

## Commoning resistance: Embodying literature as multitude's collective memories in Aksi Kamisan

*Melumbungkan resistensi: Mewujudkan sastra sebagai memori kolektif khalayak dalam Aksi Kamisan*

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### Abstract

This article examines *Aksi Kamisan* (Thursday Action) in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, as a contemporary practice of resistance against state-enforced historical amnesia in Indonesia. It addresses the question of how literary traditions of dissent are transmitted and transformed into resources for collective political action. The central thesis is that Indonesia's Sastra Perlawan (Literature of Resistance) functions as a *lumbung makna*, a metaphorical "commons of meaning," that is actively stewarded, or "commoned," by social movements. Through an ethnographic case study, this research analyzes the mechanisms by which the literary "archive" is translated into an embodied "repertoire" of political protest. Drawing on an integrated theoretical framework that includes Foucault's "regime of truth," Ostrom's work on the commons, Taylor's concept of the repertoire, and Hardt and Negri's theory of the multitude, the study finds that the silent weekly vigil is a performative act of counter-discourse. This act not only challenges the state's monopoly on historical narratives but also demonstrates how a shared cultural inheritance of resistance is collectively sustained and reactivated. The article concludes that *Aksi Kamisan* offers a compelling model for understanding the contemporary political efficacy of literature, where cultural memory becomes a vital, living resource for grassroots movements demanding justice and accountability.

### Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji *Aksi Kamisan* di Samarinda, Kalimantan Timur, sebagai praktik perlawanan kontemporer terhadap amnesia historis yang dipaksakan oleh negara di Indonesia. Artikel ini menjawab pertanyaan tentang bagaimana tradisi sastra perlawanan ditransmisikan dan diubah menjadi sumber daya untuk aksi politik kolektif. Tesis utamanya adalah bahwa Sastra Perlawan Indonesia berfungsi sebagai lumbung makna, sebuah "lumbung makna" metaforis, yang secara aktif dikelola, atau "dilumbungkan," oleh gerakan sosial. Melalui studi kasus etnografi, penelitian ini menganalisis mekanisme di mana "arsip" sastra diterjemahkan menjadi "repertoar" perwujudan protes politik. Dengan menggunakan kerangka teoritis terpadu yang mencakup "rezim kebenaran" Foucault, karya Ostrom tentang lumbung (*commons*), konsep repertoire Taylor, dan teori *multitude* Hardt dan Negri, studi ini menemukan bahwa aksi diam mingguan tersebut merupakan tindakan kontra-wacana yang performatif. Tindakan ini tidak hanya menantang monopoli negara atas narasi sejarah tetapi juga menunjukkan bagaimana warisan budaya perlawanan bersama dipertahankan dan diaktifkan kembali secara kolektif. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa *Aksi Kamisan* menawarkan model yang menarik untuk memahami keberdayaan politik sastra kontemporer, di mana ingatan budaya menjadi sumber daya yang vital dan hidup bagi gerakan akar rumput yang menuntut keadilan dan akuntabilitas.

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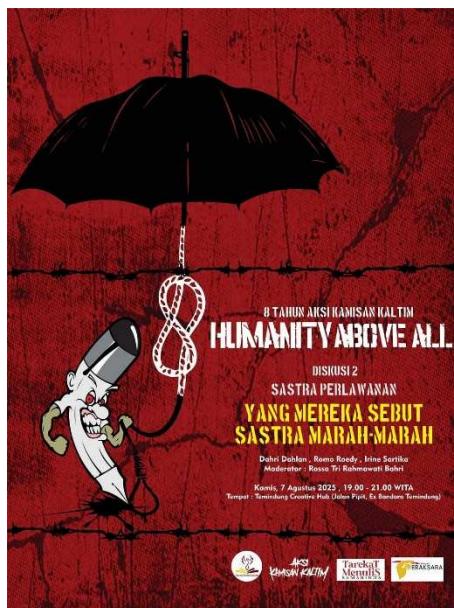
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## A. Introduction

Each week in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, a small group engages in a quiet but persistent ritual of political contestation. As participants in *Aksi Kamisan* (Thursday Action), they stand in silent vigil, clad in black, holding portraits of victims of state violence. This act constitutes a direct challenge to the official silence surrounding Indonesia's history of human rights abuses, participating in what Heryanto (2018) describes as "a protracted battle over what the nation is allowed, or willing, or able to forget and remember from its past." Such acts of remembrance are not merely commemorative. In a political climate where historical narratives have been systematically manipulated, they are also interventions. This, in turn, raises a fundamental question: what narrative resources sustain such contemporary movements of counter-memory in resisting a powerful state apparatus of forgetting?

