

HEGEMONIC STRATEGY IN AJIDARMA'S *IBU YANG ANAKNYA DICULIK ITU*

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Abstract

This essay is to figure out the hegemonic strategy in Ajidarma's short story entitled *Ibu yang Anaknya Diculik Itu*. The story was written in 2008 through online mass media, Kompas. It is believed that the story is loaded with critical perspectives toward current social and political issue. The critics represent the way the author sees the issue and efforts to create self-awareness and self-enrichment. Using Gramsci's hegemonic theory, the story is analysed. The essay shows that Ajidarma's story functions as hegemonic sites. The ideology of humanity is simultaneously proposed to the readers through the character of Mother. Ajidarma disagrees the inequity caused by political power and he believes that every human being has right to get immunity from the political violence.

Keywords: political power, hegemony, *Ibu Yang Anaknya Diculik Itu*

A. Introduction

Seno Gumira Ajidarma is an Indonesian prose writer as well as journalist giving much critical consideration on the issue of power. His ideological perspective flourishes on the writings before the subaltern by proposing the issue of marginalization. Through simple yet tough language, he speaks under subordination the marginal experienced. Almost all the writings offer issue of humanity as the main ground.

The consideration on the political power or regime written on the works seems representing subordinate resistance toward the dominant. The dominant wants to legitimate and preserve its quo status through hegemony or repressive behaviour. A picture of authoritarian leadership is an inspiration to his works; to criticize. The critics representing in fictional writings will eventually work as hegemony yet in subtle way; a subordinate hegemony strategy as the opposition to the dominant hegemony. The prose writings such as *Penembak Misterius* (A Mysterious Sniper), *Saksi Mata* (Witnesses), *Dilarang Menyanyi di Kamar Mandi* (Don't Sing in the Bathroom) written in 1993 to 1995 are loaded with ideological perspective. The prose style or story line is said to be surrealistic; in which reality and imagination and combined into one. Singh (2011: 21) states that it emphasizes the role of the unconscious in creative activity and employs the psychic unconscious in a more orderly and serious manner; tries to express what is hidden in the mind by showing objects and events as seen in dreams. Surrealism has the use of fantastic jokes, chance events as illumination, repudiation of rational processes, concern with fundamental problems of existence, use of humour as a dialectical statement of truth (Singh, 2011: 22).

Ajidarma's works seem full of humour yet loaded with social and political critics. The issue of superiority to inferiority is mostly the grand idea employed in his literary writings. Since the story contains the social and political issue, sociological approach is used to analyse. Sociology of literature is a new discipline as an opponent for structuralism drawbacks and stagnancy. The structuralism tends to ignore the relevancy between literature and its society; in where the texts are created. There is belief saying that literary works should have similar function to the other cultural aspects; that is why the work itself has to be regarded as an inseparable part of the society communication system and has to be returned to the society. Gramsci believes that culture has significant relationship with politic; opposing the liberal idealist and Marxist that view culture as a matter of "spirit." Gramsci's definition on culture enables literary works to analyse as it is. The work of literature is written by an author, retold by a story teller and copied by copyist; in whom the three are the part of the society itself. He/she lives within society, accept and perform the social values.

The literary works both written and spoken, further, reflect society competence in depicting their social problems. This relation creates the nature of inter-subjectivity between society and the literary works; to which the people see their own image in the works. Author's conception on the literary works loads ideology to form certain writer-works-reader consensus. This consensus, according to Gramsci (Faruk, 2010: 135), is a hegemony strategy leading to readers' acceptance. Ideological hegemony in the literary works will automatically bind heterogenic communities in a harmonic way. Faruk (2010: 130) further says that literature is a social institution without

autonomy with potential formative character to the society.

Ajidarma's works represent the image of subordinate societies and intend to resist the fascism power. The works, as stated before, are part of ideological formation carrying the capability of hegemony, hegemonic counter, or incorporation as well as resistance toward the dominant. Ajidarma knows that the works are able to make his readers realise the ideology and start the resistance. Most of his works try to deny the discourse of power through hegemonic strategy; thus the works are said to be hegemonic literary works.

Having an easy way to publish, speaking freely on the issue, this works are luckier than those written in the era of old order which were depoliticized in publication. Employing himself as the intellectual, he tries to substitute society's perspectives which are currently manipulated by certain hegemonic power; through hegemonic strategy in literary works.

