

Violence, Science, and World Hegemony in *Semilyar Ikan Memakan Anjing-anjing* by Absurditas Malka

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Abstract—Within the revolutionary strategy for power domination, ideology has become a convention that unites subordinate class society in achieving hegemonic leadership. The said issue is also found in literary works which becomes the media for the author to deliver the ideology he wants to convey, as contained in *Semilyar Ikan Memakan Anjing-anjing*, a short story by Absurditas Malka. This story tells the resistance of the fish character to the dominance of the power of the dogs' character based on the science ideology. Besides, there is also a conflict between the ideology of science and the ideology of violence which both then become a weapon to achieve world hegemony. This study aims to analyze the ideological forms that exist in *Semilyar Ikan Memakan Anjing-anjing* short story based on the perspective of Gramsci's ideological-hegemonic framework. The research paradigm is using a qualitative descriptive approach. In the process of collecting data, researchers conducted reading and note-taking techniques. These data were then processed through a process of inference and qualitative-conceptual analysis. The results of the analysis showed the representation of fish as a subordinate society and dogs as the representation of the dominant society. It is also found that there is a close link between the ideology of science and ideology of violence that is oriented to the world hegemony agenda.

Keywords: *hegemony, ideology, science, violence*

I. INTRODUCTION

Power as something that is always contested by mankind, is a topic that is always interesting to talk about until now. The struggle for power, regional expansion, colonialism, and the desire to be superior and dominant over others are some of the phenomena of power that occur in real in the lives of the world community. McClelland, in developing Murray's System of Needs theory, divides human needs on three bases, namely the need for affiliation, the need for achievement, and the need for power (Jha, 2010). This explains that power is considered to be a part of human instinctive needs so it is not surprising if people are craving power.

The concept of power refers to the ability of an individual or group to achieve certain goals while the other groups are trying to prevent them to make it real (Weber, 1992). That is, the said activity will divide the community into two groups, namely the ruling group and the powerless group who are forced to be submissive. On the other hand, Felicia, I-Ching, Judy, and Eileen (2010) said that humans use the power to

survive and evolve in the context of environmental demands. This assumption shows that demands arising from environmental conditions can also affect the power needs of humans.

In this regard, Antonio Gramsci (1891—1937) saw that power should be obtained through agreed hegemonic leadership, namely, ideological-political leadership (as cited in Kurniawan, 2012). Gramsci's concept itself is a "correction" of the Marxist Theory which considers that material and economic interests are the cause of the emergence of a democratic revolution. Gramsci assumed that ideology played the main role in the issue of the subordinate class revolution to gain power. For him, ideological, intellectual, moral, and philosophical agreements have a more dominant contribution in uniting all the main groups in a nation and leading them to a revolution or hegemonic leadership (Robert, 2015).

The theory of hegemony is not new to the Marxist tradition. Names like Sigmund Freud or Sigmund Simmel are two Marxists who were prior to knowing hegemony before Gramsci. However, there are two things distinguish the characteristics of Gramsci's hegemony with those of previous experts' theory, they are: 1) Gramsci expanded the realm of the concept of hegemony into ideology and the supremacy of one group over another. This view is antithetical to the old hegemony concept which only shows the relation between the proletariat and other groups; 2) it characterizes hegemony in the term of "cultural influence" and is not limited to political leadership in an alliance as what has been understood by earlier Marxist generations (Femia, 1983).

Gramsci considers that ideology is very important in hegemony because, within the human mind, ideology grows and evolves into a system that regulates practical actions and moral behavior. With this system, a person or social group starts to take action to gain awareness of their position and struggle (as cited in Kurniawan, 2012). It can be illustrated that if a country spreads a national ideology, then that is done in order to maintain state stability and power. Through that ideology, society as a subordinate class will obey the government in power. Therefore, hegemony moves at the level of ideology and will naturally become a consensus as the character of society. This shows the importance of ideology in the process of hegemony as a firmness between the relationship of antagonistic class against the dominant class in power.

Literature and society can be seen as two different variables but the relationship between the two cannot be underestimated. In modern literary theory, it has been recognized that there is a very strong connection between literature and society. Literature is considered as a reflection of society and it is even able to describe what is not visible in the midst of the society itself (Aron & Alain, 2013).

Questioning about the community, Pitirim Sorokin as cited in Soerjono (1969) mentioned that there is one branch of science that studies the relationship and the mutual influence between various social phenomena in society that we are familiar with the term of sociology. Sociology and literature have the same object of study, namely humans in society (Wiyatmi, 2013).

In literary works, the author is the main actor who determines the direction of the story. In an expressive theory of literature, literature can be seen as an expression of the author. That is, it is not impossible if literary works can be a medium for authors to show and express their social positions and views. This can be projected from the concepts and ideas that the author tries to communicate through the linguistic manifestation compiled in his work. In line with this idea, it can be concluded that a literary work can also contain ideologies that are intentionally inserted by the writer through the literary narrative.