The context for this resistance is the enduring legacy of the New Order regime (1966–1998), which institutionalized a culture of impunity and historical amnesia. The regime's foundational violence, the anti-communist purges of 1965–66, was systematically erased from public discourse and replaced with a singular, state-sanctioned narrative that justified mass murder (Heryanto, 2005). This project of historical engineering, which McGregor (2007) terms the creation of "history in uniform," was designed to legitimize authoritarian rule and suppress alternative accounts. Although the *Reformasi* era ushered in a period of relative openness, the deep structures of state-enforced forgetting persist, leaving unresolved human rights cases and a fragmented public memory. *Aksi Kamisan* operates directly within this contested space, resisting the state's monopoly on historical truth, while also coining the concept of *perlawanahan*, or resistance, that takes a subject acting against an opposing force beyond a simple binary of protagonist and antagonist, aiming for alternative ways of being recognized, noticed, and directed (Lilja, 2022; Wulia, 2023).



**Figure 1. Flyer for dialogue on literature of resistance, which they call angry literature, at the 8th anniversary of the East Kalimantan *Aksi Kamisan* (Aksi Kamisan Kaltim, 2025a)**

For decades, Indonesia's tradition of *Sastran Perlawanahan* (Literature of Resistance) has functioned as a crucial site for articulating this subjugated knowledge. *Sastran Perlawanahan* is seen not only as a genre of protest but is also understood as a vital cultural practice (Rahman & Kholid,

2025). It is a mode of speaking back, of recouping narrative, and of cultivating an ethic of defiance against forces that seek to silence, marginalize, and erase (Pradhan, 2025). Scholars have extensively documented its oppositional force in various forms, including the use of magical realism to indirectly critique the 1965 politicide (Lye, 2018), the courageous documentation of authoritarian oppression in the poetry of Wiji Thukul (Miller et al., 2023), and the portrayal of student resistance in novels like Leila S. Chudori's *Laut Bercerita* (Arabella, Dzarna, & Citraningrum, 2024). In the post-*Reformasi* era, this tradition has continued, with critiquing societal silence (Ferdinal, 2021) and empowering communities to confront environmental injustice (Habsari, 2023). While this body of scholarship affirms the critical social function of these literary works, its analytical focus often remains on the text as an artifact or an expression of individual authorial courage. Consequently, a gap exists in understanding the mechanisms through which this literary tradition is transmitted and transformed into a resource for collective political action in the present day.

This article addresses this gap by proposing a new way for understanding literature's contemporary political efficacy. The central thesis is that *Sastra Perlawanahan* functions as a *lumbung makna*, a metaphorical "common of meaning" that is actively stewarded by social movements. This concept is derived from the Indonesian agrarian tradition of the *lumbung*, a communal rice barn where the harvest is stored and managed collectively for the community's long-term well-being (Budianta, 2019). Here, the shared resource is not grain but an intangible cultural inheritance: collective memory, ethical frameworks, and a vocabulary of defiance. This study analyses the *Aksi Kamisan* in Samarinda as a living practice of "commoning" this resource, which is understood as a process wherein archived narratives of resistance are transformed into an embodied, collective performance of political dissent (Linebaugh, 2008).

To substantiate this argument, this study employs an integrated theoretical framework. First, it utilizes Michel Foucault's (1980) concept of the "regime of truth" to define the object of contestation: the state-sanctioned historical narrative that *Aksi Kamisan* seeks to dismantle. Second, drawing from Elinor Ostrom's work on the commons (2000), the article frames the *lumbung makna* as a cultural commons that is collectively managed. The mechanism of this "commoning" is explained through Diana Taylor's (2003) distinction between the literary "archive" and the protest's embodied "repertoire." Finally, the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000, 2004) is used to situate this local struggle within a global context, arguing that the activists function as a singularity of the "multitude," creating counter-power against the logic of a global "empire" that seeks to erase such histories.

