construct

06
One year of Construct
2016

06



CONTENTS

theconstructdocuments.blogspot.com

TRUC

late 16th cent. (superseding earlier *tenent*): from Latin, lite

erally ‘he holds’, from the verb *tenere*.

TENETS

THE SEVEN FOUNDATIONS OF CONSTRUCT

1 We are a group that aims to further develop the spirit and elements of all schools of thought.

2 We believe that ideas are a horizontal transplantation, not a vertical inheritance. This is our general opinion, our basic point of departure in both theory and practice.

3 We use language as a tool to communicate our literary and political intentions. We believe language carries a potential that goes beyond the rigid boundaries of national and cultural identities.

4 We intend to explore the new continent of indonesian literature. We strive to express new content, to create new forms, to discover new means, and to invent new techniques.

5 We emphasize intellect and resist romanticism. We exclude the expression of feelings. What use is it to rely solely on unrestrained emotions? Our approach requires a high degree of reasoning in order to express accurately, which is an endeavour that lies heavily on composition, objectivity and profundity.

6 We pursue the usefulness of poetry. We believe that poetry must have a solid and beautiful construction, it must always take side with the people and their daily lives, the writer must be an outstanding engineer.

7 We believe that through the truth of poetry we can seize history and pave the way the possibility of a classless society.

THE CORRECT PRINCIPLES IN THE DIRECTION OF POETRY OR SIX BASIC TENETS OF CONSTRUCT POETRY

1 Poetry is rooted in human life. It should not comply with an "art for art" approach, nor should poetry serve human life. Its meaning is more philosophical and lies in the observation of life itself in all its forms, and in the expression of the whole realm of human life. It nourishes and illuminates mankind.

2 Poets should not only write for their personal pleasure and write in obscure and chaotic imagery. They have to be considerate of the people and make them enter the material as well as internal world of the poet. One should strive for a balance between the wishes of the people and the poet.

3 New expressions can be found in precision. Only when poetry is precise can it reach the highest attainments of profoundness, compactness, deepness, implicitness and vividness.

4 Poetry must not always criticize life, but it must vividly reflect life, and thus vividly reflect our people. The poet must work while breathing with the pulse of our time, but only works that possess temperament and interest contain individual emotions of pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy truly move people. We accept this with pleasure and do no reject it.

5 We think poets have the responsibility to unveil the "inner life" of all people, not only of intellectuals. Inwardness can be revealed by exposing inner feelings, but also by outwardness or other angles or points of view. The road and material are broad enough.

6 We respect the past but are not infatuated by it. We are cautious about the future but confident. We embrace our pre-existing poetic developments, but do not reject the west. Excessive embracing and rejection are unnecessary.

TUJUH LANDASAN CONSTRUCT

1 Kami kelompok yang mengedepankan semangat pemikiran dari berbagai mazhab dan elemen-elemen yang mendukungnya.

2 Kami percaya ide adalah apa yang ditanam dan diterapkan sebagai transplantasi horisontal, bukan sekedar apa yang diturunkan dari atas. Ini gagasan dasar yang kami jadikan titik berangkat dalam ranah teori maupun praktik.

3 Kami menggunakan bahasa sebagai alat penyampai dalam pemenuhan niat-niat atas kebutuhan estetis, juga politis. Kami percaya bahwa bahasa mempunyai potensi yang mampu melampaui kemajemukan identitas kultural dan batas-batas kenegaraan.

4 Kami berniat untuk menjelajahi wilayah-wilayah baru dalam dunia kesusastraan indonesia, dan berkehendak untuk menciptakan ekspresi, konten, bentuk, makna, serta teknik penulisan yang baru.

5 Kami menolak segala tendensi romantisme dengan mengesampingkan bentuk karya yang mengacu sepenuhnya pada kekuatan emosi, dan lebih memilih untuk menekankan pada intelektualisme. Lagipula, apa yang bisa didapat dari emosi yang tak terkontrol? Pendekatan yang kami lakukan lebih mengedepankan akal sehat yang dialami secara natural, agar akurasi dalam macam bentuk ekspresi bisa tercapai, melalui rangkaian usaha terpadu yang melandaskan dirinya pada kekuatan komposisi, kedalaman dan objektivitasnya.

6 Kami mengandaikan kegunaan dari puisi. Konstruksi yang padat, berisi dan indah adalah syarat yang harus dipenuhi dalam pembentukannya. Ia harus selalu menunjukkan keberpihakkan yang eksplisit terhadap elan orang banyak. Penulis mestilah menjadi insinyur yang handal.

7 Kami percaya bahwa potensi kebenaran dalam puisi mampu merebut kembali narasi sejarah dan lalu membuka jalan bagi tercapainya masyarakat tanpa kelas.

ENAM PRINSIP DASAR MENUJU PUISI CONSTRUCT

1 Puisi berakar dari elan kehidupan manusia, ia tak seharusnya tunduk pada pendekatan 'seni untuk seni.' Tapi puisi juga tak seharusnya hanya melayani kehidupan inklusif manusia. Puisi memiliki makna yang lebih filosofis dan emansipatoris, ia berada dalam proses penyerapan segala bentuk kehidupan dan ekspresi di berbagai ranah kehidupan manusia. Puisi harus memelihara sekaligus mencerahkan umat manusia.

