

THE ROLE OF LITERARY WORKS AS ALTERNATIVE HISTORICAL NARRATIVE: *ANTARA DENDAM DENGAN PERJUANGAN* BY ALI JUSOH

*(Peranan Karya Sastra sebagai Naratif Sejarah Alternatif:
Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan karya Ali Jusoh)*

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Abstract

Historical literary works inject soul and life into historical events contained in the texts. Local historical literary works provide an alternative history that deepens the reader's understanding of the struggles of past Malay warriors. *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan* by Ali Jusoh serves as an alternative history that is vivid and provides a contemporary meaning that elevates the novel as a document filled with the struggles of the Malays in their fight against the colonizers. This article aims to analyse the psychological aspect of the main characters of this text. In doing so, historical events are reinterpreted. In the novel, the uprising of Pahang warriors is not only narrated, but through the New Historicism approach, readers can better understand

the events in history. The novel narrates not only past events, but also includes the tones and nuances of silenced voices of the past. This article applies the New Historicism approach, particularly that of Greenblatt (1989), which affirms the connection between a text and its context of setting and time. This article also applies the idea advocated by Hashim (2003) that New Historicism contributes to the deconstruction of history, especially that of postcolonial societies. It also focuses on selected events that expose the characters' psyche in the novel, thus demonstrating that history and literature complement each other. Through New Historicism and the study of selected characters in the novel, particular events are re-lived and given new meaning and contemporary interpretation.

Keywords: Deconstruction of history, New Historicism, struggle, historical literature, alternative history, psychological aspect

Abstrak

Sastera sejarah memberikan jiwa dan menghidupkan aksi sejarah yang wujud dalamnya. Karya sastera sejarah tanah air mampu menyediakan sejarah alternatif yang memperkukuhkan pemahaman tentang perjuangan tokoh Melayu zaman silam. Novel Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan (2007) karya Ali Jusoh menyediakan sejarah alternatif yang membawa semangat serta makna kekinian yang mampu mengangkat karya ini sebagai bacaan yang sarat dengan dokumen sejarah perjuangan bangsa Melayu menentang kuasa penjajah. Artikel ini bertujuan menganalisis aspek kejiwaan yang berjaya diserlahkan melalui watak-watak yang dibangunkan dalam karya ini, seterusnya menterjemahkan kembali peristiwa bersejarah. Peristiwa kebangkitan pahlawan Pahang yang terakam dalam novel Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan tidak sekadar "bercerita" semata-mata, sebaliknya pendekatan melalui perspektif Pensejarahan Baharu mampu membawa khalayak untuk lebih memahami inti pati sejarah secara lebih mendalam. Novel ini tidak hanya menyadurkan kisah sejarah silam; namun sarat dengan nada dan gema suara-suara yang dinafikan. Sehubungan dengan itu, artikel ini mendekati novel Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan daripada perspektif Pensejarahan Baharu, khususnya yang disarankan oleh Greenblat (1989) yang menegaskan perkaitan antara teks dengan konteks latar dan masa sesebuah penulisan. Selain itu, artikel ini juga mengaplikasi idea Hashim (2003) yang menjelaskan bahawa Pensejarahan Baharu menyumbang kepada dekonstruksi sejarah, khususnya bagi masyarakat pascakolonial. Artikel ini menumpukan perhatian

terhadap beberapa peristiwa yang dapat mendedahkan aspek kejiwaan watak-watak dalam teks terpilih. Rangkaian aspek ini berdasarkan perspektif Pensejarahan Baharu mampu menjelaskan bahawa sejarah dan sastera mempunyai pertalian yang saling melengkapi. Peristiwa lampau terpilih yang dihidupkan kembali melalui watak-watak dalam novel tersebut diteliti untuk diberikan makna dan interpretasi kekinian berdasarkan perspektif Pensejarahan Baharu.

Kata kunci: Dekonstruksi sejarah, Pensejarahan Baharu, perjuangan, sastera sejarah, sejarah alternatif, aspek kejiwaan

INTRODUCTION

The nation's historical literary works are able to provide an alternative history that deepens our understanding of the struggles of the Malay warriors in the past. Remembering these past stories evoke a nostalgic feeling when we share their feelings of joy, sorrow, happiness, disappointment and other emotions. These elements form the difference between historical literature and factual history. The factual notes in historical documents function as the official records of the past, whereas historical literature stir one's soul and emotions, and vividly bring to life particular events in history.

The novel *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan* by Ali Jusoh has as its background the country's history, specifically of the state of Pahang. In this novel, there is the generally accepted history within the time frame and space used by the author so that the reader get to know the historical figures that are involved. This directly elevates the novel as a document that is filled with the history of the struggles of the Malays who rose in protest against the colonizers.

With that in mind, this article aims to explore the selected characters' greatness as well as the aspect of the soul through their development in this novel. At the same time, it aims to interpret these historical events from the perspective of New Historicism. Although this novel revolves around historical events, its nature as a creative work is clearly maintained as the author succeeds in highlighting the psychological aspect of these characters. Thus, today's generation can have a better understanding of the role of these past Malay figures and this can indirectly stir up the spirit of nationalism towards the country and its people.

NEW HISTORICISM

According to Greenblatt (1989:2), historical works that are concerned with political thought and power bring forth new interpretations so as to give a more significant meaning in the context of contemporary society. Thus, history is not merely viewed as an element within a certain time frame, but crosses the boundaries of political and social thought. New Historicism focuses more on external factors outside the text that encompass the culture, socio-political system and the environment that become part of the agenda in the “deconstruction” of the objectivity of history. Greenblatt (1989) views history from a wider and more dynamic perspective, that is, history is not only a static record, but should be discussed from various angles of culture and literature. The “discussion” suggested by Greenblatt explains the relationship between the author’s voice and the historical events in a literary work. This shows that literary works are not plain or dependent only on the author’s imagination. On the other hand, a work of literature is born out of the interaction between various sources, such as history, culture and politics, as well as the thoughts and background of the author. In relation to this, a literary work is seen as a bridge that can connect a society with its history as well as to enable today’s generation to understand history in greater depth.

In the context of New Historicism, the literary works produced are neither plain nor purely entertaining. The author not only adapts historical events and facts, but in fact adds stories that have probably been ignored by historians. George Duby in Umar Junus (1996:139), brings up the importance of looking for the truth within the statements that are not expressed. These statements are suggestions for the contemporary society to re-examine history because they are written by those in power. The victorious will decide historical facts, while the defeated are ignored or erased.

As there is a possibility that a country’s historical facts can be manipulated by parties with vested interest, the authors of creative literary works can play the role of including the voices silenced by official history. Guided by New Historicism’s method of viewing historical literary works, it is found that historical facts are deeply intertwined in these works. The author is free to express his thoughts through the characters that are developed in his work. A study of the silenced voices can generate a new interpretation of a particular historical situation.