## B. Method

This study employs a qualitative, interdisciplinary methodology rooted in the traditions of cultural studies, sociology, and performance studies (Mahmud & Zaman, 2022). The research is designed as an ethnographic case study centered on the *Aksi Kamisan* in Samarinda, East Kalimantan. This approach was chosen to facilitate an in-depth analysis of how collective memory and literary heritage are embodied and enacted in contemporary political practice. The primary goal is to understand the mechanisms of cultural transmission from text to action, focusing on the lived experiences and meaning-making processes of the activists themselves.

Primary data collection was conducted through interviews. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a selection of key informants, including organizers and regular attendees. The interview process was designed to explore the activists' personal journeys and analytical frameworks by asking what first motivated them to join the action and how they perceived the role of stories in keeping memory alive. To specifically probe the connection to a literary inheritance, participants were asked if any literary works had inspired their resolve and whether they had read authors like Wiji Thukul, WS Rendra, and Pramoedya Ananta Toer, whose work has inspired resistance across Indonesian generations (Anggraini & Falah, 2024; Faruk, 2019;

McQuaid & Pirmasari, 2023). Then we look at the connections they saw between the spirit of those works and the contemporary struggle of *Aksi Kamisan*.

The process of data analysis is inductive and integrative. Interview transcripts were thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns of meaning, narrative frameworks, and cultural references. This empirical data is then placed in dialogue with a textual analysis of key works from the *Sastrawiranata* archive. This synthesis is interpreted through the study's integrated theoretical framework, allowing for a layered reading of how dominant power discourses are challenged (Arnold & McMahon, 2019), how cultural memory is managed and sustained as a self-governed commons (Leitheiser, Trell, & Horlings, 2022), and how such local forms of resistance can be contextualized within networked defiance against globalized power structures (Uyurkulak, 2023).

## C. Results and Discussion

### 1. The architecture of resistance: on regime of truth and *Aksi Kamisan*

Michel Foucault's work delivers a critical lens for recognizing that power is not merely a repressive force exercised from above, but a prolific network that saturates society, creating knowledge, defining truths, and constituting subjects (Bigoni, Maran, & Occhipinti, 2024). Power and knowledge are indissolubly linked in a relationship Foucault termed "power/knowledge" (Foucault, 1980). Within this framework, a "discourse" is more than just language. It is a system of thought that defines what can be said, thought, and known, thereby establishing a regime of truth. *Sastrawiranata*, in this context, is fundamentally a Foucauldian practice: the production of counter-discourse and "subjugated knowledge," the localized, disqualified, or erased truths of those outside the dominant structures of power.

Throughout its modern history, Indonesia has been subject to powerful, state-driven discourses. The Dutch colonial regime propagated a regime of truth rooted in racial hierarchy and European superiority, justifying political domination (Asia, Ridwan, & Galenta, 2025). Following independence, and most acutely during President Suharto's New Order (1966–1998), a new discourse was enforced. This centered on *stabilitas nasional* (national stability) and *pembangunan* (development) (Sari, Marjono, Sumardi, Umamah, & Surya, 2022), legitimizing authoritarian control, suppressing dissent, and demanding obedience in the name of economic progress (Maksum & Bustami, 2014). Any voice that challenged this narrative was branded subversive and silenced through censorship, intimidation, imprisonment, or disappearance.



**Figure 2. The East Kalimantan *Aksi Kamisan* asked, "President, where is Wiji Thukul?" (Aksi Kamisan Kaltim, 2025b)**

It is precisely against this backdrop that the work of Pramoedya Ananta Toer emerges as a monumental act of counter-discourse. Composed largely during his fourteen-year imprisonment without trial on Buru Island (Khosy, 2020), his Buru Quartet was not just a historical novel but a counter-history. By centering an indigenous protagonist, Minke, Pramoedya reclaimed narrative agency for the colonized, undermining both colonial and feudal orders (Thomas, 2014). The New Order's immediate banning of these works (Salam & Zamzuri, 2023) revealed the state's recognition of their destabilizing power: these texts did not simply tell another story but produced an alternative knowledge capable of unsettling official truths (GoGwilt, 2019). W.S. Rendra and Wiji Thukul extended this production of subjugated knowledge through different forms. Rendra's Bengkel Teater mobilized satire and allegory as a public pedagogy of dissent (Adda, 2022; Novianto, Guntur, Faruk, & Simatupang, 2024), while Thukul's direct, populist poetry bore witness to the everyday violence of the state and the dignity of resistance (Rishanjani, Rafl, & Zuriyati, 2019). His forced disappearance in 1998 transformed him into a martyr, a symbol of unyielding counter-discourse (Mahuze & Dewi, 2025). Here, Foucault's insight into the productivity of power becomes evident: repression itself generated the conditions for literary resistance. Censorship, imprisonment, and surveillance paradoxically fueled the creation of new subjectivities: Toer's counter-histories, Rendra's forbidden plays, and Thukul's defiant verses.