A short story composed by Absurditas Malka with the title *Semilyar Ikan Memakan Anjing-anjing* (A Billion Fish Eat Dogs) has a very interesting theme and conflict within it. This short story, published in the Kompas Short Story column in 2014, illustrates the social phenomenon that occurs in the ideologies adopted to the efforts of world power domination. Society in this short story is divided into two groups represented in the form of dogs and fish. The revolution happened because of the existence of demands and pressures that came from environmental conditions and subsequently led to the ideological feud that occurred in the process of the said resistance. Among these said ideologies are the ideology of science and the ideology of violence which is used as a tool to create world hegemony. The story above illustrates how power becomes something so desired by many people.

Seeing the phenomena that occur in this short story, the authors try to analyze the power hegemony contained within it based on the perspective of Antonio Gramsci because the story is closely related to ideology as a means of achieving power. The theory of power hegemony or the theory of hegemony proposed by Antonio Gramsci, says that the dominance of a class (dominant) over another class (subordinate) occurs because of ideological-political aspects. Based on Gramsci's opinion, it can be concluded that the dominance of "power" (which in this short story is world domination) can occur due to ideological-political influences. Therefore, the authors used Gramsci's Hegemony theory in the analysis of the short story *Semilyar Ikan Memakan Anjing-anjing* to find out how the ideological feud illustrated in the attempt of domination within it.

II. METHOD

Whereas descriptive, as explained by Nazir (2011), is a description that aims to describe the phenomena that is studied systematically based on the data obtained.

The approach used in this research is the sociology of literature approach based on Gramsci's hegemony theory. In general, this approach has two views. First, literature is an ideological representation of social classes. This view focuses on the process of hegemony through literature development in a certain period of time. Second, literature is perceived as a world that bears various social problems within it. This approach focuses on the analysis of literary works based on hegemonic social problems.

Based on the two views above, the steps of Gramsci's sociological hegemony analysis in this study consisted of (1) identifying the dominant and subordinate classes in the short story; (2) identifying social problems that arise in the short story; (3) describing the hegemony process between the dominant and subordinate classes; (4) analyzing ideologies that negate the alliances between social classes; and (5) analyzing of the relation of the hegemony process in the short story with social facts (Kurniawan, 2012).

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are two major groups in *Semilyar Ikan Memakan Anjing-anjing*, they are dogs and fish. Based on the story, these groups have a different role in the system; the dogs' group ruling the government and the fish group obeys their rules as citizens. The main conflict that both groups (dogs and fish) face in *Semilyar Ikan Memakan Anjing-anjing* story is the environmental damage harming especially the ocean ecosystem where the fish live. These damages occur because of the dogs' arbitrariness to the environment. The issue then starts the discussion within the fish group to restructure again their position and role in the system for the sake of preventing the ongoing damages. It results in an ideology agreed by the group to resolve the problem; science ideology. The agenda to prevent the damages from happening at the same time becomes an ideological revolutionary attempt over the dogs' regime as it is the only way to bring back peace to their ecosystem.

Then, after revolutionizing their understanding and paradigm about what is happening and agreed ideologically to do resistance, the fish group starts to sneak into the library to get some books to read and obtain bits of knowledge. This where then the fish group meets the library guard dogs and has to face them. During the event, the fish group then changes their ideology upon preventing the damages with science into violence where they can both prevent the damages and fight the dogs in instant. Here we can see the conflict between the ideologies belongs to the fish group within their resistance agenda toward the government.

A. Fish and the Representation of Subordinate Community

In his concept of cultural hegemony, Gramsci distinguishes the society into two super-structural groups based on its political and intellectual privilege in the system; the bourgeois and the subordinate group. The bourgeois group is also known

as “the state” or “the government” that has more dominant political rules. On the other hand, the subordinate community or “the civil society” is the group that is hegemonized by the state’s domination (Lears, 2016).

Based on the main conflict of the story, the representation of fish as a subordinate community can be seen from the form of its powerlessness in preventing the environmental damage caused by the dogs from happening. This may be done with rules or policies regarding the environmental conditions which are regulated by the government. If from the beginning the fish group can prevent the damage (with rules and policies), it will imply that the fish are the group in control, just like the dominant bourgeois group. On the contrary, the fish group can’t do anything for its lack of political power in the social system.

This assumption clearly shows the position of fish as a subordinate society in the system managed by dogs; a society that complies with government policies and has no dominant power. Related to this, this group is also classified in the area of civil society that was sparked by Gramsci; an area controlled by the authorities and treated according to the will and approval of the authorities in order to win the consent of the community (Faruk, 2003). We can understand that the fish group so far is forced to obey under the dogs’ regime so they cannot do anything for their environment. This cannot be done by the fish group because the government is in control of the rules in the area.