Through historical literary works, authors often reinterpret history within the present context. The interaction between the characters in these literary works exposes the psychological aspects that are not noted in historical sources. In the novel *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan*, Ali Jusoh succeeds in reviving the characters of numerous great Malay fighters. These characters are similar to well-known national figures in the history of Malaya, such as Datuk Bahaman, Mat Kilau, Tok Gajah and several of their loyal followers. The development of the character and psyche of the Malay protagonists in the novel encourages the people to feel with them as they undergo the twists and turns of their journey. This is not found in historical records. Using the historical elements as the core of the novel, Ali Jusoh re-enacts past history through a modern perspective and interpretation. This situation is similar to the idea of New Historicism, which views history as not only being something monumental, but is open to various interpretations with new meanings. The following section will focus on these characters to explore the psychological aspect in their struggle, as they fight for the people and the country.

IN DISGUISE AND AS FUGITIVES

In local history records as well as colonial reports, the story of the Malay heroes who fought the British ended in their capture by the Siamese army. Based on a British agent's report, Mat Kilau is said to have died while trying to escape the Siamese army, while Datuk Bahaman and several of his followers were captured by Siam and brought there. This episode is recorded in *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang Darul Makmur 1800-1930*, in which six rebels—Tuk Gajah, Mat Kilau, Awang Nong, Teh Ibrahim, Haji Mat Wahid and Mat Lela—were captured by the Siamese High Commissioner and brought to Chiang Mai (Muhammad Yusoff & Aruna, 1992:324). The English report through Agent Duff, which was sent to Terengganu, states that Datuk Bahaman and several of his followers died as a result of the torture and pressure that they had to endure throughout their journey to Siam (Jang Aisjah, 1972:249).

According to historical records, Mat Kilau sustained injuries while attempting to escape from the Siamese and this caused his death. Similarly, Datuk Bahaman and his followers are said to have died as a result of torture and abuse by the Siamese. However, this episode has never been clearly proven (Muhammad Yusoff & Aruna, 1992:324). There

is a dearth of information from the date of Datuk Bahaman's death in 1895 until Malaya's independence, thus opening the door to speculation and manipulation by literary writers regarding the event. Ali (2007:21) introduces Abdul Rahman, Ahmad and Ishak as the main protagonists in the novel. These characters have similarities to Datuk Bahaman and Mat Kilau, who are known in historical records as great and wily Malay freedom fighters. The characters of Abdul Rahman and his comrades-in-arm are seen as resembling these historical figures from Pahang who appear in *Pemberontakan Pahang 1891-1895* (Jang Aisjah, 1972), *Sejarah Pahang* (Haji Buyong, 1972) and *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang Darul Makmur 1800-1930* (Muhammad Yusoff & Aruna, 1992). The characters of Abdul Rahman and Ahmad are shown not only as great warriors in the novel, but also as the state's high-ranking officials who are ousted as a result of British incitement.

In the novel *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan*, Abdul Rahman and his comrades not only have to live as fugitives in Siam, but also have to go about in disguise to evade pursuits by the colonizers and to continue their fight (Ali, 2007:25). Although their disguise is successful in giving them a new and free life, the readers of the novel can feel their suffering as fugitives and as people who have been declared dead. Their separation from family and home becomes a huge sacrifice because their families have to accept their supposed deaths so they can go on fighting for their cause (Ali, 2007:181). Their lives in Siam or Malaya are always in a state of vigilance. Additionally, separation from family and loved ones is a sacrifice not easily borne by ordinary people.

Memang cukup menyedihkan, apa tidaknya, berada di kampung sendiri, melihat isteri yang nampaknya terlalu tua, anak-anak dan cucu yang sedang membesar dari jauh, tetapi semuanya tidak dapat didekati. Aku yang menjadi asing di kampung halaman aku sendiri. Bukankah aku sudah diisytiharkan mati? Siapakah yang akan memikirkan orang yang sudah mati? (Ali, 2007:142)

[It's really sad, what with being away from home, seeing the wife grown old, children and grandchildren growing up from afar, we could not come near. I've become a stranger in my own hometown. Haven't I been declared dead? Who would remember one who has died?]

"Saya ikut saja, tapi saya tak mahu balik ke kampung saya."

“Mengapa pula tidak mahu balik? Tak mahu tengok anak isteri?” Aku bertanya.

“Saya tidak mungkin setahan abang,” jawabnya. (Ali, 2007:152)

[“I’ll go along but I don’t want to go back home.”

“Why don’t you want to go back home? You don’t want to see your wife and children?” I asked.

“Maybe I’m not as strong as you,” he replied.]

The dialogue quoted above shows the emotional impact and suppressed feelings that the characters have to endure while living in disguise for the sake of the cause. While in this disguised state, Bahaman and his comrades have to live under cover using different names—such as Tuk Lawit, Mat Siam and Pa Yak—to avoid being detected by the enemy (Ali, 2007:69). Their return is not that of heroes, but as outcasts who are strangers to their own families. Clearly, the struggle that they have launched demand a huge sacrifice and require mental and physical strength to stay the course. Their struggle means not giving in to tiredness and exhaustion. On the contrary, these obstacles have fired their enthusiasm even more.

In the following narrative, the author raises doubts in the stories spread by the British. Abdul Rahman’s heroism is proven by the failure of Klipod to capture him and his comrades, even though the British have the help of the Sikh army:

Seperti aku jangkakan, api anggun yang masih berasap itu berjaya menarik kumpulan itu datang menyerbu dengan hebatnya. Mereka terus melepaskan tembakan bertalu-talu sambil bersorak mencari. Apa lagi, aku tolak Sikh itu jatuh ke pasir, dan peluru terus menerjah tubuh gempal itu. Tidak ada suara langsung kecuali dia mengerang kesakitan. Bukan itu saja, berbilang-bilang lembing dan pedang sudah menikam dan menetak tubuh yang mahal harganya itu. Darah pun bersemburan, air dari perbukitan yang sejuk dan nyaman itu berubah warnanya. Setelah sah Sikh itu telah menjadi mayat, aku berundur bersama-sama kawan yang turut menyaksikan peristiwa itu. (Ali, 2007:318)

[As I expected, the bonfire that is still burning is able to attract the group that quickly attacked us. They opened fire repeatedly while shouting and looking. Immediately I pushed the Sikh right upon the sand and a bullet went straight into his big burly chest. He couldn’t

utter anything except groan in agony. Not only that, spears and swords pierce and cut up the body that had been bought expensively. Blood spurted everywhere, the water from the cool and tranquil hills changed colour. After making sure that the Sikh was really dead, I withdrew with my comrades who witnessed the whole incident.]