2 Penyair tidak seharusnya menulis hanya untuk kesenangan pribadi. Penyair juga harus menghindari gambaran kacau dan obskur dalam menulis, dan lantas mengacuhkan elan orang banyak. Karya penyair yang baik harus mampu menarik orang banyak ke dalam dunia-nya, baik yang internal maupun materiil.

3 Bentuk-bentuk ekspresi baru dalam puisi bisa ditemukan melalui ketepatan. Hanya dalam ketepatanlah, puisi dapat meraih kedalaman, keringkasan, kejelasan dan implisitas.

4 Puisi tidak harus selalu memfungsikan dirinya menjadi kritik yang ditujukan atas kehidupan, namun yang terpenting, ia juga harus mampu mencerminkan kehidupan orang banyak. Penyair harus berkarya seiring dengan tarikan nafas di masa ia hidup dan peka terhadap zamannya. Karena hanya karya yang memiliki tujuan dan memiliki watak—yang mengandung emosi otentik manusia, seperti rasa bahagia, marah, dan sedih—yang mampu menggerakkan orang banyak.

5 Kami berpendapat bahwa penyair mempunyai tanggung jawab untuk menyingkap segala tabir yang menyelimuti kehidupan batin dalam diri setiap orang, bukan hanya kehidupan para intelektual. Penyingkapan itu bisa dilakukan melalui keterbukaan para penyair terhadap perasaan-perasaan batin dalam kesehariannya, yang dilihat melalui perspektif dalam ataupun luar. Mengenai hal ini, banyak cara yang bisa dilakukan.

6 Kami tidak terpaut pada masa lalu, namun tetap menghormatinya kami mempunyai keyakinan teguh pada kemungkinan-kemungkinan yang ada di masa depan, tapi tetap melangkah dengan penuh kehati-hatian. Kami menerima perkembangan kesusastraan indonesia yang telah dilandaskan oleh para pendahulu, tapi tak sepenuhnya menolak pencapaian kebudayaan barat. Penolakan dan penerimaan secara berlebihan adalah juga sebuah kesalahan.



06

Poems and prose are written by:
Future Collective

Writers:
Jalang Mode
Bayu Galang
Aksop
Poetra Slamet
Seorang Kalajengking
Cassius Song

We publish strictly digitally every two months.
Access all our past and current issues at
theconstructdocuments.blogspot.com and
contact us at construct.docs@gmail.com

Designed in Singapore

All images are properly credited to their respective
owners, we do not claim any form of ownership

Cover photo: Arthur Rimbaud (1871), Étienne Carjat
Masthead photo: Kirsten (1996), Inez Van Lamsweerde
and Vinoodh Matadin

CONSTRUCT 2016
The views expressed in CONSTRUCT are shared by the publication
as a whole.

table of contents

This Edition

TENETS

3

Fixed

MASTHEAD

9

Contents

AD PLURES IRE*

11

THE DEATH WE DESERVE

13

YANG LUPUT DARI PEMBAHASAN

19

WORKING TITLE

21

LETTER TO YOUNG POETS OR HOW TO STOP WORRYING AND LEARN TO SHOUT

23

TENTANG KESEHARIAN III: KEBENARAN OMONG KOSONG

27

I OPEN MY MOUTH

29

AD PLURES IRE*

I know one who has a weak heart
she travels among spiders by the threads
and speaks of the sky when the sky is empty
She carries herself like a leaf in a stream
that flows through the declining city
A shard of glass in a broad daylight

Men are the wreckage of the Earth
she declares hysterically
Her tears become masculine
Her smiles become a broken chain
Television and close-knitted traffic—
one gets used to everything

I know one who is absent-minded
She knows the addresses of my friends and acquintances
the hours of my rendezvous at her fingertips
In all her political concepts
party slogans
declarations and commands are firmly lodged

She often thought about
Sartre and De Beauvoir
Eluard and Nusch
about the destruction that reaffirms the eternity
of these bestial angels
—of poets
of men among men
of solidarity and brotherhood
and of mankind
She throws slogans without ideas
and peddle it into fashion

I know one who believes that the study of historical materialism
can train itself
No further investigations required
I doubt that she knows Fuchs
the Collector and the Historian
Genre painting as mass art
a caricature of the masses

She collects coins
There was no cheap form of reproduction in the ancient world
apart from coins

she says reassuringly
The coin offers too small an area for caricature
might as well be a philately and collect stamps

To find strength in the despised and apocryphal
she beats her own path to them
a path which Marxism had done a little
There is no caricature in antiquity
She took a passion bordering on mania

In every lithographs of art-lovers and dealers
of admirers of painting and connoisseur of sculpture
they resemble her
Fairly tall and pale
and their eyes blaze fire

She lives in a city of watchwords
where she inhabits
conspiracy as a fraternal term
where every alleyway shows its color
and where every word has its echoes

I know one who feels herself abandoned
She takes up a book
and approaches it lovingly and polemically
just like how a cannibal spices a baby
She later finds out that the page she is about to turn is already cut
Even here she is not needed

The following experience will be familiar:
if one is in love
or intensely preoccupied with another person
one's lover photograph will appear in every book
in
stories
novels
arts
ads

She appears in endless metamorphoses

*A Latin word for dying

THE DEATH WE DESERVE

I

Seek for poetry
in the crooked lines of cars
that harass the streets day in
day out, *and*
you will fail
because
poetry is dead.

