

Ideology in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Footsteps*

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ABSTRACT

This study is conducted to construct ideology in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Footsteps*. In order to construct ideology in the novel, Eagleton's theory of six ideological features is employed as the tool to analyze the text. This study finds that there are two dominant class ideologies which are constructed in the novel, which are capitalism and feudalism. This study also finds that the characters are attributed with five ideological features, which are legitimation, rationalization, action-oriented, universalization, and naturalization to maintain the domination and advantages of the dominant classes and their ideologies.

Keywords: *ideology, unifying, action-oriented, rationalization, legitimation, naturalization, universalization*

INTRODUCTION

Literature and politics are two disciplines which have a connection to each other (Farrel, 1942). The relation between politics and literature itself can be seen through literary works. As Bertens (2001, p. 113) states that literary works “always have a political dimension in the sense that on closer inspection they can be shown to take specific stances with regard to social issues, either through what they say or through what they do say”. Eagleton (1996) also states that literature deals with societies, power, and the way people see history or, in other words, it deals with politics from the beginning.

If politics and literature are bounded, then ideology is the bridge between those two. As Hartley (2013, p. 5) states that “we must first have a basic grasp of the concept of ‘ideology,’ since this is one of the most useful terms for linking politics and literature.” According to Eagleton, ideology is “the way men live out their roles in class-society, the values, ideas and images which tie them to their social functions and so prevent them from a true knowledge

of society as a whole (p. 6).” In relation to literature, Eagleton (2002, p. 7) also says that literary works are “forms of perception, particular ways of seeing the world; and as such they have a relation to that dominant way of seeing the world which is the social mentality or ideology of an age.” If literary works are particular ways of seeing the world and they have a relation to ideology, then it means it is important to analyze ideology that is constructed in literary works in order to comprehend them.

One of the writers in Indonesia whose ideology looks strong in his literary works is Pramoedya Ananta Toer. As Boef and Snoek (2008) write, Toer was a writer who was arrested and whose books were banned by the Dutch colonialist, the Old Order, and the New Order because of his political tendency. He was also a member of an artist organization, Lekra, and had contributed to the spreading of socialist-realism doctrine in Indonesia. In 1980, Bumi Manusia, the first part of Pramoedya’s *Buru Quartet*, was published. This *Buru Quartet* (Bumi Manusia, *Anak Semua*

Bangsa, Jejak Langkah, and Rumah Kaca) is a story about the birth of Indonesia nationalism. Bumi Manusia was greatly welcomed and had been reprinted five times when the second book was published. However, the first two books were banned by New Order regime because the regime believed that the books implicitly propagate the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism. In 1985, the third book, Jejak Langkah, was published and also immediately banned by the regime.

The third novel, Footsteps, by Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1996) is chosen to be analyzed in this study. The reason for choosing the book is because Minke, the main character, already has a firm political idea and realizes the condition of the colonized people that are oppressed by the colonialist and the feudalists. His idea and realization have not surfaced yet in *This Earth of Mankind* and *Child of All Nation*. These opinions are supported by Boef and Snoek (2008) who believe that Minke is an egg in the first novel and then hatches in the second novel. They find that Minke as the protagonist has matured in the

third novel of the Buru Quartet. Thus, with Minke's maturity in the novel, this study offers an alternative way to read Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Footsteps by constructing ideologies in the novel.

Berteens (2001, pp. 84-85), explains ideology as faiths and ideas that make the fake and conflicting condition becomes natural in people's eyes by distorting the condition. Shelby also (2003, pp. 156-157) argues that there are negative features or aspects in ideology which can be criticized and denied. Thus, ideology contains negative features that aim to distort the truth, and this distortion eventually is related to the interest of certain class in society

According to Marx (as cited in Taha et.al, 2008, pp. 237-238), ideology and its systems "are the products of social and economic condition." It is related to the statement that say "the class which has the means of material production controls the mental production (p. 235)", it means that certain class in certain era which dominates the economic base is able to use ideology in order to maintain its domination.

For example, the feudalists could spread their ideologies that indeed were able to give some benefits to them since they once dominated the economic base. Taha, Zahra, and Al-Khaoli (2008) then, connect ideology to dominant class. They seem to stress the untruth dimension of ideology that cannot be separated with the economic base and the interests of the class that lie within. Consequently, the ruling thoughts that get around in society are determined by the condition of economy. The thoughts are only purposed to serve the benefit of dominant class and conceal the truth that society and every aspect in it is actually dominated by this dominant class.