Short story *Ibu yang Anaknya Diculik Itu (The Mother Whose Son was Kidnapped)* is one among his works speaking about social phenomena proposing the life experienced by the subordinate. It proposes an issue of politic power by particular dominant party. This short story was first published in Kompas Online on Sunday November 18th 2008. It tells about a mother missing for her husband and son who had been lost, and killed. His husband died; meanwhile son had been lost for ten years without any information – all she knew was his son was kidnapped and killed. The missing is told to have relation with political realm in that time. Knowing the theme of the short story, this essay tries to put Gramsci's hegemony perspective for a deep analysis. The question to answer here is how the author shifts ideology put in the story of *Ibu Yang*

Anaknya Diculik Itu. The answer will declare Ajidarma's perspective on the issue being discussed and confirm the statement that his literary works are hegemonic sites.

B. Discussion

The narrative structure used in the story does not really reveal current social fact experienced by the main character. Mother as the single story narrator is not the main character to tell rather his son named Satria. Along the plot Satria does not exist at all, however, he is basically the real plot centre to carry the story outline. Satria, retold by Mother, is a starting point to where the story begins its perspective toward the issue proposed i.e. the dominant efforts in maintaining quo status. Although physically Mother stays still on the chair, yet her spoken memory dynamically brings back all evidences in the past; uncovers the readers' enigma on the hidden message of the work.

Mother murmured in sadness, recalling her husband and son, to which issue of power is eventually seen. Mother accepted that Satria died; but she could not accept the fact that her son was kidnapped, persecuted, and murdered; that was unfair and cruel (line 39–42).

Gramsci says that in fascistic power system, a regime will perform two strategies: (1) dominating awareness through coercive and force strategy and (2) dominating through hegemony emphasizing society docility and awareness. What is seen in the story is preserving domination through coercive and force strategy; kidnapping, persecution, and murder belong to the coercive way. The strategy used is an effort to make a better performance of certain group's stability and safety. The group tries to prevent tension, conflict

and rebellion within society through systematically hidden coercive strategies, such as kidnapping, in order to unable criminal evidences.

Systematic kidnapping was first done by covering the victim's eyes. The actor knows well the names of the victim's family member as well as complete photographs of each (line 144–148).

A regime would like to act without evidences; that is why they employ certain group of people to evacuate the targets. The groups of people do the kidnapping, persecution and murder under the name of power. The agreement obtained from these groups to support the dominant depicts the success of fascist regime in spreading hegemonic power. The groups can be in shape of infrastructure's organization involving intellectuals who agree, surrender, obedient, and support the regime. Their agreement is to seek position and integrity to cooperatively manipulate social and political system of the subordinate. Faruk (2010: 135) says that coercion is a strategy implementing power from superior class toward inferior class through coercive way. The violence involves institution such as police and the like. Even though the real perpetrator is not revealed, the groups kidnapping Satria are those under the obedience to the controlling regime.

To deal with this social phenomenon, Sutrisno and Putanto (2005: 31) state that Gramsci proposes *solidarity block* to challenge the fascism regime. Dealing coercion with similar response is not recommended, that is why creating new hegemony is suggested through this solidarity block. It is integrating intellectuals who have similar perspective on supporting freedom and justice.

Ibu Yang Anaknya Diculik Itu is an effort of implementing new democratic and humanism ideology. By telling deep sadness and disappointment

felt by Mother for her son's missing under the dominant political interest, the story tries to bring the readers under new ideology to resist the old established one. Ajidarma invites the readers to realize how bad the dominant treating subordinate class on behalf of power interest is. Unconsciously, new positive hegemonic ideology is implemented here, to build people's block solidarity and improve their awareness toward real social politic condition. The solidarity built eventually drives the society to challenge fascism power.

In line 49–54, Mother stated that human could not have kinship with monkeys. The way Mother called the people as *monkey* represents the characters of animal, which is in common are not educated and inhuman. This is the way the story criticizes the condition that the subordinate has no power to speak before the regime. Mother's spoken words represent the silence among people who strongly disagree to the inequity. This is, as result, persuading the subordinate to perform resistance.

Mother's saying refers to author's perspective in which intellectuals with similar point of view will agree and solidarity among them is possible. She keeps persuading the readers by saying that every broken hearted should be burnt into blazes, until finally the anger will set the fire to the whole world (line 73-78).

