



# Resistance narratives in *Laut Bercerita* and *The Long Walk* through the lens of hidden transcript theory

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates how hidden transcripts function as covert resistance in *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori and *The Long Walk* by Stephen King. The research specifically aims to (1) identify and classify symbolic resistance (indirect signs of refusal), discursive resistance (subtle counter-narratives), and gestures of resistance (defiance body signal), and (2) compare how these forms emerge under Indonesia's New Order and King's dystopian authoritarian system. Using James C. Scott's resistance theory, the study applies qualitative close reading, thematic coding of resistance expressions, and cross-textual comparison. Findings show that both novels construct hidden transcripts to critique state domination through layered symbolic and narrative strategies. However, *Laut Bercerita* foregrounds communal memory and coded mourning rituals, while *The Long Walk* emphasizes individual bodily endurance as muted protest. These variations indicate that covert resistance is shaped by political repression and cultural frames of suffering. The study contributes to resistance literature by demonstrating how fictional texts extend Scott's theory and highlighting the value of comparative literature in revealing oppressive structures. The novelty of this study lies in its cross-regime comparative approach, which integrates Scott's resistance framework with hidden transcript analysis to uncover previously unexamined patterns of covert dissent in two politically and culturally distinct novels.



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## 1. Introduction

The issues of domination, resistance, and opposition are fundamental themes that have long been a focus in humanities studies. Previous analyses have often explored the complex nature of resistance by marginalized groups against dominant powers, particularly in relation to social life during the New Order era [1]; [2]; [3]. These [1]; [2]; [3] studies have not fully addressed how such covert strategies are constructed and negotiated within literary texts from different political and cultural settings, just based on socio-history in Indonesia. This gap is important, as literature not only mirrors social inequality but also critiques it through symbolic structures, narrative perspectives, and representational choices that reveal suppressed voices [4]. In the context described above, resistance against an authoritarian regime, a common backdrop in literature, can indeed manifest in various forms. Overt actions in public spaces, often termed open resistance or the public transcript, along with covert actions in the private sphere (the hidden transcript), are the three key concepts of resistance according to Scott [5]. Scott states that the forms of resistance by subordinate groups that occur beyond the reach of the powerful represent a strengthening of agency. This is characterized by the presence of oppositional discourse, symbols of resistance, and gestures of dissent, albeit within a limited sphere. In a repressive context, this form of resistance often becomes a crucial foundation for maintaining the stability and security of the subordinate group [6]. From this perspective, resistance does not always take the form of direct demonstrations or open rebellion. It can also be present in

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the form of private discourse, symbols, and gestural practices that contain a rejection of domination or power [7].

In essence, open resistance and hidden resistance are two interrelated phenomena. Open resistance cannot exist in isolation; it is necessarily preceded by hidden resistance [8]; [9]. Therefore, the hidden transcript holds relevance as an active social practice that actively shapes and paves the way for open resistance. *The Trisakti University shootings* in Indonesia served as a turning point that transformed hidden resistance into a wave of national protest [10]; [11]. This process illustrates that hidden transcripts are crucial as an initial foundation, which can then evolve into public pressure against the authorities. A similar process occurred with the *Black Lives Matter* (BLM) movement in the United States [12]; [13]. From the Trayvon Martin case to the death of George Floyd, resistance that was initially hidden within digital spaces and communities transformed into massive public protests [14]; [15]; [16]. In literature, such dynamics are also represented through characters, events, and symbols that capture the struggle of individuals against oppressive power. Indonesian and American literary works have frequently explored the theme of resistance against power, whether in individual or collective forms. Indonesian and American literature, such as *Amber* by Laksmi Pamuntjak, *Larasati* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori, *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *The Long Walk* by Stephen King, and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, depict characters grappling with social, political, and cultural repression and also often portray resistance against oppressive systems. Novels highlight protagonists who defy totalitarian power in ways that are not always direct or confrontational [17]. However, two novels that illustrate the hidden transcript in contrasting yet complementary ways are *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori and *The Long Walk* by Stephen King. *Laut Bercerita* presents the story of student resistance against the *New Order regime* in Indonesia through the perspective of Biru Laut, an activist who experiences kidnapping, torture, and forced disappearance [18]; [19]. On the other hand, *The Long Walk* depicts a dystopian future reality in an authoritarian state that uses a deadly walking competition as a tool of social control. Within this framework, the teenage male participants gradually exhibit forms of internal resistance against the oppressive system [20]; [21]. Despite their differences in cultural setting, genre, and form, both novels represent similar patterns of resistance: the unheard voice, the struggle to maintain identity, and the critique of power through symbolic and psychological expression.