The same dynamic underlies the emergence of *Aksi Kamisan* in the post-Reformasi era. The murder of human rights lawyer Munir Said Thalib in 2004 was a pivotal moment that exposed the continuity of impunity in Indonesia's so-called democratic transition (Easton, 2022). His death exemplified how the state's regime of truth persisted, silencing inconvenient truths about violence while framing itself as a champion of reform. In response, victims' families, supported by KontraS and IKOHI, initiated *Kamisan* on 18 January 2007, standing silently in front of the Presidential Palace week after week to demand accountability (Atmojo & Safara, 2021). The protest's form in silence, black clothing, and black umbrellas was itself a counter-discourse. By refusing slogans or loud protest, *Kamisan* undermined the state's framing of dissent as chaos or subversion. Instead, silence became a weapon here, a mourning that indicted the regime, a ritual that re-inscribed erased memories into public space (Andalas, 2017; Ardiani, 2022).

*Aksi Kamisan* thus represents a genealogical extension of *Sastra Perlawan* into embodied, performative practice. Like Toer's novels or Thukul's poetry, it produces subjugated knowledge, rendering visible what official history denies. But unlike the written text alone, *Aksi Kamisan* transforms counter-discourse into collective ritual, a living archive that reactivates the voices of the silenced week after week. Its expansion into more than 60 cities across Indonesia by the 2020s (Perdana, Sitinjak, Wibisono, Fadlilah, & Abdurrahman, 2024) shows how this repertoire has been "commoned," sustained by new generations of activists who refuse to let memory die. *Aksi Kamisan*, in this sense, is both a critique of the state's regime of truth and an architecture of resistance built upon it. It testifies to Foucault's insight that power is not merely repressive but productive: the very silence imposed by the state has become the silence wielded against it.

## 2. From text to action: literary inheritance in *Aksi Kamisan*

*Aksi Kamisan* in Samarinda is not only a protest against impunity but also an enactment of Indonesia's tradition of *Sastra Perlawan*. Following Diana Taylor's (2003) distinction between the "archive" of texts and the "repertoire" of embodied practices, *Aksi Kamisan* can be seen as the moment where the archive of resistance literature circulates into lived action. Literature is not simply read; it is performed and carried into silence, black clothing, and weekly rituals that resist the forgetting imposed by the state.

For many participants, Thukul provides the clearest bridge between text and action. One of the initiators explained that Thukul's poetry has become one with the purpose of *Aksi Kamisan* itself.

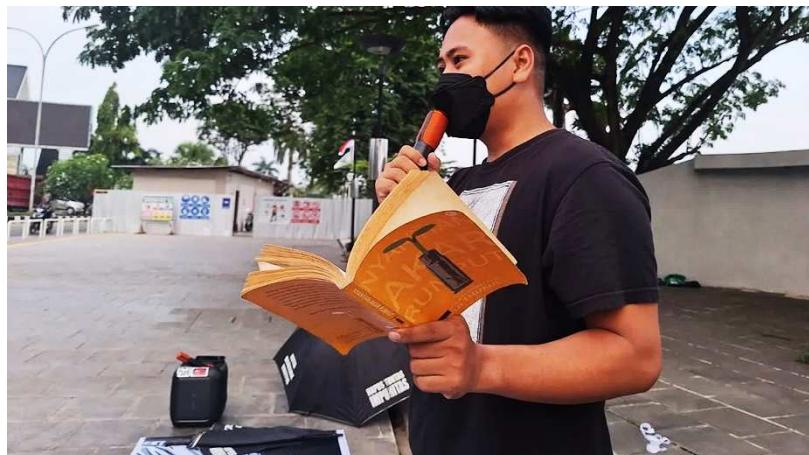
“One of them is Wiji Thukul, especially since Thukul is one of the victims of abduction who never returned. So, his poems are integrated with the purpose for which Kamisan was initiated.” (HH/M/43)