Khabarnya mayat itu diheret songsang di bandar Kota Bharu, digantung di simpang jalan selama berminggu-minggu, kononnya itulah balasannya orang yang menderhaka kepada raja. Bukankah Mat Hassan itu telah menubuhkan kerajaan di Pasir Puteh dengan melantiknya sebagai perdana menteri? (Ali, 2007:318)

[It was said that the corpse was dragged upside down to the town of Kota Bharu, hanged at the road junction for weeks, apparently as a lesson in punishment for any person who goes against the king. Didn't Mat Hassan set up a government in Pasir Puteh by appointing him as prime minister?]

The hunt, which went beyond the borders of Kelantan and Terengganu, is also recorded in *Sejarah Pahang* (Haji Buyong, 1972:352), *Pemberontakan Pahang 1891-1895* (Jang Aisjah, 1972:181) and *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang Darul Makmur 1800-1930* (Muhammad Yusoff & Aruna, 1992:316). There is a possibility that Tok Janggut as Abdul Rahman and his comrades also had to disguise themselves to survive. Their cunning act of making the Sikh soldier as their replacement saved their lives and succeeded in deceiving the British.

The characters of Abdul Rahman, Ahmad and Ishak are portrayed in the novel as great Malay warriors who cleverly plan and arrange strategies (Ali, 2007:135-315). In the narrative, Klipod fails to capture Abdul Rahman and his comrades, Ahmad and Ishak. Abdul Rahman's involvement in several clashes in Perak, Negeri Sembilan and Selangor proves that he is smart in his strategies to cripple enemy attacks. His intelligence, skill as well guerrilla-style attacks succeed in debilitating the Sikh army.

The reading of incidents about challenges and obstacles faced by the characters as well as their sacrifice through the perspective of New Historicism can provide a fairer interpretation and will be based on humanitarian grounds. Greenblatt (1989) emphasizes that there is symbiosis between literature and history that complement each other. By presenting certain characters and events, the literary author makes a literary text as

a social and cultural document that should be referred to by the historian as well as the literary researcher. The author's thoughts in portraying the main character's psychological aspect is able to give a new interpretation and unravel various hypotheses surrounding the text. Selected text analysis from the perspective of New Historicism opens the door to alternative interpretations that are fairer towards the parties involved in the history of Pahang in particular. Their sacrifice will also be seen in their relationship with the Palace. This will be discussed in the following section.

CONFLICT WITH THE PALACE

Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan is a story about the era before the coming of the British, when Abdul Rahman and his comrades were the Sultan's right hand men and fought together against his rival, Tun Mutahir. Abdul Rahman is not only a great fighter, but also an influential figure. It is said that Sultan Ahmad's ascension to the throne of Pahang was due to Abdul Rahman's lobbying of prominent figures in the state (Muhammad Yusoff & Aruna, 1992:288-289). The arrival of the British, however, would leave a negative impact on the political scenario in Pahang.

After the British succeed in infiltrating the Pahang Palace and the Palace declares that some of Abdul Rahman's men are traitors, the British seem to have absolute power to capture and punish them. Abdul Rahman reflects on this strange turn of events:

Dunia ini memang aneh. Dahulu aku perang, sekarang perang lagi. Dahulu kamilah yang bersama-sama Sultan Wan Ahmad, sekarang berperang dengan Wan Ahmad pula. Pelik betul. Dahulu aku tidak pernah bercerai tanggal dengan Baginda Sultan Wan Ahmad, kami lahir pada hari yang sama, membesar bersama-sama di istananya, aku jadi khadamnya, teman suruhannya dan kesetiaan aku tidak pernah berbelah bagi, akulah yang memujuk seluruh pembesar Pahang untuk bersama-sama kami perang kali kedua. Aku jadi pembesar, tidak ada yang lebih besar selain aku di sisinya dibandingkan dengan pembesar-pembesar lain yang banyak itu. Dan sekarang, semenjak kehadiran Klipod budak mentah Inggeris itu, aku tersingkir dan berperang dengan baginda pula. (Ali, 2007:18)

[It's a strange world. Before, I fought, now I'm fighting again. Before, we were together with Sultan Wan Ahmad, now we are fighting him instead. Strange. Before, I was with the Sultan every day without fail,

we were born on the same day, grew up together in his palace, I was his loyal servant and assistant and my loyalty never wavered. I was the one who pleaded with the nobles of Pahang to fight with us for the second time. I became a noble, there were many nobles but no other was closer to him than me. And now, since the arrival of Klipod, the simpering English youth, I am ousted and am now fighting the Sultan.]

This action by the Sultan, who is easily taken in by the colonials' slanders, deeply hurt the feelings of the Palace officials, especially Datuk Bahaman, who had once played a big role in promoting Bendahara Wan Ahmad to become the Sultan of Pahang. Unfortunately, after the Bendahara becomes the Sultan, Datuk Bahaman and his friends are exiled. Now, they are not only fighting the British, but are also in conflict with the Palace. Their situation has changed:

Dahulu, kamilah di sekeliling sultan. Sekarang, Inggerislah yang meliliti sultan kami itu...(Ali, 2007:18)

[Before, we were the ones around the Sultan. Now it's the British who surround him...]

Although Abdul Rahman and his friends are heavy-hearted about leaving, it is no longer safe for them to live in Pahang. They are not only hunted by the British, but are also spied on by their own people, who have become turncoats.

The style of governance practiced by the British from the very beginning of their occupation of Malaya was by bribing the Sultans and Malay high-ranking officials with all sorts of luxury and wealth in order to silence them and to get them to agree to every action and rule the colonizers decided on. The Sultans and officials were "silenced" without them being aware of it. In 1902, the British honoured Sultan Ahmad with the 2nd Class Honorary Member or Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George. Giving awards was a British tactic used to control the Malay rulers so that they do not rise up to oppose them (Muhammad Yusoff & Aruna, 1992:332). The British were very cunning in devising strategies to exploit the weaknesses of the Malay rulers.

Maafkan saya, saya tidak jadi macam Inggeris lain, saya sudah pencen. Saya akan tulis tentang orang Melayu, kepandaian dan

kelemahannya juga. Tentang raja-raja dan pembesarnya yang suka berjudi dan bermain perempuan (Ali, 2007:425)

[Forgive me, I'm not like other Englishmen, I'm retired. I will write about the Malays, their intelligence and their weaknesses too. About the Sultans and their officials who like to gamble and sleep around with women]

The above citation is based on Klipod's writing, associating the way of life of the Malays, especially the rulers and the nobility, with being easily swayed by women and love for gambling. These negative values indirectly trap the high-ranking officials, who ultimately compromised the integrity of Malay rulers until the state itself is sacrificed. In the case of the incident that happened to the Pahang Palace, a Chinese man named Go Hui, who reportedly was a British citizen, was killed. According to *Sejarah Pahang*, the incident somehow involved Sultan Ahmad. In fact, the British accused Sultan Ahmad of being responsible for Go Hui's death. This accusation was made because the Sultan apparently had feelings for Go Hui's wife, Ah Chu (Muhammad Yusoff & Aruna, 1992:321).