A literary review reveals ten previous studies that have examined works of literature with related themes, but still do not discuss hidden transcript as a whole theory [22]; [23]; [24]; [25]; [26]; [27]; [28]; [29]; [30]; [19]. However, among these, four studies specifically compare literary works from different national backgrounds, and one addresses the issue of domination. Ukwueze's [28] study compares *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Freshwater* using the concept of nomadic consciousness, focusing on the rejection of fixed identities but not explicitly addressing issues of power. Wang [29] analyzes *The Joy Luck Club* and *Typical American*, focusing on Chinese-American diasporic identity and matters of cultural assimilation and hybridity, yet it does not explicitly discuss resistance. Meanwhile, Karim and Hartati [30] examine literacy events in Indonesian and Japanese novels through a Lévi-Straussian structuralist approach, but do not delve into the socio-political aspects. On the other hand, Sahertian *et al.* [19] discuss *Laut Bercerita* within the framework of Gramsci's hegemony and Althusser's state apparatus, focusing on the domination of the New Order regime and the role of intellectuals as challengers of state ideology, but only in a single novel. All four of these studies have yet to specifically address the practice of hidden transcript, which is the central focus of this research. Based on the reviewed literature and existing gaps, this study analyzes how hidden transcripts function as forms of covert resistance in *Laut Bercerita* and *The Long Walk*, two novels situated in different political and cultural contexts. Using James C. Scott's resistance theory within a comparative literary approach, the research examines how hidden transcripts of resistance are articulated in two novels from contrasting regimes, thereby formulating the following research problem: how do literary texts construct covert resistance, and what comparative patterns can be identified across distinct systems of domination?

## 2. Method

This study uses a qualitative library research design. Analysis focuses on interpreting meanings and symbolic representations in two literary texts. The data consist of narrative segments, such as dialogues, gestures, and symbolic descriptions, from *Laut Bercerita* and *The Long Walk* that indicate covert resistance. James C. Scott's concept of the hidden transcript is operationalized into three textual indicators adapted for literary analysis: symbolic resistance expressed through coded objects or motifs, discursive resistance articulated in subtle counter-narratives, and gestural resistance represented through small acts of defiance by the characters. Data were collected through close reading and note-taking, then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's stages [31], data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, which are applied contextually by selecting relevant excerpts, grouping them into the three resistance categories, and interpreting their narrative functions. The comparative dimension is carried out by first analyzing resistance patterns within each novel and then comparing their similarities and differences across political contexts, ensuring that the final interpretation reflects both the theoretical framework and the cross-cultural nature of the texts. Table 1 shows the indicators used in this study.

Table 1. Indicators

Research Fundings	Indicators	Data Code from <i>Laut Bercerita</i>	Data Code from <i>The Long Walk</i>
Symbols	Words, sentences, paragraphs, or dialogues that symbolically represent hidden resistance in both novels	LB-25; LB-31; LB-76; LB-220	TLW-347; TLW-202; TLW-416; TLW-416-2
Discourses	Words, sentences, paragraphs, or dialogues that represent hidden resistance in the form of discourse, such as gossip in both novels.	LB-37; LB-76-2	TLW-21; TLW-388
Gestures	Words, sentences, paragraphs, or dialogues that represent hidden resistance through bodily gestures in both novels.	LB-139	TLW-158
Author Worldview	The author's writing style in representing hidden resistance in both novels.	All data	All data

## 3. Results and Discussion

The hidden transcript serves as the key concept for dissecting the data in the novels *Laut Bercerita* and *The Long Walk*. Data excerpts from both novels illustrate hidden resistance in an implicit manner, thereby allowing the discourse developing behind the scenes to be uncovered. A fundamental difference between the two novels lies in the authors' methods of revealing resistance. Leila S. Chudori represents symbolic resistance through authentic phenomena of the *New Order era* in Indonesia, while Stephen King creates a dystopian allegory based on representations of the *post-World War II era* in the United States. The research findings indicate that both novels represent hidden resistance, characterized by opposition through symbols, discourse, and gestures. According to Scott [5], a symbol is an object or cultural reference that expresses resistance explicitly, while discourse constitutes a narrative or story that contradicts

the official narrative of power. On the other hand, a gesture is a minor action that expresses defiance explicitly. **Table 2** is a classification of the hidden transcripts of the two novels.