I run over it one more time
to ensure its death, so that it will
finally stop spreading fear towards
everything that is not
beautiful,
everything that does not
bring us to tears.

There is no place for poetry in
a city reigned by those who
do not know how
to see
in and through their own
darkness.

II

If announcing the death of poetry is the only way to make life possible for it again, we must, by all means, scream at the top of our lungs: "POETRY IS DEAD!" Because if we keep pretending to nurture poetry by using it as an instrument to play the music of our denials and naivety, we might as well pull the trigger.

So long as we continue to impose our vulnerability, or even our *idea* of vulnerability, onto poetry, we will not be able to move forward. We should not turn to poetry because we refuse to face the demons of our demons. Poetry is neither a trashcan nor a safe haven. It is not a vessel for delusions. Poetry is not, and never has been, afraid of the truth and its array of flavours. Poetry is incapable of feeling, of admiring its own reflection, of expressing itself, of interpreting itself, of understanding itself, of doubting itself, of kissing passionately, of killing.

Poetry, on its own, is nothing. But so are we. Without the truths that constantly demand for our acceptance and resistance, we are nothing.





III

We always speak of language as if it were the sole cure to our individual and collective confusion and ignorance. But look at how many misunderstandings continue to occur because of language—or rather, because of our limited understanding of it. It is an irony that the most complex human invention is also that one that further complicates human interaction; with only sporadic instances of clarity.

Jack Gilbert wrote, "How astonishing it is that language can almost mean, and / frightening that it does not quite," ("The Forgotten Dialect of the Heart" 1-2). Language, like any other man-made thing, is incomplete. It is incompatible with the boundaries of perfection, but this seemingly disappointing element is also its redeeming factor—one that reveals language's striking similarity with poetry because poetry, like language, also defies finality and the absolute. Both have gaps—*not* "missing pieces"—that are not only part of their design, but also *define* their neglected function.

These gaps are empty spaces—spaces inhabited by nothing—that actually contribute to a possible wholeness: the possibility of true understanding. Language and poetry have the capacity to fill with gaps.

IV

Poetry, in complete isolation, is nothing. But the moment we stop treating it as if it came out of thin air, it will become more than lines of tired metaphors and emotional excess. It exists between and within the details of our material reality that, whether we like it or not, are not and cannot always be beautiful. Poetry emerges from the struggles of life as well as the struggles with language. Poetry does not need to be fabricated, but it must be developed in a manner that leaves it unscathed by expectation, romanticization and denial.



Momus Criticizes the Work of the Gods (c. 1561),
Maerten Van Heemskerck





V

Searching for beauty and perfection where they do not exist only shows a desperate need to escape reality, to turn a blind eye to the reality of things in their glorious insignificance. One cannot squeeze a rock in order to get a fresh glass of juice. There is no use in poeticizing our surroundings if we must sacrifice our ability and willingness to distinguish between what we wish were true, what is true, and what is true but continues to stifle us, and therefore needs to be changed.

Until we dare to determine a realistic starting point, the only part of poetry we deserve is its death.

YANG LUPUT DARI PEMBAHASAN

Kita terlalu nyaman dan terjebak dalam sebuah semesta artifisial dengan ketidakpedulian dan keangkuhan sebagai bahan baku produksi yang menghasilkan barisan manekin bermesin. Cetakan pabriknya berupa kumpulan tulang, daging dan kulit daur ulang dengan kepala tanpa isi. Produknya ada dimana-mana dan beragam, dari yang mengaku figur publik hasil penebar sensasi sampai selebritas media sosial terbitan kemarin sore. Tak heran mereka menjadi panutan banyak orang karena mudah dicerna tanpa harus bersusah payah berpikir.

Tekanan harian berdurasi delapan jam, belum lagi perjalanan pulang-pergi pengeropos dengkul, telah merenggut waktu-waktu berharga. Diantara tingginya sekat-sekat kubikel, perhatian teralihkan oleh racikan-racikan termutakhir penyetor eskapisme yang hanya berujung menjadi lamunan siang bolong. Alhasil, tanggung jawab dikerjakan dengan pikiran yang terlampau tumpul dan badan yang terlalu letih tapi tetap terbuai dalam lamunan akan kebebasan.

Kebahagiaan kini diukur dari seberapa seringnya kita melarikan diri dari kewajiban.

Akses menuju kebahagiaan temporer ini menuntun kita menuju lorong "Keinginan" yang bersebelahan tidak jauh dengan "Kebutuhan". Yang tersaji disana adalah jalan keluar dari beragam masalah, baik personal maupun kelompok. Membuat terlena, hanyut ke dalam zona nyaman. Pada akhirnya, terbutakan. Seperti berbelanja di *hypermarket* dengan tangan terikat dan mata tertutup. Padahal di luar itu, masih banyak yang bisa dipikirkan dan dilakukan.

Apa yang membuat seseorang menjadi "manusia" dewasa ini tidak bisa diukur dari seberapa aktifnya ia memanfaatkan waktu senggang untuk menebar pesona, tapi dari seberapa besar keinginan untuk membangun diri menjadi lebih tanggap dan kritis terhadap apa yang terjadi di sekitarnya, karena dunia ini tidak tercipta dengan sendirinya dan penghuninya tidak berkelakuan tanpa ada maksudnya. Disitulah tugas kita untuk mempertanyakannya.