Apart from Datuk Bahaman, Tok Gajah and Mat Kilau in Pahang, *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan* also depicts the rise of the nobility and religious figures in other states. In Perak, they were Dato' Sagor and Dato' Maharaja Lela, whereas in Kelantan, opposition towards the British was led by Tuk Janggut, whose real name is Haji Mat Hassan bin Munas. The similarity of the rebellions in these three states is the involvement of the nobility, who were citizens of these particular states. Meanwhile, the Sultans or rulers took the safe route by keeping silent or were amicable with the British (Muhammad Yusoff & Aruna, 1992:344-345) for the sake of retaining their throne and position. Datuk Bahaman and his friends showed genuine fighting spirit as Malay heroes who dared to rise up and oppose the colonizers, and even give up their respective comfortable life to live as fugitives. Their sacrifice was manifested by letting go of all their interests, including their name, rank, position and family. They also had to travel so far that they would be long forgotten. The jungle and valleys of Ulu Pahang and Ulu Kelantan became their sanctuary in their life as fugitives (Jang Aisjah, 1972:240-246). Nevertheless, in spite of the hardship as fugitives, their fighting spirit never left them.

The relationship between the Malay warriors and the Palace is an adaptation of the historical element in the text by the author to show the country's history as the main driving force in the writing of the narrative and the portrayal of characters. The author succeeds in proving that the role of literary works has a double advantage. In addition to fulfilling its function as a literary work, the novel also looks at history from a new perspective. The heroism of these historical figures and their important role in the Palace is developed and revived through New Historicism in *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan*.

BAHAMAN, AHMAD AND ISHAK: RELIGIOUS FIGURES AND SUFI EXPONENTS

Ali Jusoh presents the characters of Abdul Rahman and his comrades not only as nobles, but also as important religious figures in society. These characters do not only fight for worldly matters. Their big struggle is to oppose the infidels who are trying to interfere in the governance of Pahang.

Ali Jusoh also portrays these characters' submission to the Creator through their devotion in worship. The prayers and *wirid* that become their daily routine (Ali, 2007:70) give them peace and calmness to accept their fate that has been destined by Allah and, at the same time, fan their fighting spirit and their *jihad* or fight against the infidels, the colonial masters.

In addition, based on *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan*, they were students of a famous *ulama* named Tok Ku Paloh from Terengganu (Ali, 2007:23). The teachings of Tok Ku Paloh, also known as Bawah Kaus, gave them the tools for both worldly and spiritual struggles. Tok Ku Paloh was a religious figure whose in-depth knowledge of religion and piety was highly respected. The knowledge passed on from Tok Ku Paloh earned them respect and admiration from the locals. As a result, the British started a battle of nerves in order to weaken the locals' support. It is clear that they succeeded in weakening the people's support, and even the palace became involved by declaring these fighters as traitors of Sultan Wan Ahmad. This declaration was carried out by the Sultan in a state of dilemma as a result of being pressured by the British (Jang Aisjah, 1972:152-153).

These personalities, who were religious figures and exponents of sufism, provide a new perspective. This aspect of their faith is not highlighted in official history. However, in *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan*, Ali Jusoh stresses that their struggle is not secular, but based on their strong faith.

Through New Historicism, this perspective elevates these Malay heroes as fighters in the name of Islam in the eyes of the readers today.

MALAY ART AND SENSE OF IDENTITY

Abdul Rahman and Ahmad's characters are also presented as being skilled *silat* exponents, as seen in several clashes with the British colonials. The *silat* philosophy is that of self-defence, exhibiting the intelligence of the Malays in interspersing noble values within the art. The movements of the *silat* are gentle and artful, but in these lie the secret that can kill the enemy, showing that knowledge of *silat* can shape the Malay personality and identity.

The *silat* moves practiced by Datuk Bahaman and Mat Kilau are unique. The style, steps and *bunga silat* that they use are difficult to carry out and exclusive as they are not seen in any other *silat* movement (Ali, 2007:145-146). Every step is an art and is full of grace, but the punch delivered is precise and deadly. The art of *silat* that they practiced proves that they possessed high moral values and a strong sense of Malay identity at that time. Normally, a high level of knowledge in the art of *silat* is associated with spiritual knowledge. Although this matter often becomes a polemic in the empirical nature of scientific proof, this aspect is a very integral part in the culture and practice of the art of *silat*. Mat Kilau's greatness is in his dexterity during fights and his ability to disappear or vanish from the enemy's sight, making it difficult for the enemy to counterstrike. He is also reputed to be unaffected by bullets. Due to these unique capabilities, the British found it difficult to cripple his attacks.

The British colonials covered up Datuk Bahaman and Mat Kilau's superior abilities in an effort to weaken the spirit of the native inhabitants. In fact, they accused the Malays of practicing *silat*, which had an element of magic. This was part of the British propaganda to crush the Malays' fighting spirit and degrade their art of self-defence.

Apart from their agility and dexterity in *silat*, Datuk Bahaman dan Mat Kilau were also said to be brilliant in devising war strategies, which ultimately forced the British to review their own war techniques. According to historical records, this situation forced them to create a bigger army (Abd. Rahman, 2009:10-11). Such a step had never happened before in the history of British colonization of any country.

Besides their dexterity in *silat*, Datuk Bahaman dan Mat Kilau were also experts in using the *keris*. In fact, they were skilled in fighting the

enemy with just a sharp bamboo. A sharp bamboo is said to have a deadly poison that can incapacitate the enemy. The extent to which these stories are true is difficult to prove; nevertheless, their ability during clashes with the British helped them to survive long enough to witness the greed of the British in colonizing Pahang. Ali Jusoh portrays the English defeat in Pahang as something that is really shameful and can be regarded as a huge blow to them.

Klipod sudah lama meninggalkan bumi Terengganu dengan penuh kecewa. Pemburu yang letih itu sudah tidak larat hendak meredah bukit lagi, sudah tidak larat hendak mengharung paya lagi. Pahlawan-pahlawan Pahang terlalu licik. Orang Terengganu pula langsung tak boleh diharap. Mereka tidak pernah membantu Inggeris. Bukan macam di tempat lain, di Perak, di Negeri Sembilan, di Selangor atau di Pahang sendiri. Di bumi itu, pahlawan-pahlawannya berasa lebih aman. Klipod telah belayar balik dengan kapal Sea Belle tanpa diiringi pahlawan-pahlawan yang akan menghuni penjara yang disediakan. Penjara itu kosong. Kapal itu pulang dengan kecewa; tidak pernah berlaku begitu dalam sejarah perang Inggeris. (Ali, 2007:16)

[Klipod had long left Terengganu in great disappointment. The tired hunter could no longer climb hills, or wade through swamps. The Pahang warriors were too cunning. Terengganu folks couldn't be depended on. They never helped the British. Unlike other places like Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Selangor and even Pahang. There the fighters felt more at peace. Klipod had sailed back on the *Sea Belle* without the fighters who should be in the prison that they prepared. The prison was empty. The ship sailed in disappointment; it has never happened in the history of English wars.]