**Table 2.** Classification of Hidden Transcript

<b>Hidden Transcript Forms</b>	<b>Laut Bercerita</b>	<b>The Long Walk</b>
Literacy as Resistance (Symbols)	Reading the literary works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer (LB-25)	Writing an essay filled with mockery toward the Major (TLW-347)
Private Spaces as Safe Zones (Symbols)	Hiding books by Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Karl Marx behind the kitchen cabinet (LB-31); Carefully discussing literary works inside the house (LB-76)	Conversations and emotional disclosures functioning as psychological safe spaces (TLW-202); (TLW-416)
Identity Disguise (Symbols)	Biru Laut is adopting the new identity as Mirah Mahardika (LB-220)	Garraty rejects the state's reward system (TLW-416-2)
Counter-Narratives Against State Discourse (Discourses)	Narratives expressing refusal to accept resignation or passivity (LB-37)	Garraty's father, calling the Major a sociopath endorsed by the state (TLW-21)
Humor, Irony, and Satire (Discourses)	Sarcasm used when discussing banned books (LB-76-2)	The term "Whore of Babylon" is a parody of the state's moral values (TLW-388)
Nonverbal Resistance (Gestures)	Night-time maneuvering strategies in Blangguan (LB-139)	McVries's gaze was a silent form of rejection (TLW-158)

### 3.1. Symbols in the Novels Laut Bercerita and The Long Walk

Symbols emerge as the most dominant form of hidden resistance in both novels. Symbols are found in the context of literacy as a symbol of resistance, private spaces as safe havens, and the concealment of identity. In the context of literacy as a symbol of resistance, this means that literacy is portrayed as a form of symbolic resistance carried out covertly. This is reflected in the following quotation from the novel *Laut Bercerita*.

Data 1 (LB-25)

"Yang diam-diam membaca buku Pramoedya bukan hanya karena estetika sastra, tetapi ada suara lain yang mendorongmu!" Kinan memotong kalimatku. (hlm. 25)

Translation

*"Secretly reading Pramoedya's books isn't just about the literary aesthetics; there's another voice urging you on!" Kinan cut me off. (p. 25)*

The quotation above (LB-25) represents a symbol of courage through reading. Reading forbidden literature becomes a symbol of intellectual, subtle defiance against the domination of the *New Order*. Pramoedya is one of the rebel figures in the *New Order*. So, reading one of the books from Pramoedya means that they were not submitted to the government. The act of literacy is no longer understood as a neutral activity, but rather as a politically threatening action. The narrator, Laut, and his friend, Kinan, turn books into an ideological battleground and a space for building collective consciousness without taking to the streets. Literature becomes the most suitable medium of resistance, allowing them to oppose the dominant power without direct confrontation with entities like the police or intelligence officers. Thus, literacy becomes a powerful hidden transcript because it appears ordinary, yet contains a critique of the systemic power [17]. Meanwhile, in *The Long Walk*, the form of literacy is presented through an essay written by the character Abraham, directed against the highest American authority, the Major. This is represented in the following quotation.

Data 2 (TLW-347)

Abraham membual dalam esainya, untuk mempermankan Mayor. "Awalnya tampak berhasil, namun rupanya Mayorlah yang mempermankan aku, dengan meloloskanku dalam perlombaan Jalan Jauh ini." (hlm. 347)

Translation

*Abraham had boasted in his essay, to mock the Major. "At first it seemed successful, but it turned out the Major was the one playing me, by letting me pass into this Long Walk competition." (p. 347)*