Kita hanya bisa mengubah diri kita sendiri sebelum mengubah apa yang mengendalikan kita. Introspeksi adalah amplas yang kita gunakan untuk mempertajam pisau pikiran. Dengan bercermin dari pengalaman dan keadaan, kurang lebih akan membantu kita mengasah daya pikir setajam belati, yang di kemudian hari, bisa berguna sebagai senjata melawan pembodohan.



WORKING TITLE

Di dalam ruangan itu Ia duduk dengan tenang tanpa ada yang mengusiknya sedikitpun. Keheningan ruangan tersebut berlatarkan suara halus mesin-mesin fotokopi, komputer, dan AC yang ada di sana.

Butuh beberapa menit dalam keheningan tersebut sampai akhirnya Ia menyadari kalau di belakang tempat Ia duduk, di pojok ruangan tersebut, ada seseorang yang tak terlihat jelas rupa wajahnya. Yang pasti, Orang itu berdiri dengan posisi yang membungkuk mengarah ke tembok, kepalanya menjadi tumpuan beban badannya dan tangannya menggantung lemas dan sedikit berayun lemah terdorong ampas angin AC setengah rusak di ruangan tersebut. Oh—lebih tepatnya, mukanya lah yang menjadi tumpuan karena muka orang tersebut yang sebenarnya menempel dengan tembok pojokan tersebut.

Diam dalam duduknya, Ia berpura-pura untuk bersikap seperti tidak ada apa-apa. Ia ingin sekali menikmati ketenangan ruangan tersebut.

"Mas,"
Ia yakin kalau Orang di pojokan memanggil dirinya—*ah, tapi mungkin bukan. Mungkin Orang itu hanya bergumam sendiri.*

"Hey, mas,"
Orang di pojokan memanggilnya kembali. Ia masih mencoba untuk tidak terpanggil. Kepalanya terkunci tak mau menoleh, namun tidak bisa menahan bola matanya untuk berlirik mengarah Orang di pojokan tersebut.

"Bisa tolong—" Ia langsung membalikkan badan menghadap ke Orang di pojokan tersebut tanpa beranjak dari kursinya (kursinya hanya bergeser sedikit saja berhubung kursi itu beroda). Pulpen terjatuh dari meja kerjanya. Mereka berdua masih terdiam sementara suara AC setengah rusak kembali mendominasi ruangan.

"Mas," Ia memperhatikan dengan seksama Orang di pojokan tersebut sambil menebak-nebak apa yang Orang itu akan katakan, namun hampir tak mungkin untuk menebaknya karena Orang tersebut berposisi membelakanginya. "…sekarang jam berapa ya?"

Padahal Orang di pojokan tersebut punya jam tangan terpasang di tangannya. *Buat apa memakai jam tangan kalau cuma untuk dipajang di tangan? Buat apa punya tangan kalau cuma untuk digantung-gantung lunglai?*

"Saya mau tunggu jalanan agak sepi dulu. Males, masih ramai jalanan… kalau gerak sekarang, baru sampai juga masih… dua–tiga jam lagi."
Ia akhirnya melihat ke arah jam yang ada di tangannya. *Jam 08.16.* Ia sengaja tak memberitahu Orang tersebut karena dia masih terus menyerocos panjang lebar tentang segalanya dan tidak segalanya.
"---nya kayak teman-teman saya disini. Mereka tuh, bisa aja terus ngegas. Ada yang ngegas kesana, ngegas kesini. Ada yang keterusan, ada yang kebobolan. Ancur. Tapi masih bisa ngegas lagi. Haduh," Orang tersebut mengeluh panjang sembari (seharusnya) menggeleng-gelengkan kepalanya tetapi tertahan oleh tembok.