Klipod's disappointment is described above in the voyage back via the ship *Sea Belle*. His hope to place Abdul Rahman and Ahmad in prison also ends in disappointment. Although the British have failed to capture them, their desire for revenge is carried out in a more painful way.

The narrative on the superiority of the Malay heroes reveals the author's effort to raise their status and encourage the reader to admire their heroism. Clearly, through New Historicism, Malay heroism is given due focus, whereby a literary work can give a positive impact in the reader's mind towards these historical figures.

BAHAMAN AND MAT KILAU: WAR HEROES

According to history, Datuk Bahaman and Mat Kilau's excellence was not only based on their skill in *silat*, but Datuk Bahaman was also adept at launching guerrilla attacks and fighting in jungles. He was known as an expert in the ways of the jungle, especially in the areas of Ulu Pahang and Ulu Kelantan. In *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan*, the character of Abdul Rahman is similarly shown as someone who is skilled in the ways of the jungle. This skill enables him to take advantage of every corner of the jungle. Abdul Rahman and his comrades are also clever at devising strategies of war by erecting protected spaces that are strategic. By building fortresses (Ali, 2007:149), they manage to hide and escape enemy assaults. He is thus viewed not only as a great Malay hero, but he can also be called the "King of the Jungle" since he "knew the ways of the jungle" (Ali, 2007: 40) in Ulu Terengganu and Ulu Pahang.

In historical records, guerrilla-style attacks contributed to the success of the war team led by Datuk Bahaman and Mat Kilau. The Sikh army brought in by the British found it awkward to fight in the Pahang jungle. This episode is recorded in *Sejarah Pahang*, which describes Datuk Bahaman's wisdom in fighting the British army led by Desborough at Sungai Semantan (Haji Buyong, 1972:260-261). The army led by the British were trained and more prepared to fight in an open area. Thus, many of them were injured and killed in the clashes.

Abdul Rahman's experience in leading several war expeditions in Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak makes him an expert in the logistics and management of a war effort (Muhammad Yusoff & Aruna, 1992:164-165). Although they do not possess the modern weapons that the Sikhs have access to, Abdul Rahman and his followers still manage to fight off the enemy effectively in every encounter. The Sikh army and the other Malay informers outnumber them, but they are not defeated. Their fighting spirit drives them to fight the armies of the colonial masters even harder.

In this way, Ali Jusoh succeeds in highlighting the superiority and brilliance of the Malay heroes in their fight against the British. Indirectly, the literary work that is analysed from the perspective of New Historicism has brought back the dignity of the people and country.

TOK KU PALOH (CHARACTER OF BAWAH KAUS): RELIGIOUS FIGURE, STATESMAN AND DIPLOMAT

Ali Jusoh presents the character of Bawah Kaus as someone who can be considered as the backbone of the rise as well as the basis of Abdul Rahman, Ahmad and Ishak's struggle. The character of Bawah Kaus shows Tok Ku Paloh's eminence as someone who is multitalented. In *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan*, Bawah Kaus is not only a devout person with in-depth knowledge of religion, but is also adept at politics when facing the colonial oppressors. Apart from that, he also acts as an ambassador representing Terengganu in matters related to foreign relations. Bawah Kaus shows adroitness in dealing with Siam in matters of security for Bahaman, Ahmad and Ishak, who are in exile in Siam (Ali, 2007:24-25).

Bawah Kaus' involvement in Abdul Rahman and Ishak's struggle not only strengthened their resolve to fight, but it also fired up the spirit of the Terengganu people at that time. Tok Ku Paloh's appeal inspired them to unite with the Pahang warriors and fight in *jihad* with the British infidels (Muhammad Yusoff & Aruna, 1992:322). Through the character of Bawah Kaus, the Malay fighters receive a well-rounded education, in worldly as well as spiritual matters. This kind of education turns them into genuine fighters for a cause, ready to fight to the death for the country and also to strive in the way of Allah. This is evident in the novel's description of religious ritual cleansing through fasting and meditation (Ali, 2007:20).

In the novel, Tok Ku Paloh's strong support for Datuk Bahaman and Mat Kilau's struggle has the blessing of the Sultan of Terengganu. Thus, they are respected not only for opposing the British, but also as proponents of sufism. Their uprising this time is more about *jihad* for Islam in the effort to oppose the enemies of Islam. They are therefore always ready and fearless for the sake of religion and the country.

Selepas raja kami bertakhta semula, kami berperang dengan Inggeris dengan Klipod. Kami tersingkir dari bumi Pahang. Perang ini belum tamat walaupun sudah beribu-ribu orang Inggeris, Benggali dan juga Melayu yang menjadi tali barut Inggeris yang kami bunuh. Namun pesannya, lawan terus kafir yang memburu kami. Mempertahankan agama dan bangsa yang terancam adalah wajib. Maknanya perang kami tidak akan tamat. Barangkali kami akan mati setelah bumi ini diperintah oleh bangsanya sendiri. Tetapi bilakah masanya? (Ali, 2007:22)

[Once our Sultan was back on the throne, we fought the British, Klipod. We were ousted from Pahang. The war has not ended although thousands of British, Sikh and Malay informers we have killed. He reminded us: fight the infidels who hunt you. Defending your religion and country is a must. That means, it will be a never ending war. Maybe we will die after this land is ruled by our own people. But when will that be?]

When the British realized how strong the Malays' religious belief was, they had to devise a smarter strategy. Their experience in the Crusades taught them how to deal with Muslims. The rise of the opposition in Pahang coincided with the period of the rise of Islam in Nusantara, whereby the influence of Muslim intellectuals from the Middle East accelerated the spread of *Daulah Islamiah*, or the Islamic State, in Malaya. During this time, Islamic education through the *pondok* system was expanding and had a significant place in the Malay society. Therefore, the British realized that they should not use religious sentiment in the effort to stop the rise of these Malay fighters. In relation to this, the Malays' cause, which was now based on religion, must be defeated by a propaganda stating that these fighters were actually zealous for power, position and material wealth. The British accused them of being materialistic and that the stripping of their positions and titles was the chief reason for their act of treason towards the ruler and the colonials. This propaganda made the people doubt Datuk Bahaman and his friends. In fact, based on the country's recorded historical facts, they were labelled as traitors. This slick action by the British managed to sever ties between Abdul Rahman and the Palace. This policy known as "divide and rule" was able to weaken the spirit of those who supported Datuk Bahaman, Mat Kilau and Tok Gajah. The British pitted the nobility against each other by bringing up the issue of rank and status until Abdul Rahman and his friends began to oppose the Sultan. The result was that the British managed to influence the Sultan to ultimately declare these fighters as traitors (Ali, 2007:52).