The quotation above (TLW-347) depicts the character Abraham's deliberate act of boasting in his essay as a form of hidden resistance. Here, the medium of writing is utilized to frame criticism subtly. The essay, initially assumed to be a formal mode of participation within the system, is instead used as a space to express dissatisfaction with the dominant power. This strategy essentially reflects an intelligent form of the hidden transcript because it leverages an official channel, the essay, to convey opposition without direct confrontation. Although this strategy was ultimately deciphered by the Major, leading to Abraham's entry into the Long Walk competition (and thus failing), Abraham's contribution to resisting the dystopian power remains intellectually shrewd. Thus, it shows that subordinate groups can indeed find gaps to manipulate the symbols of power itself to carry out resistance [32]. Both novels present literacy as a veiled battleground for resistance. However, the difference lies in their form and context. In *Laut Bercerita*, the symbol of literacy is documentary and historical, characterized by reading forbidden literature, which serves as a link to collective memory and a reminder of Indonesia's dark history. Conversely, *The Long Walk* presents literacy as a rhetorical strategy that is more individualistic, namely, using the tactic of boasting to sabotage the totalitarian system. In addition to literacy as a symbol of resistance, symbols are also found in the concept of the safe space [33]. The private spaces belonging to subordinate characters are established as zones of safety. In *Laut Bercerita*, private spaces serve as the most secure locations for protection from repressive domination. This is reflected in the following quotation.

Data 3 (LB-31)

*Setelah peristiwa penangkapan aktivis di Yogyakarta karena dituduh mengadakan diskusi karya Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Bram dan kawan-kawannya diinterogasi polisi. "Untung aku sudah siap sebelumnya," kata Bram. Dia menyimpan buku-buku pemikiran Karl Marx, Tan Malaka, dan Pramoedya Ananta Toer di sebuah tempat persebunyian yang sulit di balik lemari dapur. (hlm. 31)*

Translation

*Following the arrest of activists in Yogyakarta accused of holding a discussion about the works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Bram and his friends were interrogated by the police. "Luckily, I was prepared beforehand," Bram said. He had hidden books of thought by Karl Marx, Tan Malaka, and Pramoedya Ananta Toer in a difficult-to-find hiding place behind the kitchen cupboard. (p. 31)*

Data 4 (LB-76)

*"Jadi, kalian mendiskusikan buku-buku sastra?" tanya Ibu yang kemudian sibuk dengan piring-piringnya.*

*"Ya, antara lain Bu," jawabku berhati-hati.*

*"Karya-karya yang dilarang pastinya ..." Asmara menambahkan, "semua karya Pramoedya itu lo, Bu, buku yang menyebabkan anak-anak Yogyakarta itu ditangkap." (hlm. 76)*

Translation

*"So, you're discussing literary books?" asked Mom, who then busied herself with her plates.*

*"Yes, among other things, Mom," I answered carefully.*

*"Banned works, of course..." Asmara added, "all of Pramoedya's works, you know, Mom, the books that caused those kids in Yogyakarta to be arrested." (p. 76)*

Data LB-31 above represents the character Bram hiding ideological books (deemed leftist by the government) behind the kitchen cupboard. The kitchen cupboard is utilized as an unexpected domestic space for concealment to avoid police raids. This is also found in Data LB-76, which represents the home as a safe space for discussing banned books. This strategy

demonstrates how subordinate groups exploit spaces perceived as "neutral" by the power, turning them into sites for developing counter-narratives to the government's official story. Such practices align with Scott's [5] concept of the hidden transcript, expressions of resistance that can only emerge within private spaces safe from government surveillance. Meanwhile, in *The Long Walk*, the private space is not a physical location but a psychological space formed through interpersonal interactions among the contestants of the Walk. This is reflected in the following quotation.

Data 5 (TLW-202)

"Orang-orang itu, mereka binatang. Mereka ingin melihat otak seseorang berceceran di jalan, karena itulah mereka keluar. Mereka pasti mau melihat otakmu." (hlm. 202)

Translation

*"Those people, they're animals. They want to see someone's brains splattered on the road, that's why they come out. They definitely want to see your brains."* (p. 202)

Data 6 (TLW-416)

"Kudengar ia punya lusinan anak haram. Aku ingin memberikan seluruh dunia kejutan. Membeberkan ini secara mendadak. Dan saat aku menang, Hadiyah-ku adalah meminta dibawa ke rumah ayahku." (hlm. 416)

Translation

*"I heard he has dozens of illegitimate children. I want to give the whole world a surprise. To reveal this suddenly. And when I win, my Prize is to ask to be taken to my father's house."* (p. 416)