Another recalled how *Bunga dan Tembok* first drew him into the vigil, saying:

“The most memorable specific works were when I read the poem *Bunga dan Tembok* by Thukul. Then, several essays and biographical thoughts by Pramoedya and Rendra’s poem titled *Hai, Ma.*” (KIM/M/26)

These reflections show how poems do not remain words on a page but are incorporated into bodily practices of what Connerton (1989) terms “incorporated memory.” Standing silently each Thursday is thus a way of performing Thukul’s verse, translating textual resistance into embodied resistance.

Thukul’s famous line, “only one word: resist,” was repeatedly invoked in the interviews. One respondent said it “will always be relevant” (KIM/M/26). Another emphasized its pertinence given that “*Indonesia’s current president once commanded the forces accused of abductions*” (KAB/M/48). Such statements demonstrate Judith Butler’s (2015) point that words gain performative power through reiteration. Thukul’s call is not simply remembered but enacted in *Aksi Kamisan*’s silence, where absence itself becomes a political speech act. The vigil transforms mourning into protest, turning poetry into a ritualized indictment of the state.



**Figure 3. *Aksi Kamisan* participant recited Wiji Thukul’s poem (Aksi Kamisan Kaltim, 2025b)**

This dynamic extends beyond Thukul. Several participants highlighted how Toer and Rendra shaped their ethical and political imaginations. A younger respondent described how Rendra’s poetry taught him “what humanity is” (KIM/M/26) while another listed works ranging from “Pramoedya’s *Nyanyian Sunyi Seorang Bisu* to Ayu Utami’s *Saman* and Martin Aleida’s *Jaman Gilak Tak Pernah Menangis*” (KAB/M/48). These diverse references illustrate what Michel de Certeau (1988) called “poaching”: activists selectively draw from the literary archive, reworking it into their own repertoire of dissent. Reading here is inseparable from protesting, and literature becomes a resource that guides political action in the present.

Generational renewal also shapes this inheritance. As one participant reflected, while Thukul’s words remain powerful, “new slogans must be created by today’s youth” (KIM/M/26). Another recalled, “My first encounter with *Bunga dan Tembok* was not in print but through the Indonesian band Efek Rumah Kaca before linking it to *Aksi Kamisan*,” (MAF/M/26). These examples show

how the repertoire is not a mechanical repetition of the archive but a site of creative reappropriation. Taylor (2003) reminds us that repertoires are unstable, dependent on embodied transmission, and therefore always open to reinvention. The younger generation's insistence on crafting new idioms of dissent affirms Foucault's (1980) insight that power is productive, since it generates new subjectivities even as it represses. *Aksi Kamisan* thus becomes a space where memory is preserved and reimagined simultaneously.

*Aksi Kamisan* also generates new texts, completing the cycle between archive and repertoire. Several respondents noted that poems and speeches performed at the vigil have been collected into published volumes. This practice exemplifies Taylor's (2003) feedback loop: embodied acts create new archives, which then sustain future repertoires. The vigil is not only a site of memory but also of production, where silence begets words, and words, in turn, nourish silence.

The political stakes of this process are high. One respondent described stories and literature as "vital for preventing repetition, honoring victims, and building awareness of human rights and democracy" (KAB/M/48). This resonates with Connerton's (1989) claim that commemorative practices actively construct and transmit social memory. In Samarinda, the weekly vigil functions as just such a commemorative practice, but one infused with resistance. KAB (M/48) stated, "I was involved in initiating the East Kalimantan Thursday Action. It stemmed from a desire to preserve our memory of human rights violations that remain unresolved to this day." In this instance, Butler (2015) further reminds us that assemblies themselves are performative: by gathering in public, bodies lay claim to space, visibility, and recognition. *Aksi Kamisan*'s form of gathering is being silent, disciplined, and repetitive, which recasts literature into ritual and remembrance into resistance. In other words, *Aksi Kamisan* demonstrates that *Sastra Perlawan* continues to be written not only in texts but in the bodies and voices of those who refuse to let memory die.