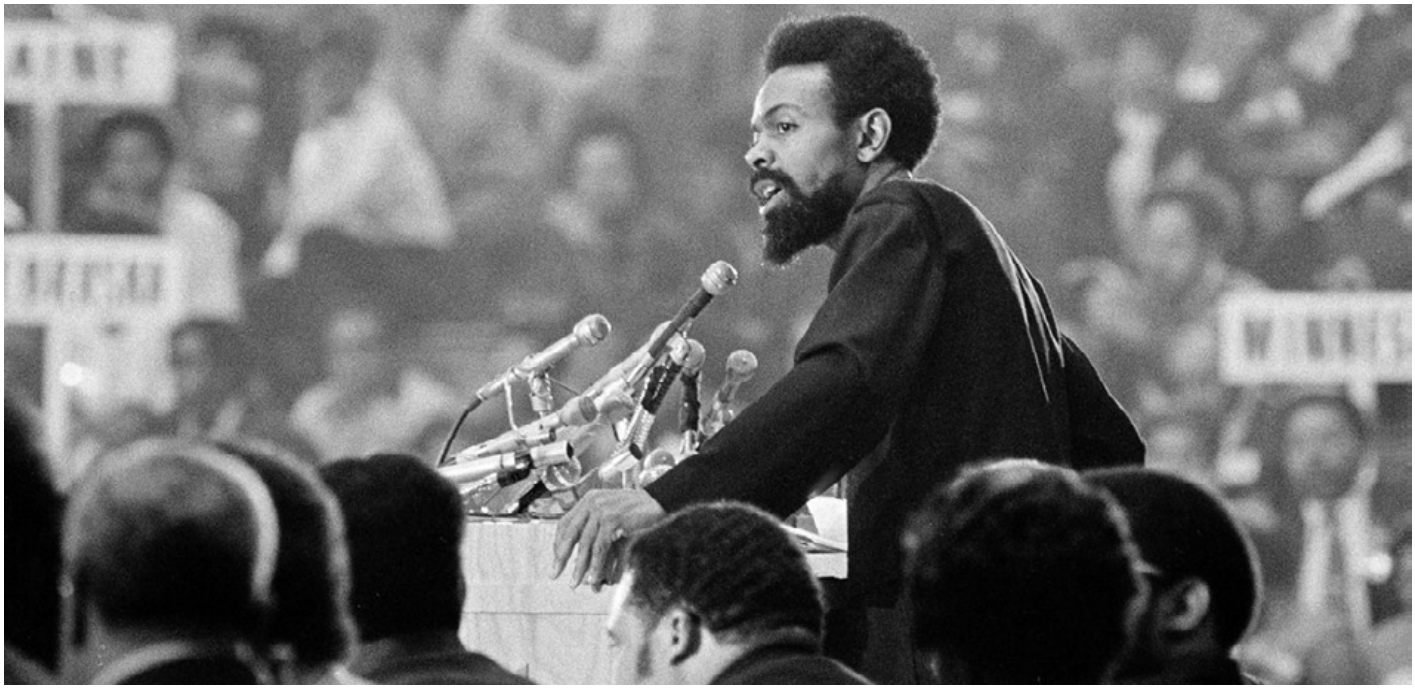
"Mereka tuh selalu bilang, 'Lampaui diri Lo, jon!' 'lampaui diri Lo!'—Tapi lampauin ke Apa? Ke mana?"
Kasihan orang ini, pikirnya. *Kalau para nietzschean-nitzschean korporat itu saja tak mampu menggerakkan mesin-mesin internalnya dan tak mampu menyulut sumbu yang bersimpul di pembuluh-pembuluhnya—harapan apa yang Ia punya! Mereka pasti sudah memperingatkan: 'Gaji telah mati—dan kitalah yang membunuhnya'. Yang tersisa hanyalah Makna. Tanpa Makna, Ia hanya akan menjadi sepasang kaki dengan muka sebagai tumpuannya.*

"Saya sudah sering melakukannya… atau mungkin saya saja yang pemalas dan sebenarnya belum. Entahlah, mungkin bukan saya yang bisa menilainya. Namun yang saya takutkan bukan persoalan bisa atau tidak—*tapi justru keberlanjutannya*. Kalau sudah melewatinya, lalu apa? Saya takut bosan.
Bukan berarti dengan merasa bosan berarti saya berhasil menaklukan semua 'tantangan'—bukan juga berarti saya akan berhasil menguasasi semua keahlian atau kemampuan yang tingkatnya lebih tinggi.
Coba bayangkan di situasi kita sekarang ini. Kita sama-sama sudah tahu kalau ujung dari perbincangan ini adalah entah antara Mas yang akan berhasil mengubah keyakinan saya, atau sebaliknya, saya yang berhasil meyakinkan Mas. Tapi lalu apa?"

Orang itu secara perlahan merubah posisinya. "Yah… tapi Mas juga palingan sudah tahu," Orang itu mengangkat kepalanya, bertumpukan kedua tangannya pada tembok, sedikit demi sedikit iya berdiri seperti selayaknya orang yang berdiri. ""Saya saja tidak bisa meyakinkan diri saya sendiri, apalagi mau meyakinkan Mas-nya. Ya, kan, Mas?"

Suara AC setengah rusak, mesin fotokopi dan komputer yang belum dimatikan kembali memenuhi ruangan kosong tersebut. Orang itu terdiam sebentar menatap ruang kosong di depannya lalu menghela nafas dengan berat dan berjalan bertatih-tatih dari pojokan menuju kursi di depannya. *Masih jam 08.12*—jam tangannya menunjukan. Orang itu masih harus menunggu sekitar setengah jam lagi untuk menghindari kemacetan jalanan.

Suara halus mesin-mesin menjadi latar untuk keheningan ruangan tersebut.
Meski sedikit khawatir akan ada yang mengusiknya, Orang itu tetap mencoba untuk duduk dengan setenang mungkin.



Amiri Baraka at the National Black Political Convention, 1972. Gary Settle/The New York Times

LETTER TO YOUNG POETS

OR

HOW TO STOP WORRYING AND LEARN TO SHOUT

"Poetry aims at difficult meanings."
— Amiri Baraka

"Come ye o spirits, owners of copyright
of false, immoral, conceited and deceitful Art!"
— Saut Situmorang, Tongue in Your Ear

Having read Baraka intensely in English—denying my own mother tongue (sue me)—I have come to one definite conclusion: that poetry should never be abstract nor descriptive, regardless of what language you speak of or what race. It should always grasp what is collective within isolated images.