Bahaman and his comrades had to leave Pahang as a result of being declared as traitors (Jang Aisjah, 1972:163-164). What is interesting in this whole episode is that they did not show any animosity or hatred towards the Sultan. On the contrary, they viewed the Sultan's action as the result of British influence in the Pahang Palace. The British infidels were the object of their struggle. Leaving Pahang and finding refuge in Terengganu did

not mean that they lost—it was a way of avoiding conflict and bloodshed with the Pahang Palace, who were Malay Muslims just like them. This proves that their struggle was noble for the sake of religion and country. The Malay identity and artistic nature are also seen in these characters in the novel.

According to historical records by Haji Buyong, Kelantan and Terengganu had close ties with Siam (1972:351). Bawah Kaus, with the blessing of the Sultan of Terengganu, negotiated to get Abdul Rahman, Ahmad and Ishak to migrate to Siam temporarily. There was a close diplomatic relationship between Siam and Terengganu and it was felt that the three of them would be safe there. Siam's act of sending two of its war admirals, Luang Visudh and Luang Swat, shows that Siam still had a role and influence in both states. The story of their journey and pursuit by the British is very interesting for fans of historical literature. The author is able to fill in the gaps of history about the lives of these fighters after they were exiled to Siam. The reconstruction of alternative history by the author coincides with the principle of New Historicism (Hashim, 2003:4). This context is in line with New Historicism in that the author is not only writing out of sheer coincidence, but is actually inserting hidden meanings to show that it matches with the story in history. Also, the treatment based on New Historicism enables the public to interpret the "exile" of these fighters to Siam with several words or possibilities. Is the declaration of their deaths true or not? This question raises the polemic in answering the issue of their disappearance.

In the novel, Bawah Kaus' act of intervening in Pahang's state affairs is based on the spirit of fellowship in Islam. He realizes that if no action is taken by Terengganu, these fighters would probably be captured by the British. The author also includes the incident that led to the killing of Datuk Maharaja Lela and Datuk Sagor as a result of being duped by British promises (Ali, 2007:24). Tok Ku Paloh has to act fast so that the tragedy that befell the Perak fighters is not repeated. The British have used the Sultan as bait so that the rebels would come to the Palace. The excuse of the offer of a pardon that is extended by the British should be interpreted wisely.

Through Tok Ku Paloh's intervention, with the blessing of Sultan Zainal Abidin, Abdul Rahman and his comrades are surrendered to an influential person in Chiang Mai. Prabansa Abdul Hamid is entrusted with safeguarding them throughout their journey to Siam (Ali, 2007:50).

The character of Prabansa is that of a former War Admiral of Siam's Navy. He is charged with ensuring the safety of these exiles from Pahang. Prabansa accepts the duty entrusted to him by the Sultan of Terengganu and Bawah Kaus in order to give a new lease of life to these fighters. The question is, did Prabasa Abdul Hamid really exist at that time? Or is this character merely a creative output of the author? According to the author, the field study and research that he had done prove that these personalities existed and were directly involved with the Pahang fighters. Based on these facts, the author tried to re-enact the lives of these characters in a narrative. The mixture of facts and creativity by the author makes *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan* not merely a book that uses only historical facts. In fact, this novel is shown to be presenting historical episodes that may have been refuted previously. This is because the "deaths" of Abdul Rahman, Ahmad and Ishak were worth a huge price, hence a big power like Siam had to be involved. The mission of surrendering these fighters in Chiang Mai could not have taken place without another party to receive them. Thus, the presence of a character like Prabansa, who is described as an influential figure in *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan*, would be interesting and opens the door to a lively debate.

In the novel, the close ties between Terengganu and Siam show Bawah Kaus' wisdom in cultivating relations with foreign powers. The good relationship between Siam and the British also gives a positive impact on Terengganu. Terengganu is free from British influence and does not require a British advisor, unlike the other states in Malaya:

"Saya percaya bahawa selagi raja yang ada ini, selagi Bawah Kaus dan selagi Abang Musa masih hidup, Inggeris tidak berjaya di negeri ini. Tidak tahulah kalau mereka sudah tiada ada lagi nanti." (Ali, 2007:134)

[“I believe as long as this sultan, as long as Bawah Kaus and Abang Musa are still alive, the British will not succeed in this state. Not sure what will happen when they are no more here.”]

The British influence over Terengganu was limited because Bawah Kaus and the Sultan of Terengganu made it difficult for them to find opportunities to interfere in state affairs. There are historical records that Terengganu did receive a British advisor after the death of Sultan Zainal Abidin V and also after the death of Tok Ku Paloh. The era of British advisors only started

in Terengganu after the Terengganu-British Agreement in 1919, which saw various new rules being introduced in the administration (Abdullah Zakaria, 1995:25).

Bawah Kaus' wisdom in handling the internal conflict in the state is also narrated in the novel. The method he used enabled Terengganu to exist in peace and harmony. The same strategy in governance was passed on to the other officials in the state so that diplomacy was used as much as possible. Bawah Kaus taught the officials to settle problems that arise with diplomacy. He also played an important role as teacher and advisor to the Sultan (Haji Buyong, 1972:298-299). The following citation from the novel displays the diplomatic adroitness of Bawah Kaus:

"Kami hanya meneruskan tatacara dan adat pemerintahan orang-orang dahulu sahaja. Kami jaga negeri kami sendiri, kami jaga orang yang menjadi tetamu kami sahaja. Kami mungkin dapat untung daripada cara kami ini. Kami hanya berkeras apabila perlu sahaja, apabila kami yakin akan menang, kalau tidak kami bersiasah sahaja, berunding dan berkira juga satu perang, dan dalam perang, yang kalah jadi abu, yang menang jadi arang. Kedua-dua arang dan abu amat berguna dalam kehidupan kita." (Ali, 2007:179)

[*"We just continue the procedure and administrative ways of people in the past. We take care of our own state, we take care of our guests only. Maybe we benefit from our ways. We're only strict when needed, when we're sure we can win, if not we confer, discuss, and fight, and in fighting, the defeated become ash, the victor becomes coal. Both coal and ash are useful in our lives."*]

The dialogue quoted above shows the method of governance practiced in Terengganu that benefitted both sides. Harsh action was only taken if the situation was critical. Wisdom in managing strategies when faced with the enemy enabled Terengganu to exist in peace.