### 3. Commoning memory, commoning the meaning of resistance in *Aksi Kamisan*

The endurance of *Sastra Perlawan*, from the banned books of Pramoedya to the chants, songs, and even cultural symbols taken up by younger generations, cannot be understood as a series of isolated acts of defiance. Its resilience lies in the way it is sustained collectively as an ongoing cultural practice. A useful lens here is the Indonesian concept of *lumbung* and the theoretical framework of the commons. A *lumbung* is not merely a rice barn but a system of collective stewardship: surplus harvests are stored for the community's long-term well-being, maintained through *gotong royong* (mutual aid) and shared responsibility (Budianta, 2022). This provides a grounded metaphor for understanding how memories, stories, and vocabularies of dissent are sustained across generations of activists.

The theory of the commons emerged in direct opposition to Garrett Hardin's influential 1968 essay, "The Tragedy of the Commons," which argued that any shared resource, left unregulated, would inevitably be depleted by self-interested individuals (Agrawal, Erbaugh, & Pradhan, 2023). This "tragedy," however, was based on the flawed premise of an open-access free-for-all (Rose, 2020). The groundbreaking work of Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom demonstrated that communities across the world have for centuries successfully managed "common-pool resources" like forests, fisheries, and water systems without privatization or state coercion (Hofmeyr, 2025). They achieve this through complex, self-devised systems of rules, social trust, and monitoring. Building on this, scholars like Johannes Eules, Peter Linebaugh, and David Bollier have emphasized that the commons is not just a resource (a noun) but an active social process (a verb): "commoning" (Bollier, 2024). Commoning is the set of practices that consist of negotiating, sharing, caring, and collaborating through which a community safeguards its shared resources (Euler, 2018).

This article extends this framework to the realm of cultural politics by arguing that *Sastra Perlawan* constitutes a *lumbung makna*, a common of meaning. The shared resource here is not rice or water but intangible cultural wealth: the collective memory of struggles, the counter-histories that resist official narratives, the ethical vocabularies of justice and solidarity, and the courage to

oppose power. These resources are sustained not by isolated authors but by communities who continually reinterpret and circulate them. Evermore, “There are often book discussions, and Kaltim’s Thursday Action has even published two books containing poems and speeches that were presented by the previous Kamisans,” (KAB/M/48). This continues Toer’s act of writing the *Buru Quartet* in conditions of imprisonment that exemplifies that what began as an individual creative act became a shared resource for sustaining the spirit of his fellow prisoners and, later, a wellspring for generations of readers. When Rendra’s *Bengkel Teater* lived and worked communally to produce politically charged performances (Yusuf, 2024), they too were practicing commoning. Likewise, Thukul’s simple, powerful poems, short, repeatable, and designed to be chanted or painted on walls, were crafted as common property for the movements he belonged to.

Yet commons are always threatened by enclosure, the act of privatizing, repressing, or destroying shared resources for the benefit of the state or capital. In this sense, the Indonesian state’s treatment of *Sastrra Perlawan* provides textbook examples of enclosure. The banning and burning of Toer’s books were attempts to foreclose his counter-history and seize control of the national narrative. The censorship of Rendra’s plays, the surveillance of his theatre, and the enforced disappearance of Thukul all sought to dismantle this *lumbung makna*. These acts of silencing were not just attacks on individuals but on a shared reservoir of meaning, aimed at breaking the continuity of collective resistance.

Viewing *Sastrra Perlawan* through this lens reveals the source of its remarkable durability. A system of resistance based solely on individual heroic acts is fragile, for a single author can be silenced, a single protest crushed. However, when literature and its meanings are treated as a commons, it strengthens grassroots political struggle (Cota & Cuenca, 2020). The power of Toer’s work today lies not just in the physical books, but in the community of readers, scholars, and activists who continue to read, discuss, and “common” his ideas, keeping them alive despite decades of suppression. The legacy of Thukul is not confined to his poetry collections. It is also actively ‘commoned’ every week by the *Aksi Kamisan*. *Aksi Kamisan* collects individuals who stand in silent vigil outside the presidential palace and public spaces, holding placards with his image and words, stewarding his memory, and demanding justice for his and other disappearances (Hadi, Suyitno, Winarni, & Wardani, 2020).