Several poets who are now working at the same time as I am writing this, will write in different languages, in overlaying dimensions, tones, moods and shapes. Within these tensions the poem becomes a work under pressure, on the cusp of several discourses with their differing relations, repulsions, attractions, contaminations, etc. These are the kinds of work that will exhaust itself in its own stubborn localities, with or without the scrutiny of history that goes beyond it. The possibility of singular poetry, or, the 'poetry of engagement' , as Baraka put it, is also an engagement with ideas that have been erased from official discourse, ideas that can still be activated. If it is incomprehensible, it is because certain ideas seem eclipsed in an epoch that cannot see them. A kind of Orwellian epoch when not only, say, revolution is impossible, but even the thought of revolution has been made impossible; a dark period that is not so far away and is actually happening, even as we speak. On the other hand, most poetry that we see today is mimetic of incomprehensibility, rather than an engagement with it.

Our current period is somewhat similar to that of Chile in the 1970s with regard to literature: it will have to take new forms . I guess everyone will agree with that, in the abstract. One of the things we have to think about—this is my sense of the situation—is how the massive loss of belief, not only in politics, to put it at its most general, but of course, also in capital, took its most frightening form in the rampant philistinism of neoliberal hegemony i.e. art and literature as a mere spectacle. We should take example from the work of CADA (roughly means Collective of Art Actions) during the dictatorship of Pinochet in Chile. The aim of CADA was entirely to de-specialize art: that society itself should become the work of art: a converging of the social in art and of art in the social. Almost similar to Situationism in France for their 'interventionist' attitude towards everyday life, or the Neo-Dada movements such as Fluxus in the US for their spontaneous attitude towards urban spaces ('happening') and The Black Mask. Members of CADA took enormous risks, because of the necessity of the situation. They painted the slogan "NO +" or "NO MORE..." on walls all over the city, the "+/..." intended for people to complete according to their specific social demands.

Given the current situation and condition, this Lukacsian gesture (the 'objectivity' in art, or, art as a necessary social practice) is all the more important, and not entirely alien to the practice of art and/or literature in Indonesia. In fact, it had been used and promoted by Left-leaning radical artists like Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat abbreviated as Lekra (People's Cultural Institute)—with Nobel Prize candidate author Pramoedya Ananta Toer as their household name—who served as the 'cultural mouthpiece' for the PKI in the 1950s to early 1960s in their rally against the aesthetic doctrine of 'universal humanism'—an inherently bourgeois value formulated (directly or indirectly) from the philosophy of the Enlightenment—that was quite popular among Indonesian intellectuals, writers and artists closely associated with Manifes Kebudayaan or Manikebu (Cultural Manifesto) at the time.

Lekra, who were deeply committed to the communist ideology and cause—with their slogan Seni Untuk Rakyat (Art for the People)—believed that art should always reflect and serve the people and their struggle for a better society, as opposed to Manikebu's bourgeois, esoteric and humanistic attitude—which brought them to believe that they are the "sole inheritance of the culture of the world"—therefore, uncommitted to the cause and the fate of Indonesian people in general. In their periodicals Zaman Baru (New Age), Lekra furiously attacked this very ideal in a polemical discourse with Manikebu that spanned for years.

From here, we can learn that art and literature, thus, can be made to function, not only for self-expression (as a form of ego-massage), but also as a tracking of eclipses in the constellations of ideas: Asia facing Demogorgon in the myth of Prometheus.

Is it too much to claim that poetic thought moves counterclockwise to the reality of our own historical period, which is papered over with a bourgeois myth that, though long dead, is still active and still fundamentally real in that it knows how to kill, and always acts from just that basis?

If we really want to believe that poetry might speed up a dialectical 'continuity in discontinuity' , and thus detourne whatever is forced to be invisible via 'realistic speech' (in a Brechtian sense), and where the lyric 'I' is understood as either an interrupter or a collective, and where direct speech and incomprehensibility are only possible as a synthesis that bends ideas into and out of the limits of insurrectionism and illegalism, the obvious danger is that disappeared ideas will only turn up 'dead' (e.g. Socialism, Communism, Anarchism, etc), or reanimated as zombies: the 'radicals' as a damaged manifestation of utopianism, when all of the elements—including those eclipsed by bourgeois thought—are still absolutely occupied by that same fucking bourgeoisie!

The danger we face is that the enemy is now fashioning forms of fascist subjectivity out of resentment and of 'sacrifice'. Resentment for the poor and any form of progressive ideology and propaganda, and sacrifice for the benefited few, under the guise of Nationalism (e.g. the forced issue of Bela Negara) and loyalty: the rich and the ignorant middle-class i.e. the bourgeoisie, State officers and apparatuses, the so-called 'civil organizations', para-militaries and armed thugs, and independent groups of religious fundamentalists, the entire regime—not to mention the reduction of intellect to servitude in schools as well as cultural institutions by the government. The danger we face is not the enemy's will to violence, the viciousness of its law-preserving violence, but that—now that social democracy is in turmoil, if not historically finished—the preparations for mastery that they are making, in the sphere of policy and propaganda, are not matched by our own preparations.

Fear plays a major part in our current cultural and political paralysis. Whether we admit it or not. If fear really is the problem, we can of course choose to wait until a greater threat overcomes our fear. But the danger is that time plays into the enemy's hands, while we hide in fear, they plan ahead. Our response should be immediate. Fear is not something that has to be suppressed, but to be taken all the way. Fear is about movement: the absolute melting away of everything stable. It is the essential nature of self-consciousness. Thus, fear must be understood as the basis for emancipatory will.