Besides that, the representation of fish as a subordinate group can also be marked by their discussion of strategies to overcome environmental damage. This form of discussion shows the intention of resistance and ideological revolution of the fish group against the dogs’ regime. According to Gramsci, the lower class/subordinate society must carry out a revolution by changing their consciousness, mindset, and understanding (Nurhadi, 2004). This resistance and opposition must be based on an understanding of their nature and requirements in the system they live in (Wiharjo, 2018).

Regarding that, In the story of *Semilyar Ikan Memakan Anjing-anjing*, the fish group is aware of the situation occurs around them; the environmental damage. They also understand their position in the system that did not have anything to overcome the damages unless they have political power or knowledge. This understanding is manifested in the form of the discussion they held which results in an ideological revolution by changing their mindset and makes them sneaking to the library to steal and read some books. These actions are agreed together by the fish group and that means a cultural revolution because it relates to cultural factors like philosophical understanding and ideologies to win the society’s opinion.

Furthermore, the plan of resistance was realized in the form of infiltration into libraries and stealing books to master science as the solution to the destruction they faced. This form is one of the stages of hegemony that occurs in fish as a subordinate community; that after gaining awareness about the surrounding condition (environmental damage) and changing the way of thinking (ideological revolution), the subordinate groups will carry out a social revolution to overthrow the governmental regime in counter-hegemony.

The form of the representation of fish as the subordinate community is also can be seen from their alertness when sneaking to the library. They also are hiding from the dogs’ library guards when they are patrolling. This will represent their fear over the guard dogs and fear means the feeling of scares over something that will bring disaster or over something bigger and more powerful than them. This fear will imply how the dogs’ treat the fish with their dominance and power, putting the fish group in the civil area that is treated haphazardly by the dogs.

B. Dogs and Representations of the Bourgeois Society

“*Bourgeoisie*” which is the social class of people who are characterized by ownership of capital and behavior associated with this ownership (“bourgeois,” n.d.). The bourgeois society comes from the middle class or the merchant class, and get economic and social strength from work, education and wealth. In the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* or (Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language) (Setiawan, 2016), the *bourgeoisie* is defined as a class of people from the upper-middle class (usually in opposition to commoners). Henceforth, the “*Bourgeois*” is now known as the upper-class. In the terminology mentioned by Gramsci, this group is included in government territory.

The stages of hegemony that occurred in dogs group can be recognized from the form of intercepting the fish group which is practiced by them. The dog group instructs the fish group to surrender because the fish group will not be able to fight them. According to what is narrated in the short story, it exemplifies the power and dominance of dogs as an apparatus in the government system. The dogs group also acts arbitrarily by saying that fish group is their food, even says that they are stupid as well. Both of these forms are in line with Gramsci’s explanation of the government’s group, that the dominant group treats the under its control repressively and arbitrarily for the sake of civil agreement.

On the other hand, the form of dogs’ domination can be seen from the library and books that they have. The fish group does not have any access to the library. This is shown by the characters that can’t read and also their desire to obtain knowledge. It means, some facilities are not obtained by the lower class but can be enjoyed by the upper-class society. This phenomenon illustrates the superiority of the dogs group in managing their country, that they can control which need to be accepted by their society, and vice versa. That idea is following Gramsci’s view about the group of government/political area, in which the government elements monopolize coercively a controlled country (Simon, 2015).

C. Science Ideology and Violence

The dialogue that occurs during the process of the fish group’s discussion explains their ideology to the problems they face. According to them, environmental damage can be solved by utilizing technology and mastering knowledge as much as possible so then they can develop to genius fish. Reading becomes the main strategy to start that. That idea was first provoked by Kamer; a red snapper fish that is respected, more open-minded, and innovative than its other fish fellows. He also added in one of his dialogues that they can obtain three

advantages by reading; 1) they can slow down the destruction, 2) curb the destruction, and 3) utilize the grandeur of technology in order to engineer themselves to be more resistant, smarter, and stronger.

That desire is a discourse to change the system that has been in force so far. In other words, in this attempt to overcome environmental damage, there is a discourse to overthrow the dogs' regime as well. This can be seen from the violations committed by the fish group as civil society represented in the theft of books from the library. The form of violations is part of the social revolution practiced by the fish group. As a conclusion, this movement corresponds to Gramsci's concept of hegemony, that resistance movement or counter of hegemony was born from the political-ideological agreement regarding the expected government system. In this case, a distributed agreement is that environmental damage must be solved by utilizing technology and knowledge.