Data TLW-202 and Data TLW-416 from the novel *The Long Walk*, as shown above, depict intense conversations between participants in the Walk, such as Garraty and McVries. Under extreme pressure, their conversations become the only safe space to express fear, pour out their hearts, and even criticize the government. As evident in Garraty's outpouring about his desire to visit his father, or McVries calling the soldiers "animals," these conversations are not merely dialogue; they are a survival mechanism against systemic pressure. Both feel safe making such comments because their interaction is based on the interpersonal closeness developed during the Long Walk. This reflects a hidden transcript that develops within a symbolic, internal space shared between the participants [34]. Both novels depict subordinate groups creating safe spaces as a foundation for resistance. In *Laut Bercerita*, private space is associated with the home, the protection of family or community, and unexpected, hard-to-reach places that are beyond the police's expectations. On the other hand, *The Long Walk* presents a safe space within the interpersonal conditions among the Walk participants, serving as a form of psychological solidarity among the equally oppressed. Having discussed literacy as a symbol of resistance and private space as a symbol of safety, the concealment of identity also emerges as a crucial symbol in both novels. Identity concealment is not always explicit but can also be symbolized according to the context [34]. In *Laut Bercerita*, Biru Laut changes his identity to Mirah Mahardika, a name vastly different from his former one. This is illustrated in the following quotation.

Data 7 (LB-220)

Kenapa sih namamu menjadi Mirah Mahardika?" Daniel membaca halaman sastra Harian Demokrasi Minggu sambil melirik. "Memangnya kamu anak buah Guruh?" (hlm. 220)

Translation

*"Why on earth did your name become Mirah Mahardika?" Daniel asked, reading the Sunday Democracy literary page while glancing over. "Are you one of Guruh's followers?"* (p. 220)

The act of changing identity in the quotation above is not merely a strategy for protection from the police, but also a form of rejection against the labels imposed by the powerful. Identity concealment ultimately becomes a symbol of resistance against a system that seeks to control one's name. Previously, the name Biru Laut was known to the police and other dominant groups as an activist opposing the New Order. Therefore, the name Mirah Mahardika carries a meaning of resistance that aims to erase the existence of Biru Laut. In *The Long Walk*, resistance against the system's labeling emerges when Garraty states that the competition's prize means nothing to him. This can be seen in the following quotation.

Data 8 (TLW-416-2)

*Dan saat aku menang, Hadiah-ku adalah meminta dibawa ke rumah ayahku." (hlm. 416)*

Translation

*"And when I win, my Prize is to ask to be taken to my father's house." (p. 416)*

The quotation above signifies Garraty's decision to reject the system that controls his life and death. Initially, Garraty disguised himself as someone who desired the prize. However, during the journey, his facade is broken. Garraty, in fact, opposes the system of the Long Walk competition by participating in it. Garraty rejects the existentiality constructed by the state. He does not desire fame, money, or the prize, but instead chooses a sincere human connection. In the context of Scott, this is a symbol that denies state incentives as a mechanism of control. In agreement with Hasaniyah [34], this symbol becomes an invisible yet impactful voice of resistance. The two main characters in the novels *Laut Bercerita* and *The Long Walk*, Biru Laut and Ray Garraty, choose to reclaim their agency through their choices of identity and value orientation. Biru Laut changes his name to save his body and fight stigmatization, while Garraty refuses to become a product of the system, even when he is at the finish line of winning the Long Walk competition. Both imply that hidden resistance takes personal and symbolic forms. Thus, both novels demonstrate that literacy, private space, and identity concealment can serve as forms of hidden resistance against power. This aligns with the opinion of Massoumi & Morgan [16], who state that symbols in hidden resistance come in various forms, ranging from discourse to gestures. The statement by Haberkorn [35] also affirms that symbolic actions within the hidden transcript have an impact that can weaken state amnesty. In *Laut Bercerita*, reading banned books and hiding identities become ways to resist quietly, and indirectly, the dominant power is weakened. Meanwhile, in *The Long Walk*, a satirical essay, the relationships between characters form a type of psychological resistance. Although set in different cultural backgrounds, both works affirm that individuals can still resist.

### 3.2. Discourses in The Novels *Laut Bercerita* and *The Long Walk*

Discourse is a form of hidden resistance that can also be found in both novels. Resistance through discourse can be found in events featuring counter-narratives to the state's narrative, as well as in humor, irony, and satire. In the context of a counter-narrative to the state's narrative, this means there is a narrative or discourse that resists but is expressed secretly in a limited space without the knowledge of the dominant group. This is reflected in the following quote from the novel *Laut Bercerita*.