The dominant class in society is not only the feudalists, which nowadays rarely seen in the world, but also the capitalist/bourgeois class. Several theorists (Macris, 2011, p. 24; Sussman, 2012, p. 477) connect ideology with the capitalists. It is said that ideology is a tool that is used by the capitalists and their state, including the high ranking politicians, to help and maintain their domination and benefit over society. The

economic and political condition, which only bring advantages to the capitalist class while the rest of society are exploited and oppressed without even knowing it, are eternalized through ideology.

Althusser (as cited in Berteens, 2001, p. 90) tries to answer the question of how ideology distorts and conceal the truth, by stating “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.” Ideology is always able to distort the truth because ideology is some ideas that are continuously developed and constructed by individuals (Shelby, 2003, p. 161). It is related to Eagleton’s (1991) theory about ideological features. Ideology is continuously developed and constructed since people always use ideology as a tool of rationalizing, legitimating, naturalizing, universalizing, action-orientating, and unifying.

Ideologies are said to unify since they “are often thought to lend coherence to the groups or classes which hold them, welding them into a unitary, if internally differentiated,

identity, and perhaps thereby allowing them to impose a certain unity upon society as a whole (Eagleton, 1991, p. 45).” In the action-oriented process, ideologies are not only deal with somewhat like ideas. They as well “must work both practically and theoretically, and discover some way of linking these levels. It must extend from an elaborated system of thought to the minutiae of everyday life... (p. 48)” In this kind of process, Eagleton continues, ideas, values, norms, or cultures must be able to be transferred into practice. Then, ideology also can be used for legitimating the dominant class and its ideas. Legitimation feature of ideology “can simply mean establishing one’s interest as broadly acceptable, rather than lending them a spurious wash of legality (p. 54).” The next feature is rationalization, which “can be seen as more or less systematic attempts to provide plausible explanations and justifications for social behavior which might otherwise be the object of criticism (p. 52).” The fifth is universalization, where in this feature “values and interests which are in fact

specific to a certain place and time are projected as the values and interests of all humanity (p. 56).” The last feature is naturalization. According to Eagleton, “successful ideologies are often thought to render their beliefs natural and self-evident - to identify them with the 'common Sense' of a society so that nobody could imagine how they might ever be different.” Thus, people who see something as natural or common, but it turns out that it can be considered as an object of criticism; they actually get involved in naturalization process.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs descriptive qualitative method, where the basis concept of this method is that the data take the form of words and the analysis depends on explanation. However, the characteristics of the method also include that the researchers have to take more attention in comprehending reality in itself and there are a lot of alternatives explanations rather than if the researchers use numbers (Elliot & Timulak, 2005, p. 147). Tesch (as cited in Dey, 1993, p. 3) expresses

that the method is “oriented to providing thorough descriptions and interpretations of social phenomena.” It also can be employed to make the aspects or features of the topic categorized (Neville, 2007, p. 2).

Regarding the data collection and data analysis, there are several steps of the data processing in this study. First, the data are obtained by identifying narration and dialogues of characters which show conflicts. Next, the conflicts are divided into three kinds of conflicts, which are: (1) conflicts between the colonialist and the colonized, (2) conflicts between the feudalists and the commoners, and (3) conflicts of organizations. The conflicts that can be identified to construct ideologies in the novel are the conflicts that contain the advantages and privileges groups/classes get that can affect or maintain the dominant classes interest politically or economically, and also the ideas, values, cultures, norms, or actions that can maintain the dominant ideologies domination over society. The third step is to categorize and analyze the conflicts with reference to Eagleton’s Marxian

(1991) theory on ideological features: unified, action-oriented, rationalization, legitimation, universalization, and naturalization. Fourth, is to construct the dominant class ideologies from the analysis. The next step is to make meaning from the analysis by referring them to Marxist theory. The last step is to make the conclusion of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis that is conducted finds that there are two dominant class ideologies in the text. These dominant class ideologies are capitalism and feudalism. By using Eagleton’s (1991) ideological features, the analysis also indicates that there are five ideological features constructed in the novel: legitimation, action-oriented, naturalization, universalization, and rationalization.