**Figure 4. Commemoration of the 8th anniversary of the East Kalimantan *Aksi Kamisan* #399 (Aksi Kamisan Kaltim, 2025c)**

This perspective reframes *Aksi Kamisan* as more than a weekly protest. It is a living common where narratives of resistance are stewarded and reactivated. The vigil gathers individuals into a shared practice of memory: standing together in silence, invoking the words of poets and victims, and inscribing erased histories into public space. In this sense, *Aksi Kamisan* is not only a critique

of state silence but also a cultural ecosystem that regenerates its own values and participants. Its endurance demonstrates that resistance persists not as disconnected strikes against the state but as a *lumbung makna*: a common of meaning that continually reproduces solidarity and defiance across generations.

#### 4. The Multitude of *Aksi Kamisan*

*Aksi Kamisan* emerges in a political landscape increasingly shaped by diffuse and transnational logics. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in *Empire*, argue that the age of imperialism defined by territorial expansion has been succeeded by a new global order they call “Empire,” a decentered and deterritorialized apparatus of sovereignty that operates through international institutions, multinational corporations, and cultural circuits (Hardt & Negri, 2000). In this framework, the state itself becomes one node within a larger network of domination, tasked with managing flows of capital, disciplining dissent, and preserving stability in line with global imperatives rather than national autonomy (Hardt & Negri, 2004).

Within this global order, the corresponding force of resistance is not “the people” imagined as a homogeneous national subject, but what Hardt and Negri term the “Multitude”: a heterogeneous collectivity of singularities capable of collaborating without erasing difference (Hardt & Negri, 2004). Resistance today is less about seizing the state than about producing alternative forms of community and meaning that disrupt the logic of empire. *Aksi Kamisan* exemplifies this shift. It is not a mass rally with a single leader or centralized command but a dispersed practice of solidarity, repeated weekly in over sixty cities (Perdana et al., 2024), where silence, black umbrellas, and portraits of the disappeared form a shared repertoire of dissent (Andalas, 2017).

*Aksi Kamisan*’s structure mirrors the logic of the Multitude. Families of victims, students, artists, and ordinary citizens gather not as “the people” in a nationalist sense but as singular presences bound together through memory and shared indignation. Their silence destabilizes the state’s tendency to equate protest with disorder, reframing dissent as mourning, remembrance, and ethical refusal. In Hardt and Negri’s terms, *Aksi Kamisan* does not simply confront the Indonesian state but enacts a transnational critique of the logics of impunity and erasure that sustain Empire itself.

The testimonies from Samarinda illustrate how this multiplicity functions in practice. One activist explained that they were drawn into the protest after witnessing someone read a poem in public, noting that “stories and poems are what keep *Aksi Kamisan* breathing” (HH/M/43). Another described how the poetry of Thukul, particularly *Bunga dan Tembok* and *Puisi Menolak Patuh*, had become part of the very DNA of *Kamisan*: “It is not only that Thukul is gone, but that his words are here with us, every week” (HH/M/43). These voices reveal how cultural inheritance becomes a shared common of meaning, but in Hardt and Negri’s vocabulary, they also illustrate how singular subjectivities converge into a collective practice that exceeds national boundaries.

The endurance of *Aksi Kamisan* unsettles the state’s strategies of control. As observed in Jakarta and Samarinda, officials have oscillated between dismissing the protest as marginal and labeling it subversive, revealing the difficulty of confronting a form of resistance that is neither conventionally violent nor institutionally organized. Like Fika (2025) and Nugroho (2025) suggest in related discussions of symbolic protest, states often struggle to contain movements that rely on cultural symbols, affect, and decentralized networks rather than traditional organizational hierarchies. This paradox demonstrates how the Multitude operates: its strength lies precisely in its refusal to play by the rules of state-centric confrontation.

Importantly, *Aksi Kamisan* does not merely preserve memory but generates a new political subjectivity through repetition and ritual. A Samarinda participant recalled that every Thursday, “the voices of the disappeared return, even if only in silence,” (MAF/M/26) framing the protest as an embodied counter-discourse that reactivates the absent. This corresponds to what Hardt and Negri describe as the productive capacity of the Multitude: the ability to create new social relations, new forms of being-together, and new forms of resistance beyond the state (Hardt & Negri, 2004).