Data 9 (LB-37)

*"Sejak peristiwa menghilangnya Ibu Ami, aku mengatakan pada Bapak bahwa aku tak bisa diam saja melihat keadaan seperti ini. Jawaban Bapak, itulah sebabnya kita dilahirkan sebagai orang Indonesia. Kalimat Bapak melekat dalam diriku hingga kini. Itu kuartikan bahwa kita harus selalu mencoba berbuat sesuatu, menyalakan sesuatu, sekecil apa pun dalam kegelapan di negeri ini." (hlm. 37)*

Translation

*"Ever since the disappearance of Mother Ami, I told Father that I couldn't just stand idly by and watch conditions like these. Father's response was, 'That is why we were born as Indonesians.' His words have stayed with me to this day. I interpret them to mean that we must always try to do something, to ignite something, no matter how small, within the darkness in this country." (p. 37)*

The quote above reflects the burning spirit possessed by Biru Laut and also his father. Laut's father conveys a deeply meaningful sentence to his child. This statement is not directly provocative; instead, it implies a critique of the state, which undoubtedly stifles the creativity of its people [36]. This is tangible evidence of a counter-narrative thriving in a small space, the

family, far from the eyes of the state. This discourse ignites Biru Laut's awareness to not submit and give up, while also containing a moral imperative to resist. Meanwhile, in *The Long Walk*, a similar form of counter-narrative also emerges from the characters of a father and child. This is reflected in the following quote.

Data 10 (TLW-21)

*Ayah Garraty sering menyebut Mayor sebagai monster yang paling langka dan paling berbahaya yang bisa dihasilkan bangsa mana pun, sosiopat yang didukung masyarakat. (hlm. 21)*

Translation

*Garraty's father often referred to the Major as the rarest and most dangerous monster any nation could produce—a sociopath supported by society. (p. 21)*

The quote above shows that Garraty's father fundamentally disagrees with the Major's style of governance. This expression is a bold statement that undermines the official narrative, transforming the Major from a benevolent figure into a sociopathic one. This statement is uttered within a limited environment, the family, which shapes Garraty's understanding of the reality of a corrupt government system. It also voices the critique that society itself has become complicit in that very system. This is a form of Garraty's father's hidden resistance, aimed at preventing his son from being ensnared by the Major's dictatorial system. The two excerpts above, from the novels *Laut Bercerita* and *The Long Walk*, demonstrate that hidden resistance originates from discourse. In *Laut Bercerita*, the counter-narrative is constructive, building hope and moral commitment, whereas in *The Long Walk*, the counter-narrative is cynical and destructive. However, both stem from hidden resistance within a small, limited sphere: the family (the father-child relationship). Besides being based on counter-narratives against the state's narrative, resistance through discursive events is also based on humor, irony, and satire. This humor, irony, and satire do not necessarily directly criticize the government within a limited space; rather, they show a form of limited resistance through discourse that is either non-serious or contrary to the facts [37]. Even though it contradicts the facts, the goal remains the same, which is to resist the government. In *Laut Bercerita*, the dialogue between the mother, older sibling, and younger sibling concerning banned books is portrayed with a sarcastic tone.

Data 11 (LB-76-2)

*"Karya-karya yang dilarang pastinya..." Asmara menambahkan, "semua karya Pramoedya itu lo, Bu, buku yang menyebabkan anak-anak Yogyakarta itu ditangkap." (hlm. 76)*

Translation

*"The banned works are definitely..." Asmara added, "all of Pramoedya's works, Mom—the books that caused those Yogyakarta kids to be arrested." (p. 76)*

Although the statement above sounds lighthearted, Asmara's words contain a satire on the absurdity of a system that fears books and silences knowledge. On the other hand, in the novel *The Long Walk*, a form of extreme satire emerges through a religious parody. This is shown in the following quote.