CAPITALISM

Conflicts between the Colonialist and the Colonized

Legitimation

The legitimations that occur in the conflict between the colonialists and

the colonized in *Footsteps* do not involve the Dutch colonialist directly. The mode of legitimation that can be found in the novel is the dialogues between characters, Ter Haar and Minke, which contain consent of the capitalistic ideas. As explained by Eagleton (1991, p. 55), that "A mode of domination is generally legitimated when those subjected to it come to judge their own behaviour by the criteria of their rulers." So, it also can mean that one is able to not obey the dominant ideas, values, powers, or cultures that exist within society, but one can also do otherwise, which is legitimating the dominant ideology. The legitimation feature can be seen in the evidences where Ter Haar states:

"... In this modern era, everything moves faster. You remember why? Because of the triumph of capital, in its search of profits... (p. 33)"

...He returned to his lecture. "In short, it is the liberals who are the chosen sons of our times, the best sons of the age of capital—an age when everything has and will be brought into being by capital, when anybody—not just the kings and sultans—will be able to have anything they like, as long as they have some capital (p. 35)"

The legitimation in this statement is pointed by the statement of the importance of capital in this age; everybody can do anything they liked as long as they possessed capital. But here, Ter Haar only tells the importance of capital but he conceals the situation that not everybody is able to possess capital. Therefore, the people that do not own capital will only become the miserable person in the end. This condition only gives advantage to the persons that own capital. The ideas of capitalism, where capital is above everything, are not denied by Ter Haar. Because of his acknowledgement of capitalism ideas, he can be identified as legitimating the ideas of capitalism as the dominant class ideology.

Rationalization

From the textual evidences gained from the novel *Footsteps*, the attempts of rationalizing most of the time are manifested by the Liberals and their leader, Van Kollwijjn. Van Kollwijjn stresses the importance of educating the Natives as a compensation for the profits and

benefits that the Natives give to Netherlands. He says:

"We owe a lot to the Indies—there is a moral debt. A debt of honor, which as Europeans, as Christians, we are obliged to repay. We must now do good for the Natives, in return for the good they have done us. And this should not just amount to a few regulations in their favour. They must be helped to become equipped to deal with the new times. And the best bridge across to the Natives in order that they may be so helped is the educated Natives (p. 39)."

Here, Van Kollwijck just falsifies some reasons or justifications to educate the colonized people by explaining that it is because the debt given by the colonized people to the Dutch and the obligation to repay as the Christians. Thus, in this passage, Van Kollwijck rationalizes the act of educating the colonized people. For the further explanation of the reason why they should help the Natives, he says it in the previous paragraph:

"...The qualifications needed to work in a modern society are higher today. This is true in the Indies as well as in Holland. This means we have a responsibility to prepare educated Natives to enter into the modern age. If we do not do this, then all the factories and machines, no matter how fantastic, will be useless because the Natives will not be able to use them (p. 38)."

By mentioning the aim of educating the colonized people is to make them able to operate the machines and factories, it seems that Van Kollwijck indirectly reveals the true motive of his idea. It is to make the colonized people become the workers of the European and Dutch capitalists. Thus, the purpose of the education eventually is just to make the colonized become the cheap workers, so that the capitalists can gain the bigger profit. To conceal this despicable motive, Van Kollwijck therefore, make a rationalization that the education prepared for the colonized is aimed to fulfill the Dutch's obligation as Christians and as repayment to the colonized.

Action-Oriented

The ideological feature of action-oriented could be viewed when Minke read some letters from his friends, Ter Haar and Mir Frischboten, who at once report and ask him about war and politics situation that occur in Dutch-Indies. However, Minke is too confused to answer them because he spend too much times on his study

when he attends STOVIA, the medical school. He says:

And as for me, why was I never able to answer any questions based on my own knowledge? How was it that they knew far more about what was happening in the Indies than I, and I lived here? But as usual all these questions went by the board because of my studies and work (p. 169).

I had no chance to do any writing. Every hour was taken up by studying. There was no time left for enjoying life (p. 55).

These evidences in which Minke knows nothing about recent political updates because he is too busy with his studies indicate the action-oriented feature. STOVIA, the school whose graduates will become the *gubermen* doctor, makes a strict regulation that one has to keep studying continuously in order to become the doctor. Therefore, the regulation prevents Minke studying the political condition of the society. The regulation eventually oppresses the students of the school and makes their political criticism become dull, as evidenced by Minke's inability to answer his friends' reports. It is like what Eagleton (1991, p. 47-48) explained that sometimes ideology

isolates people from the political and concrete reality. Thus, in *Footsteps*, STOVIA prevents the students, Minke particularly, to study the reality of their nations by using action-oriented feature of ideology that takes the form of study regulation.