The anger felt by the broken hearted mother of losing her son for ten years without knowing whether he was still alive or not seems bursting the ideology delivered in the story as well. The character "Sir" mentioned in the story refers to Mother's husband, who had disappeared (died) for a year. She spoke with him as if he was there beside her, as if he was still alive. "Sir" refers to silence representing people who cannot do anything to deal with the situation. Mother

believed that her son would return home someday, even though her husband insisted her that he had died: *I wish...and wait. Wish and wait. But you keep telling me that Satria has gone. Satria is died* (line 33-34). *“It’s been ten years, Satria died, you died, Munir is also died* (line 56–57).

Criminal without further investigation is argued in the story; violence toward the subordinate group is questioned. The dominant assumes that there are groups within society endanger their existence, power, and domination. To protect their position, systematic criminals are conducted by kidnapping, persecuting, and murdering. The apparatus keep silence and the people soon forget the issue. *“The chair stays empty. Like everything remains empty. Will everything be just an unsolved secret, the secret of the past, the secret of life? This is a disgrace, a criminal, which is unsolved”* (line 155–157).

To this fact, society should be aware of what is happening; they should activate their common sense. Gramsci in Faruk (2010: 13) states that common sense within individuals will always enable them to self-transformation, self-enrichment toward scientific ideas including philosophic opinions such as perspectives of life, as what is seen in Ajidarma’s writing.

In the story, Ajidarma was not only referring to the son and father’s persecution but also the people who are violently murdered and thrown to the Madiun’s river (line 118-119). These people were *ludruk*’s players. The hardest thing was when Mother heard that the one killed the innocent people was going to be a president; *“Crazy!! Those murderers are going to become president!* (line 172).

Based on Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, the social, politic, and cultural power embodied in the story function as the author’s ideology and it will

influence the reader's perspective toward the issue as well. Ajidarma proposed human immunity from political violence and political inequity. The evidences found in the story were excerpted from real life. Munir Said Thalib, also mentioned in the story, was a human right activist. He was assassinated on his flight to Amsterdam for his master's degree in international law and human rights (September, 7th 2004). He was one of Indonesia's most famous human rights and anti-corruption activists. Munir was poisoned with arsenic on his flight and died two hours before the arrival in Schiphol, Amsterdam. It needed ten years to reveal who the real murderers were and the Indonesian State Intelligence Agency (BIN) official were surprisingly involved in the criminal (Wikipedia.org). Prior before Munir's issue was national activists' assassination for the sake of political power in Old Regime; such as Otto Iskandar Dinata (1945), Sutarto (1948), and Tan Malaka (1949).

Ajidarma criticized the way political power delicately fights against the activists through coercive way and he wanted the society to become aware of the real fact. Through the power of literary works, Ajidarma inserted the ideological hegemony in his short story. It proves that literary works has its power and system to shape without eliminating its structure.

Faruk (2010) states that literary work is a work of art, integrated part of culture and hegemonic sites; the authors of literary works are organic intellectuals and function as hegemonic agents. Literary works, in this context, will eventually address to the single cultural climate establishment through socio-cultural unification of the multiple heterogenic interests and goals. The works help promoting historic activity by collective individuals.

Thus, Ajidarma's *Ibu yang Anaknya Diculik Itu* helps in promoting individuals ideological unification on the issue of political power violence. The readers will understand that there is a big issue needed to solve, the political interests and statuses has violated human rights.

C. Conclusion

To resist the inequity caused by political interests, establishing new perspective is very important. When resistance conducted in coercive way is more risky, the hegemony strategy is possible to do. To defend or refuse the inequity, literary works function as the strategy itself. It involves author's perspective toward certain issue and eventually creates society's agreement. *Ibu Yang Anaknya Diculik Itu* is potential hegemonic site to shape social understanding on the issue of social and politic domination.

There are lots of Ajidarma's hegemonic works talking about social political issue. Through online media, it is easy for him to reach the readers. He often writes his short fiction in Kompas websites, a famous mass media in Indonesia. His passion in criticizing political realm, the dominant issue, and social issue comes along with his job as a journalist. When journalists have no freedom for sharp critic, then literature can; that is one of his essays.

Seeing this, deep analysis on his stories both novels and short stories will be necessary to do. If this essay is simply talking about Ajidarma's hegemonic ideology in one story, further essays can use several stories to get real picture of his motif and perspective. A further study to the readers' behaviour after reading his literary works is as well recommended.

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