"Orang-orang kampung itu memperoleh keuntungan besar. Pertama, harta mereka. Orang kampung boleh bekerja membersihkan tanah mereka, membina rumah-rumah mereka, dan akhir sekali, aku telah berpesan supaya mereka menurunkan semangat juang dan segala ilmu persilatan kepada orang-orang kampung itu. Rakyat Terengganu menjadi semakin handal bukan?" (Ali, 2007:182)

[“The villagers will reap huge benefits. First, their property. The villagers can work in clearing their land, build houses, and finally, I’ve reminded them to pass on the fighting spirit and the knowledge of *silat* to the villagers. The people of Terengganu will become experts, yes?”]

The citation above between Abdul Rahman and Abang Musa describes the method of governance that was practiced. The rebel leaders were not punished harshly; in fact, their abilities were utilized to help develop the local area. Their *silat* prowess enabled them to pass on this knowledge to the local youths. This act not only ensured the continuity of *silat* knowledge, but it helped to secure the defence of the place with the emergence of many trained youths. This strategy enabled Terengganu to maintain the peace and wellbeing of the general public.

Similarly, in the novel, diplomacy is used to ensure that the exiles—Abdul Rahman, Ahmad and Ishak—are safely brought to Siam. In fact, with the help of Bawah Kaus, they are declared dead, having been shot in Siam (Ali, 2007:184). The declaration of their “deaths” ends the British hunt for them. The British then spread this news via newspapers as a sign of victory in crippling another local uprising in Malaya. It is also to show British strength and capability in keeping the peace in Pahang as well as a form of warning to would-be rebels that they would suffer the same fate.

The character of Bawah Kaus was included by the author to highlight the element of friendship and cooperation among Malay freedom fighters. The author has presented the Malay heroes as great warriors who are also well-mannered and have a strong spirit of comradeship. The following section will discuss British trickery in controlling the minds of the Malays through the character of Zaki Hamidon.

ZAKI HAMIDON: THE ANGLICIZED MALAY

The character of Zaki Hamidon is the son of Abdul Rahman and his wife, Seri Banum, whom he married in Siam. Zaki Hamidon, whose Siamese name is Prasan Jongkolban, received his early education in English at the Vajirabudh College, Bangkok. He then continued his education in England before returning to Malaya as “an officer who drafted laws and ruled the country after Independence” (Ali, 2007:8).

Zaki Hamidon can be classified as a victim of British vengeance for his father’s opposition to the colonizers. There is a Malay saying that goes, “If

you cannot defeat your enemy, try to defeat the family members”. Through the character of Zaki Hamidon, the British continue their aggression, only this time without any obstacle and opposition from the Malays because Zaki Hamidon himself is the new Malay who has been educated and shaped in the British mould.

“Barangkali benar, Klipod sudah menang. Zaki Hamidon sudah jadi Inggeris, benar-benar Inggeris, dan oleh itu dia sudah tidak punya sedikit pun darah menentang seperti ayahnya dalam tubuhnya.” (Ali, 2007:493)

[“Perhaps it’s true, Klipod has won. Zaki Hamidon has become Anglicised, truly British and as a result he does not have an ounce of rebellious spirit in him unlike his father.”]

In the conversation between Abdul Rahman and Seri Banum concerning their son, Zaki Hamidon, Seri Banum expresses her sadness in placing their son in British hands. The child whom she carried for nine months and ten days has transformed completely into someone who has fully embraced the British way of thinking and way of life. Zaki Hamidon’s opinion about his race is no longer seen through a true Malay’s eyes, but through the British point of view. This makes him a creation of the British as a way for them to prolong the legacy of their rule. He agrees with the British view that the Malays can only progress with British assistance and he also feels that the British are good friends. The feelings resulting from this situation is described in the following citation:

“Mereka orang Kristian. Dan lebih daripada itu, Inggeris itu musuh kami. Bagaimana anak kami mesti belajar dengan musuh kami? Apakah anak aku itu akan dididik untuk menjadi orang lain, bukan macam kami? Anak itu akan dididik untuk menentang kami? Barangkali aku menjadi orang yang sangat berdosa kerana melahirkan anak itu. Kalau begitu, besar sungguh dosa aku. Anak aku itu sudah jadi anak itik yang beribukan ayam.” (Ali, 2007:328)

[“They are Christians. And more than that, the British are our enemies. Why should our son study with our enemies? Will our son be taught to oppose us? Perhaps I am most sinful for giving birth to this son. If so, my sin is great. My son has become a duckling with a hen as its mother.”]

The above citation reveals Abdul Rahman's anxiety about his children who have been left behind in his wife's care, especially the child who was left in Siam. In addition, this child from a very young age has been left in the care of the British for his education. The education received by Zaki Hamidon shows the success of the British in transforming the children of Malay nationalists to become British informers. Zaki Hamidon views Abdul Rahman, Ahmad and Ishak as rebels and traitors. Thus, Abdul Rahman not only has to fight the British, but also his own flesh and blood.

Zaki Hamidon has been trained by the British and has received a comprehensive British education. To clarify Zaki Hamidon's way of thinking, the writer shows it through his character as an officer in the British government that ruled Malaya.

"Saya percaya, dia telah dilatih untuk memerintah, menjadi seorang pegawai yang seluruh jiwa raganya berjiwa Inggeris, jiwa yang amat berlawanan dengan jiwa manusia yang melahirkannya, pahlawan Pahang yang terbilang itu. Sekarang lihatlah bagaimana berjaya Inggeris membentuk jiwa seorang pejuang menjadi seorang tali barutnya yang amat berlawanan sekali dengan jiwa ayahnya. Tidakkah sedikit pun abang merasakan apa yang sedang saya rasakan ini?..." (Ali, 2007:431)

[“I believe, he has been trained to govern, and become an officer whose body and soul is British, a soul that is opposite of the soul of the person who gave life to him, a great Pahang fighter. Now look at how successful the British have been in shaping the soul of a fighter to become an informer which is totally opposite to his father's soul. Don't you feel a little bit of what I feel?"]

The British provided the type of education that had its own secret agenda and was among the methods used to ensure their colonial dominance over the native inhabitants. The Malays were taught and trained to view their own race from the British perspective, which enabled the British colonization of Malaya to endure for a long time.

With this “brainwashing” of a native inhabitant who is now instilled with new values and way of thinking, Zaki Hamidon is praised as the “New Malay” who is modern, English educated and has influence in the British administration. He does not view the British as the enemy and, in fact, praises them as a “teacher” and “friend” of the Malays. His soul is no

longer the Malay soul, even though his physical reality is that of a Malay. This planned action by the British can be seen as an effort to produce a generation that viewed the British as an aid to modernization and progress. The character of Zaki Hamidon can also be termed as the New Malay who has lost his identity and fighting spirit.