In this way, *Aksi Kamisan* functions simultaneously as archive and repertoire, a living memory practice that challenges not just the Indonesian regime of truth but the broader logics of empire that seek to normalize forgetting.

At the same time, *Aksi Kamisan* demonstrates that the Multitude's resistance is materially grounded in ongoing struggles over justice and resources. By yoking the memory of past state violence to current patterns of impunity and extractive governance, activists make visible how local grievances, especially in coal and plantation areas that affected East Kalimantan, are embedded in wider political-economic regimes (McGregor & Setiawan, 2019). This stitching-together of temporal and spatial scales reframes remembrance as a present-tense intervention: the silence of Thursday vigils indicts not only historical atrocity but also the persistence of illiberal and developmentalist logics that structure contemporary contestation (Diprose, McRae, & Hadiz, 2019).

This local dimension in East Kalimantan reveals a crucial evolution of *Sastra Perlawan*, broadening its ethical concern from a primarily human-centered struggle to a "planetism," a planetary ethics recognizing the deep interconnection between social justice and ecological sustainability (Losch, 2019). This turn is clarified through ecocriticism, which critiques the anthropocentric assumption that humans are separate from nature (James, 2022), and ecolinguistics, which investigates how language can either perpetuate destructive environmental relationships or foster harmonious ones (Stibbe, 2021).



**Figure 5. The East Kalimantan *Aksi Kamisan* commemorating National Children's Day questioned 54 coal mining void victims (Aksi Kamisan Kaltim, 2025d)**

This ecological consciousness has deep roots in the literary archive. Rendra's 1975 play, *Kisah Perjuangan Suku Naga*, dramatized an indigenous community's resistance against a mining project, explicitly linking human oppression with the capitalist exploitation of their environment (Riyanto, 2025). An ecocritical reading of Thukul's poetry similarly reveals that the grassroots he champions are the first victims of environmental degradation (Purnomo, 2024). When he writes of displaced farmers or poisoned rivers, he documents a form of social-ecological suffering, making his poetry an ecopolitical archive of the human cost of environmental violence.

In this sense, *Aksi Kamisan* is not simply a continuation of *Sastra Perlawan* but its transposition into a living repertoire sustained by connective practices. "After attending the 500<sup>th</sup> *Kamisan* Jakarta (Ten Years), I felt that the elderly people involved in the action needed solidarity, and they should not be left to fight alone." (KAB/M/48). Weekly, low-threshold actions circulate through city networks and digital channels, enabling durable participation while translating dispersed discontent into publicly legible dissent (Diprose et al., 2019). The repertoire's power lies less in episodic spectacle than in patterned repetition: a slow but resilient counter-conduct that

accumulates moral authority and archives alternative truths in plain sight, thereby unsettling official forgetting while aligning with broader regional currents of rights-claiming and memory activism (McGregor & Setiawan, 2019).

#### D. Conclusion

This article has argued that *Aksi Kamisan* in Samarinda represents a vital contemporary expression of Indonesia's long tradition of *Sastran Perlawanan*, or Literature of Resistance. By conceptualizing this literary heritage as a *lumbung makna*, a metaphorical common of meaning, this study has shown how activists collectively steward and reactivate a shared resource of memory, ethical frameworks, and defiance. The analysis demonstrated that *Aksi Kamisan* is a practice of "commoning" where the literary "archive," containing the works of figures like Wiji Thukul and Pramoedya Ananta Toer, is transformed into an embodied "repertoire" of political protest. This weekly, silent vigil serves as a powerful counter-discourse, directly challenging the state's official "regime of truth" and its systematic project of historical forgetting.

Ultimately, this case study reveals that the endurance of resistance is not solely dependent on individual acts of courage but on the collective practices that sustain a shared cultural inheritance. The local struggle in Samarinda, when viewed through a global lens, exemplifies how a singularity of the "multitude" can generate counter-power against the logic of an "empire" that seeks to erase such histories. The continuous transformation of text into embodied action, from poetic verses to silent protest, illustrates the profound political efficacy of cultural memory. *Aksi Kamisan* confirms that the meaning of resistance is a living entity, constantly renewed and re-enacted by those who refuse to allow the past to be silenced.

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