Data 12 (TLW-388)

*"Pelacur Babylonia telah datang ke tengah kita! Dia berbaring di jalanan dan mengangkangkan kakinya di atas kotoran batu-batu jalan! Nista!" (hlm. 388)*

Translation

*"The Whore of Babylon has come among us! She lies in the streets and spreads her legs upon the gritty filth of the road! Abomination!" (p. 388)*

The quote above represents the frustration of all the participants in the Long Walk. Although frustrated, they do not openly oppose the government in public space using explicit language, but instead use distorted Christian religious terminology. Implicitly, the utterance is indeed one that defiles the Christian religion [38]. However, their frustration has reached a breaking point, leading the teenagers to shout this as a form of hidden resistance. The statement is a theatrical act, a kind of moral mockery as a satire aimed at a state that allows public death in the Long Walk under the guise of upholding ethics. Thus, both novels demonstrate that forms of hidden resistance can grow from discourse born in private spaces, such as the relationship between child and parent. This aligns with Scott's [39] statement that the resistance of the oppressed or subaltern is based on provocative commentary that remains within a limited sphere. Furthermore, it is consistent with the statements of Scott [5] and Massoumi and Morgan [16] that discourse serves as a medium for veiled provocation. In *Laut Bercerita*, the counter-narrative appears as moral encouragement and hope, whereas in *The Long Walk*, a similar narrative emerges in the form of cynicism towards the system. Both also employ humor and irony as effective rhetorical strategies for delivering criticism without direct confrontation. Through ambiguous and veiled language, subordinate characters build alternative narratives capable of subtly yet meaningfully challenging domination.

### 3.3. Gestures in The Novels Laut Bercerita and The Long Walk

Gestures are a form of hidden resistance that can also be found in both novels. Resistance through gestures can be observed in symbolic or non-verbal events. As a distinguishing feature, gestures emphasize an attitude manifested as an act of resistance, while symbols refer more to meanings containing representation. Resistance through non-verbal events means opposing the government through real actions, but still in a secret or limited context. This is reflected in the following quote from the novel *Laut Bercerita*.

Data 13 (LB-139)

*"Sampai sekarang, setelah beberapa jam, hanya kita dan kawan-kawan yang berhasil masuk ke rumah penduduk. Yang lain masih di penampungan Pak Subroto. Artinya, aksi ini tersendat. Kita harus keluar subuh nanti."*

*"Ada strategi lain, Mas?" tanyaku lagi. "Subuh masih agak jauh."*

*Sang Penyair menghela napas. "Kinan benar, kita harus menunggu sampai penjagaan sudah mulai berkurang." (hlm. 139)*

Translation

*"Even now, several hours later, only we and our comrades have managed to get into the residents' houses. The others are still at Pak Subroto's shelter. This means the action is stalled. We have to leave at dawn tomorrow."*

*"Is there another strategy, Mas?" I asked again. 'Dawn is still a while away.'*

*The Poet let out a sigh. "Kinan is right, we have to wait until the guard has started to lessen." (p. 139)*

The quote above signifies a gesture of resistance that does not manifest as verbal confrontation, but rather through a calculated strategy of silence and waiting. The dialogue demonstrates an awareness of the ongoing situation, specifically an awareness of how to face military repression. The acts of waiting, moving in silence, and choosing the right moment to execute their plan are forms of invisible yet highly tactical resistance. Here, the gesture serves as an effort to avoid direct confrontation with the dominant group while preserving the collective action undertaken by the activists, such as Laut, Kinan, and The Poet. In a context quite different from the gestures in *Laut Bercerita*, the gestures in *The Long Walk* are displayed more subtly. This is reflected in the following data quote.

Data 14 (TLW-158)

*McVries memandangi tentara-tentara tanpa ekspresi di atas panzer dengan sorot mata janggal. Para tentara balas menatap tanpa perasaan. (hlm. 158)*

Translation

*McVries stared at the expressionless soldiers on the armored personnel carrier with a peculiar glint in his eyes. The soldiers stared back, emotionless. (p. 158)*

The quote above demonstrates hidden resistance through the gesture of a gaze. McVries stares at one of the soldiers, who is, notably, a subordinate of the Major in the dystopian government. This gaze is not an ordinary one, but rather a gaze of hatred. It is not merely McVries's psychological expression towards the soldiers, but also a gestural form of refusing to fully comply with the dominant narrative of submission. Within the system of the Long Walk, which forces the teenagers to keep walking and surviving, the simple act of McVries's cold stare becomes a subtle form of resistance. Although not conveyed verbally, the glint in his eyes still implicitly shows rejection. Within that silent attitude lies a critique of the system, McVries's courage to disrupt the image of state control. He chooses not to provide the expected reaction. Aligning with Sendra's [40] opinion, it is precisely from this silent, profound gaze that hidden resistance operates. Thus, both novels similarly show that the bodies of the subordinate can be a primary medium of resistance. In agreement with Massoumi and Morgan [16], gestures and backstage narratives constitute efforts of hidden resistance that are the inverse of the public transcript, or the pretense performed in front of the dominant group. In *Laut Bercerita*, resistance is shown through tactical and planned collective gestures, whereas in *The Long Walk*, it is shown through intense and symbolic individual gestures. Both novels prove that a gesture is not merely a movement or a wordless bodily action, but a form of political communication.