Wiji Thukul's poem Ucapkan Kata-Katamu demonstrates this call to overcome fear in a very didactic way. Such clarity is unique. There is no overused of rhyme, no pantun-like verse, no malingering senility. It is untraditional, straightforward, colloquial and consistent, without completely ignoring the highest artistic possibility. Forget for a while the permissive beauty of Soetardji Calzoum Bachri or the melancholy of Sapardi Djoko Damono. In the face of cynicism and/or despair, we should begin to recognize the reality of our time, to seize back the words and its meanings from the captors (the "owners of copyright" as Saut eloquently put) and be prepared to try to make attempts in one way or another to hold on to where we are—to fight for the lesser dread and invent a better future.

So several questions arise. In our current socio-political situation, how do we overcome our fear and talk back? To return our enemy's violence back to them? How to make whatever it is that is trapped in aesthetics, idealism, politics and in history, learn to speak? How to make poetry meaningful and dangerous again? Can the poem really speak? Can the poet really speak—not only for themselves—but for the 'resurrection' of disappeared ideas and neglected consciousness? And how can we (the poets and the people) work towards the common good without common ground? How can we harmonize our activity without even understanding one another, let alone agreeing?

These are the questions that we must try to answer. Because what we really needed now—more than ever—are new gestures, new forms and meanings which we can stand by. To be able to push off from whatever that moved us, at whatever cost—or in Baraka's term, the poetics of 'turning-away' . One that is particular in method and practice, but universal in essence.

One thing we know for sure, is that 'the new' will have to be placed on a ground that reaches beyond the current order. A new ground where we can build the same substance of dreams, to propose new artistic and political configuration further than 'genres' of conservatism or avant-gardism, democracies or totalitarianisms; poetic revolutions where people can follow their own singularities and at the same time respect and encourage others; a poetic revolutions that require us to be brave and go beyond political-correctness, to write the kind of poetry that will—as what Mayakovsky and other Futurist poets did —spit on the face of the enemy and the current public's taste (counter-public); poetic revolutions that are absolutely negative, and absolutely wrong, and thus absolutely correct, that will force the false 'inclusivity', apathy or any kind of hippie escapism, out of the fucking orbit.



1) "[...] to see the realities of this and and to seek the genuine, 'struggle' or the truths of an ideal realm." The Future of Poetry: Is It an Endangered Species? (1987), p. 23.

2) "Under these circumstances, true literary activity cannot aspire to take place within a literary framework." Walter Benjamin, 'One-Way-Street and Other Writings', Lowe & Brydone (1979), p. 45.

3) The goal is to see beyond the surface appearance of things: truth is "not to be found at the beginning but at the end [...] truth is not the initial impression". Lenin's point is that observation must be followed by "generalization, the formulation of concepts (judgments, conclusions)", i.e. the "perceptual image" must be turned into "abstract thought" and mere perception succeeded by concrete scientific knowledge. Only by this process that one could capture the "full process of life": a true work of art that "reflects or captures the class conflict intrinsic to the place and time which it depicts and which is the engine of history (to be precise, the dialectical progression from one mode of economic production to its successor) by which that social totality is subject to transformation." Gyorgy Lukacs, "Art and Objective Truth". 'Writer and Critic and Other Essays'. London: Merlin (1970) p. 26-7.

4) In Shelley's lyrical drama, Asia, Prometheus's wife, questions Demogorgon the "Supreme tyrant" about the nature of God and human vileness. She then declares that Prometheus "gave man fire, the knowledge of mining, speech, science, and medicine." and asks Demogorgon to release Prometheus. Demogorgon simply responds, "All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil". Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Prometheus Unbound' (1820) p. 35.

5) To bring into a world founded by discontinuity all the continuity such a world can sustain. "Poetry leads to the same place as all forms of eroticism—to the blending and fusion of separate objects. It leads us to eternity, it leads us to death, and through death to continuity. Poetry is eternity; the sun matched with the sea." Georges Bataille, 'Eroticism', Marion Boyars, London, (1987) p. 19-25.

6) G. W. F. Hegel "Master-Slave Dialectics", para. 194

7) http://www.wijithukul.tk/2014/02/ucapkan-kata-katamu.html

8) "[...] To resist the 'hell' of stasis and conformity at every turn, and to embrace the continual motion of change instead. (SD 153)" Andrew Epstein, 'Beautiful Enemies: Friendship and Postwar America Poetry', Oxford University Press (2006), p. 166.

9) David Burliuk, Alexander Kruchenykh, Vladmir Mayakovsky, Victor Khlebnikov, "A Slap in the Face of PublicTaste" https://www.marxists.org/subject/art/literature/mayakovsky/1917/slap-in-face-public-taste.htm



TENTANG KESEHARIAN III: KEBENARAN OMONG KOSONG

Coba kita tengok linimasa jejaring sosial online masing-masing, tak akan terlalu lama dan dengan akurasi mengerikan kita akan menemukan "berita" yang membahas hal-hal kontroversial dan banal lewat bahasa bombastis, abai fakta serta berlari menjauhi kebenaran. Biasanya sumber yang mereka bagi dan sertakan adalah "media massa alternatif" (bukan dalam konotasi mencerahkan atau berjarak dari kekuasaan), dengan kredibilitas tanda tanya, jajaran staf redaksi yang mirip hantu atau menjual bias opini pribadi sebagai informasi objektif.