After that, there was an ideological change adopted by the fish group. After stealing and trying to read books, the fish group still could not fight the strength of the guard dogs. Knowledge alone is not enough to be their strength, they need other supporting assistance against dogs, moreover against physical contact. At last, the fish group begins to improvise the feud. Their ideology shifts from mastering science by reading, becoming violence ideology which takes war fight. This way firstly is proposed by Bara, a temperament-faced barracuda fish, which then welcomed by Balu, a skeptical pale sea-skinned fish, as the instant way to take science and technology.

These science and violence ideologies are highly contradictory ideologies. The goal of each ideology is different. In the beginning, the fish group assumes that only with knowledge could environmental damage be overcome, however, they do not realize that they have to deal with the guard dogs first. To deal with such things, science cannot be expected. In the end, war is the only choice against dogs that have long been hated by society. The goal of this violent ideology likely tends to fight and impose the dogs' power. If that violent resistance actualized, technology and science are not hard to seize anymore. Environmental damage will be easily overcome.

In one of the story's narratives when the war between fish and dogs is inevitable, Kamer, as the fish figure which first suggests mastering science and technology by reading, says that the war will not bring any difference to destruction, it will be even worse. The fish group will be just the same as the dogs are. Kamer then is accused of being non-moderate and too romantic. From that understanding, it can be concluded that violence is believed to be a moderate manner; a neutral attitude that wants to consider another perspective like violence.

D. Science, Violence, and World Hegemony

Humans are the only creatures bestowed by God with intellect. Intellect is a spiritual tool created by God specifically for humans to be able to distinguish between good and bad or right and wrong. Through history, the pattern of human thought then developed into logocentric and finally arrived at absolute truth or *causa prima*. Humans have used their minds to uncover and reveal various phenomena that they encounter during life.

The results of these thoughts are then continually improved by examining the deficiencies that exist in various aspects according to the findings they have found. Over time, humans continue to think scientifically and systematically and produce what we now know as science with a variety of study focuses.

Furthermore, science continues to develop to accompany human life. Many problems in life that can be explained with reason and intelligence can be answered with science that has been arranged scientifically and systematically. Books are written, printed, distributed, corrected, translated, copied millions of copies, and became treasures for science. There is a very famous Indonesian proverb that says; "Books are a window to the world", "books are a storeroom of knowledge". By reading, we can find out what is happening and revolve around us. By reading, we can visit various places without even moving. By reading we can master anything in the world thanks to our knowledge of it.

In the story of *Semilyar Ikan Memakan Anjing-anjing*, reading becomes an ideology to the fish group that is believed to be a weapon of resistance to the domination of power carried out by dogs. The knowledge gained from reading various books is considered to be able to create genius fish that are able to solve the problems that the fish are facing; environmental damage. During this time, various tools of power, tools of war, helpful tools, and various other tools that play a major role in human life were created using the knowledge that has been developed by humans. All inventions that can help life and lead to destruction. Science is everything because it is the king who controls and reveals all the problems of the world, so that science is considered to be able to solve the conflict of environmental damage.

The word violence itself refers to the Latin *violentus* which means power and became a basic principle in Roman public law (Berger, 1953). From this lexical interpretation, it can be seen with a clear relationship between violence and power, including violence as a weapon of power. This is the most happening in the history of mankind. For hundreds or even thousands of years, humans have carried out practices of violence and war to conquer and dominate the world. Not only that, when departing from the events that many of us encounter today, the path of violence has become a shortcut in resolving various other problems.

Science and violence are actually two things that have a really close relationship. Science was created to answer human curiosity while violence was taken to force a person or group to submit under it (in power). People fight for the sake of sciences, science is also sometimes used as a tool for war. Science and technology too if misused will bring destruction to the world, just like violence. Both play a crucial role in war and peace. They are like the two sides of an inseparable coin; there are positive or negative effects that can be obtained from it.

IV. CONCLUSION

There are two ideologies found in this short story, they are science ideology and violence ideology. These ideologies are convinced and brought to fight by the fish group are which to Gramsci is an effort and attempt to commit power hegemony. In pursuance of Gramsci's thoughts, power domination is not

always political and violent nor is governmental issues. In his book, *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci uses various terms that correspond to him to be equivalent to ideology, such as philosophy, worldview, or conception of the world. Gramsci said that the domination of power can be done with ideology, culture, and science.

The fish group in Gramsci's hegemony terms belongs to the bourgeois community group, which is represented by four forms, they are: 1) its powerlessness in preventing environmental damage; 2) the discussion of the preparation of strategies to overcome environmental destruction; 3) the violation of entering the library and stealing books; and 4) its carefulness to infiltrate libraries and steal books, The stages of hegemony that occur in groups of dogs as a reflection of bourgeois society can be seen in three forms, they are: 1) the depreciation and deterrence of fish groups in the library; 2) treating fish groups arbitrarily; and 3) the ownership of libraries and books.

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