### 3.4. The Author's Worldview

In the genetic structuralism approach developed by Goldmann, a literary work is understood as a reflection of the collective worldview of a social group (in this research, Indonesian and American society) as mediated by the author's consciousness. Here, the author constructs a narrative of violence based on their world, or the author's vision represents it through collective events in real life [41]. This worldview is an expression of the historical, social, and ideological conditions underlying a literary work [42]; [43]; [44]. Therefore, analyzing a literary work involves not only focusing on the text but also observing the symbolic structures within the text that reflect the struggles of a specific group. In this context, comparing *Laut Bercerita* and *The Long Walk* allows the researcher to understand two authors from different cultural backgrounds who construct a worldview of subordinates resisting domination. Thus, Goldmann's concept of worldview can be a comparative literary approach focused on comparing works that are worthy of comparison and possess certain interconnections [45] [46]. In *Laut Bercerita*, Chudori [18] builds a worldview rooted in Indonesia's repressive history during the *New Order* era. Symbols such as the banned books of Pramoedya Ananta Toer or characters' pseudonyms become manifestations of resistance against a power that silences freedom of thought. Conversely, King [20] in *The Long Walk* formulates a worldview leaning towards allegory through a dystopian reality. In this dystopian world, the slaughter of teenage boys is turned into mass entertainment by the state. On the other hand, the subordinates in *Laut Bercerita* are student activists opposing the *New Order* regime, while the subordinates in *The Long Walk* are teenage boys who have already submitted to the dominant power. Visually, the crucial things from this comparison can be seen in Table 3.

The differences between the two authors underscore that Leila's worldview is constructed from social memory and historical spirit, while King builds his vision through a futuristic dystopian allegory reflecting the destruction of values in society. This comparison aligns with research by Karim and Hartati [30], which states that authors have their own unique style for revealing issues in their literary works. This authorial expression is based on ongoing or past real-world phenomena, depending on how the author chooses to represent a reality-based culture in their work. Additionally, research conducted by Wang [29] is also consistent with this

study, as it examines the author's perspective focused on the relationship between Chinese and American culture

**Table 3.** Classification of Hidden Transcript

Comparative Aspects	Laut Bercerita	The Long Walk
Context	Indonesia during the New Order era (1990s)	An allegorical American dystopia
Approach	Historical realism	Allegorical and symbolic
Author Worldview (Goldmann's Concept)	Emphasizes progressive worldview and collective memory	Critique of the American government in the post-World War II era
Forms of Hidden Transcript	Secret discussions, hiding banned books, identity disguise, alternative moral narratives	Satire, silent gazes, symbolic criticism, internal rejection of the system
Characterization of Subordinate Figures)	Student activists as representations of oppressed intellectuals	Teenage poor boys as a metaphor for a generation sacrificed by a competitive authoritarian system
Purpose of Resistance	Restoring historical truth and continuing the struggle for democracy	Surviving while preserving a sense of self in a bleak future

#### 4. Conclusion

This study set out to examine how the hidden transcript, as theorized by James C. Scott, manifests as a form of covert resistance in *Laut Bercerita* and *The Long Walk*, and the findings confirm that identity-based symbols constitute the most dominant strategy through which characters negotiate agency under repression. These symbolic acts, most clearly reflected in the circulation of banned books in Chudori's novel and the production of satirical essays in King's dystopia, form the core mechanisms of concealed resistance, while gestures, silence, irony, and other discursive expressions appear as secondary variations that enrich the narrative spectrum of opposition. A cross-cultural comparison further shows that Chudori's worldview emphasizes collective historical memory grounded in Indonesia's authoritarian past, whereas King frames resistance within a bleak, individual-centered allegory of future totalitarianism. Theoretically, this research contributes to comparative literary studies by demonstrating that Scott's hidden transcript can function as a unifying analytical lens for understanding resistance across national and political contexts, while offering the novelty of focusing exclusively on symbolic identity markers as a comparative axis between the two novels.

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