The education received by Zaki Hamidon can also be seen as a subtle weapon of the British against the Malays. Looking back before the British colonization of Malaya, the Malay society's education was based on Islam through the *pondok* system, and many youths succeeded in advancing their education in universities in the Middle East, such as Al-Azhar and others. When the British arrived, they viewed this phenomenon as something that needed to be curbed so that the Islamic religion could be controlled. Their act of introducing a secular and vernacular education system in Malaya caused the Islamic education to be viewed as outdated and old-fashioned. This education system was sidelined by the colonials (Saadon et al., 2016:83). Society was encouraged to send their children to either Malay- or English-medium schools. Slowly but eventually, the religious schools became less popular. Those who completed their studies from religious schools or *pondok* did not have the opportunity to get jobs in the colonial British government or British-owned companies (Saadon et al., 2016:88) and were only qualified to be called *ustaz* or *imam*, occupations that should be recognized as worthy because of the high level of religious knowledge that had to be acquired.

The Malay College Kuala Kangsar was set up by the British to provide education for the elite Malays at that time. This college was populated by the children of rulers or dignitaries from all the states in Malaya, whereas Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) was set up in Tanjong Malim as an institution to train the children of farmers, fishermen and villagers to become teachers. These two colleges were fully owned and controlled by the British. Therefore, the knowledge that was provided leaned towards British culture and way of thinking, producing a mixture of thoughts and values according to the colonials' wishes. The British had no desire to advance the Malay youths through education. Instead, the education they received was aimed to produce assistants in the British administration in Malaya.

Zaki Hamidon is an example of an English "creation". Not only were they his teachers, but he is also regarded as a British informer. Zaki Hamidon is a symbol of the Malay-British who was given the opportunity

to govern Malaya. This is subtly referred to in Abdul Rahman's reflection as follows:

Kami bertiga diam, barangkali Adik Mat mendidih hatinya. Aku mula teringat kepada anak aku yang sedang di dalam kandungan Seri Banum, juga anak-anak yang aku tinggalkan di Pahang. Anak-anak Adik Mat dan Adik Yak juga. Dan, seluruh orang Melayu yang dijajah itu, semuanya akan diajar Inggeris, maka akan menjadi Inggerislah seluruh pemikiran dan perbuatan mereka. Yang dijajah oleh Siam pula, akan jadi Siamlah mereka. Siam orang putih. Ya Tuhan! (Ali, 2007:96)

[The three of us kept silent. Adik Mat was boiling with rage. I began to reflect on the fate of my child who was still in Seri Banum's womb, and the other children whom I had left behind in Pahang. Adik Mat's children too. And Adik Ya. And all the Malays who were colonized, all will be taught English, they will become English too in their thinking and actions. Those under Siam will become like Siamese. Siamese English. Oh God!]

This planned move can be interpreted as the English way of taking vengeance on the rebellion against them, which was launched in Pahang. Hence, Zaki Hamidon becomes the bridge through which they could channel their resentment and anger towards Abdul Rahman, or Bahaman, as a way of "poisoning the Malay race and ultimately make him an enemy of his own father's cause" (Ali, 2007:15). For that, Zaki Hamidon is given the best treatment by the British as a tool to avenge the British failure to punish Bahaman.

Mengapa Zaki Hamidon disayangi Inggeris sebegitu rupa? Mengapa Siam sayangkan Zaki Hamidon begitu rupa? Mengapa Zaki Hamidon diambil belajar di Bangkok? Mengapa pula dia dihantar ke England? Mereka sebenarnya mahu memisahkan anak itu daripada ibunya, daripada datuknya, anak itu digunakan untuk menyeksa ibunya kerana dosa ayahnya. (Ali, 2007:430)

[Why was Zaki Hamidon loved by the British to such an extent? Why was Zaki Hamidon brought to Bangkok to study? Why was he sent to England? Actually they wanted to separate the son from his mother, his grandfather, he was used to make the mother suffer for the sin of his father.]

The above citation shows that Zaki Hamidon is a symbol of a victim of the colonials' vengeance towards his father. Abdul Rahman, or Bahaman, is elevated as a Malay hero who is willing to oppose the colonials until his last breath. On the other hand, Zaki Hamidon is the pro-colonial offspring of an anti-British fighter. This shows the contradiction between the two characters. This relationship is seen as paradoxical. Before, the British were regarded as the oppressors and enemy of the Malays, but now British power and politics have provoked enmity between flesh and blood. In fact, when viewing it in a bigger context, the character of Zaki Hamidon can be said to represent the class of Malays who received British education during colonial rule. The education they received left a huge impact on the life of the traditional Malay society in their way of life or thinking. The British deliberately produced a generation that regarded them as friends and not oppressors.

However, the evil intention of the British to stay in power in Malaya is hindered by the death of Zaki Hamidon. Their plan was to appoint Zaki Hamidon to an important post in Malaya, that is, Chief Secretary to the government. However, their objective is not achieved due to his death. This failure indirectly saves Malaya from being governed by a native Malay whose thinking was that of an Englishman.

Through the character of Zaki Hamidon, the author combines historical reality with fiction. His character typifies the informers among the Malays who were influenced by British propaganda. The sacrifice and the sorrow of parents are highlighted through this character. New Historicism gives room for the author to dramatize Malayan history, which not only comprises great Malay heroes, but also the characters who became informers and victims of British propaganda. Zaki Hamidon's character enables the author to convey the thinking relating to the Malay society during the colonial regime era, which not only included great warriors but, in reality, also included groups of Malays who sided with the colonizers.

CONCLUSION

The novel *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan* demonstrates a literary genre that moves from historical facts to fiction. This frees the author to express his thoughts and, at the same time, bring forth a new interpretation on past events in today's context. *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan* not

only narrates past events, but also puts forward matters that are probably not found in official historical records. This, in fact, aligns with the spirit of New Historicism, that is, history should be understood from the perspective of the marginalized society that was previously not given a voice. The historical reconstruction through creative works becomes the vehicle that can restore the dignity and pride of a nation or at least raise awareness about the historical perspective that was previously biased because the truth of historical facts should be challenged.

The episode on the rise of the Pahang heroes, as written in *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan*, is not only a matter of “storytelling”. In fact, by approaching this novel through the perspective of New Historicism, it can enable the public to better understand events in history in greater depth. Based on the characters presented, the spirit of these past figures can be understood. *Antara Dendam dengan Perjuangan* not only describes past historical events, but it also brings to light the voices that were once silenced. In relation to this, approaching the novel from the perspective of New Historicism can demonstrate that literature and history have a strong connection and complement each other. Past events should be looked at again to afford history a more contemporary meaning and interpretation.

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