Dengan penuh percaya diri, kerabat internet kita sukarela membagi informasi ini, biasanya disertai caption "Jangan percaya begitu saja berita dari media massa". Perilaku ini bisa dilakukan oleh siapa saja, kenalan yang sedang mengejar master di Eropa Barat atau sahabat yang baru bertemu di parkiran kost kemarin sore.

Mereka yang percaya sepenuh kepala dan hati sumber "berita" tak jelas sepertinya sudah menjadi jamur di belakang kuping; massif dan menyebalkan. Kemampuan membedakan antara fakta dan karangan lama-lama terkikis omong kosong harian. Kita sebagai pribadi yang lulus PPKN tentu tak bisa berbuat banyak, klik unfollow jadi pilihan paling jitu. Mengingatkan bahwa berita itu tidak valid dan bersumber dari situs tak jelas? Memang kita siapa? Social Justice Warrior?

Menjadi skeptis dan kritis bukan lagi kebutuhan yang bisa diabaikan di era ini. Ledakan informasi dalam skala harian (seharusnya) menjadikan kita kebal terhadap kebohongan dan omong kosong. Ternyata tidak, menjadi skeptis dan kritis ternyata mahal harganya. Dua sikap ini jadi barang mewah yang makin langka dari hari ke hari.

Sikap skeptis dan kritis terhadap media massa arus utama (atau institusi besar lain) merupakan salah satu karakter efektif meminimalisasi kebohongan dan omong kosong harian (juga baterai untuk melawan penguasa lalim). Lucunya, dua sikap ini bila tidak berdasar ilmiah dan logika yang ketat akan menggiring



kita untuk percaya pada Kebenaran dari sumber-sumber yang memiliki kredibilitas tak jelas. Menafikkan media massa arus utama sebagai sumber informasi dan menukarnya dengan situs-situs penuh kebohongan adalah ekses dari kemuakkan kita atas perilaku media massa yang kerap menjadi corong pemilik modal, Negara atau aparat. Tiap-tiap generasi di negeri ini tak pernah mengalami media massa yang betul-betul bekerja untuk demi kepentingan warga negara, kalau pun ada, hanya untuk waktu yang singkat ketika rezim berganti.

Sulit untuk percaya pada media massa karena jumlah tak sebanding dengan kualitas. Paska reformasi, media massa favorit kita semua, televisi jumlahnya makin banyak dan disiarkan ke seluruh pojok negara ini. Portal berita dan media massa online bermunculan, ada yang disiplin metode jurnalistik, ada pula yang memberitakan sesuai pesanan. Namun, kompetisi di antara korporasi dan grup media massa tidak mendorong kualitas media massa tersebut sebagai pengawas institusi-institusi besar dan penjaga kepentingan warga negara. Tradisi menjadi corong pemilik dan bias ada kepentingan ekonomi-politik mereka pun diteruskan dengan mulus.

Perilaku kawan-kawan kita membagi "berita" dari sumber-sumber tidak jelas adalah gejala dari gagalnya media massa menjalankan fungsi anjing penjaga dan sarana edukatif bagi warga (untuk membangun sikap kritis terhadap Negara, korporasi dan aparat). Konyol memang berharap banyak dari institusi yang sepanjang sejarahnya di negeri ini punya kebiasaan menjadi sarana propaganda. Kita sebagai penonton, pendengar dan pembaca merasa sudah terlalu lama dikibuli media massa, hingga kita merasa tak ada pilihan lain kecuali menolak total informasi dari mereka dan menerima total informasi dari sumber-sumber tak jelas. Ada semacam rasa lega bahwa ternyata masih ada Kebenaran di luar sana.

Sumber-sumber itu memberikan rasa nyaman pada kita, sementara media massa menyajikan ketidakpastian dan kondisi carut-marut, sumber-sumber itu mengatakan hal-hal yang ingin kita dengar. Tak ada tantangan untuk mencerna realita sebagai akumulasi kekacauan dan ketidakpastian serta memformulasi bagaimana cara kita mengatasinya. Pihak-pihak yang bukan-kami tentu saja penyebab mengapa negeri ini kacau, kenapa? Karena sumber ini menjelaskan demikian. Gampang dan nyaman.

Tentu hidup jadi lebih mudah ketika kita menghadapkan diri hanya pada dua Kebenaran: semua kekacauan ini disebabkan golongan tertentu atau ketika informasi dalam berita adalah pil pahit yang kita harus tolak. Tak ada lagi kemungkinan untuk melihat ke sekeliling dan berpikir keras, sebetulnya apa-apa saja yang membuat keadaan tidak baik-baik saja?

I OPEN MY MOUTH

I open my mouth
and measure
my tongue
        only to be frustrated by
this disquieting fact:
the world
depends on something
so vulnerable and
                small.
        It is hard to accept
that the world
is the size of a tongue!
As for whose—it doesn't matter;
yours, your Mother's, or
a stranger's.
        The universe belongs to
silence,
        existing beyond the horizons of
        Language.
Could it be, that to get there,
we must build a bridge made of
tongues,
our tongues?
        So that we might,
        at long last
        grant ourselves the privilege
        of true speech,
        of uttering the Truth
in
one
united
voice.

ONE
YEA
O
CON
2 0

ACCESS OUR ARCHIVE AT
THECONSTRUCTDOCUMENTS.BLOGSPOT.COM

E
R
F
NSTRUCT
6
1