not quite happy, because writers were blatantly telling the truth of the situation, launching criticism, condemning the Cultural Revolution and the false decisions made by state leaders and also doubting the fundamental thoughts on the principles of socialism in China (Spence, 1983: xiv).

Literary works of this kind were published incessantly, even by magazine officially managed by Chinese Communist Party. The reason was that those works fitted the Party’s need to launch criticism to “the gang of four”. But Chinese Communist Party also warned the writers that although “wounded literature” might reflect the hurt feelings, their works were not allowed to influence the process of socialism and the party leaders (Wu, 1982: 39-40). This made it clear that even under the new leadership, literary works remained to be paid attention to by Party leaders.

Conclusion

Literature was not a knife, but its capacity and usefulness might be better and sharper than a knife. Criticism contained in literary works

⁸Literary works of this genre that had been translated into English could be followed in the book that I used as reference in my paper, *The Wounded: New Stories of Cultural Revolution 77-78*, by Geremie Barmè and Bennet Lee, Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co, 1975

might endanger a government, might make some one recognize his or her shortcomings or faults. Literature might also become a tool to convey policies. In Indonesia literary works might endanger the government. However literature was not a tool to convey government policy. In some cases, government indeed banned the publication of a literary work, or did not permit the staging of drama, yet Soeharto and his government never included literature in the agenda of party meetings to formulate policies relating to literature. A number of Presidential Instructions issued by Soeharto for Indonesian people of Chinese descendants had the impact of restricting the freedom of writers. In fact, the decisions and instructions issued did not relate to literature. They were more based on political considerations. Because of these decisions, literary works produced by authors of *peranakan* Chinese did not dare to write stories containing Chinese cultural elements, social problems faced by Indonesian Chinese, etc. Following Soeharto's step down from power, all those instructions and prohibitions were gone. Freedom of writing restored, and literary trend also changed.

Because of its great function, China assumed literature is very important, and paid very much attention to it. The importance of the role of literature in China could be observed from the presence of dignitaries in the literary meetings. Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Lu Dingyi, all had ever issued literary guidance and policies. Literature in China had a tight and direct relation with policy making apparatus and politics. When Mao Zedong was in power, and was about to launch Cultural Revolution, he issued a number of policies concerning literature, in order to see to it that all would move according to his expectation. To implement his policies, Mao needed of course the support of some public segments. Because of his policy decisions, the literary trend underwent a change. Literary that had the chance to emerge, were all those following his guidelines. After Mao passed away on September 1976, literary trend swiftly changed significantly. Literary works belonging to the genre "wounded literature" took over the literary emerging in the era of Cultural Revolution.

Policies made by government often brought about negative influence indeed, but there were also positive effects to be found. In China, the era of Cultural Revolution was said to be giving the opportunity to amateur writers to produce literary works. While during Soeharto's regime, the government recommended the use of standard Indonesian language in various aspects, causing the writers of Chinese

descendants do their job with standard Indonesian, and consequently received wider acceptance among the readers. Soeharto's policy at that time indirectly paved the way for authors to become well known and to be more widely known among their readers.

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