Universalization

The universalization in *Footsteps* is used by the *gubermen*, or governor-general. It can be found in the novel in relation with the exile of the Raja of Kasiruta and his daughter from their country. When Minke hears this problem and then consults it with his friend who was also a legal adviser, Hendrik Frischboten, the narration states:

He explained that it would be impossible for the princess to leave Java without special permission from the governor-general. He needed to give no justification for any decisions he would make. The governor-general had special rights and was not bound by the law. The raja of Kasiruta had been exiled through the use of these special powers. That his daughter had not been involved in whatever had brought about the decision was irrelevant. Such a practice came from the backward custom of the peoples of the Indies themselves that held that with blood ties went shared responsibility (p. 307).

The evidence of universalization in this passage is shown by the fact that the *gubermen* “had special rights and was not bound by the law.” It means that he is above the law or he is the law itself. Therefore, he is able to do anything he likes without having to care about the consequences. Then, there is no difference between *gubermen* and ancient kings that often consider themselves beyond the law, or even the representation of God itself. Such a value is transferred by the *gubermen*, to the age where the kings’ mightiness has almost vanished. The *gubermen* in this case, brings the idea which is bound to particular time to the beginning of twentieth century, or specifically, he universalizes the absolutism of ancient kings.

Conflicts of Organizations

Legitimation

The legitimation in the conflicts between the organizations is concerned with *Boedi Oetomo*. One of the founders of *Boedi Oetomo*, Raden Tomo, has a discussion with Minke about the new direction of the organization that he wants to

establish. Raden Tomo wants Minke to help him in the organization. But then, he suddenly pries the rumor about Minke and the *gubermen* closeness. He asks:

“The stories about your relationship with the governor-general have been exaggerated, perhaps?”

“It sounds as though you would like those rumors to be true?”

“Well, Meneer Minke, I think that if you go with the stream things are always easier (pp. 235-236).”

In this evidence, Raden Tomo viewed that it is going to be safer for *Boedi Oetomo* if it follows the stream of government power. By mentioning the *gubermen* and the stream, Raden Tomo wants to utilize the authority of *gubermen*. This dependency to the *gubermen’s* power and authority indicates that Raden Tomo and his organization legitimate the colonialist government. If the aim of Raden Tomo’s organization is to liberate the Dutch-Indies from the Dutch colonization, then the organization will have the aim that will destabilize the status quo. However, he decides to be under the protection of the colonialist rule and gives the consent to the colonialist authority. Therefore, by thinking that the *gubermen* is the

legitimate one, Raden Tomo maintains the dominant culture of the Dutch domination over Dutch-Indies.

Action-Oriented

Aside from *Boedi Oetomo*, the organization which was told in *Footsteps* was *Sarekat Dagang Islam(ijah)*, the organization that was founded by Minke. When he has a discussion with his comrade, Thamrin Mohammad Thabrie, Minke decides that it is time to establish a party. He says:

“So you agree, Tuan Thabrie, that such an organization should be established. One that is multi-ethnic, that has Malay as its official language, that is not based on the priyayi but on the traders...”
And so it was that the Sarekat Dagang Islamijah (Islamic Traders' Union) or SDI was founded.... (pp. 339-340)

The action-oriented process in this passage is indicated by Minke's decision to make the traders/little bourgeois as the mass basis for his organization. It means that capitalism, which is represented in the traders, is brought into practice by Minke and his colleagues. Minke's act to make the traders become the mass basis of the organization neither supports the Dutch colonialist and capitalist nor

disadvantages the colonized people. However, it supports the ideology of capitalism maintain its domination in society.

Feudalism

Conflicts between the Feudalists and the Commoners

Naturalization

The evidence of naturalization is shown by the worker of a train when he stands face to face with Minke and his old friend, Sadikoen. Both Minke and Sadikoen hold the title of Raden Mas, while the trainman is just a commoner. As narrated by Minke, the trainman really feels inferior when he is herded before Minke by Sadikoen:

Not long afterward he returned with a man wearing overalls, who just stood there beside Sadikoen, with a bit of bow in the way he stood. He clasped his hands before him. He didn't dare sit down, only because the priyayi caste system classified him as being of lower status (p. 270).

The naturalization process in here is showed by the trainman's act that just stands straightforwardly before Minke and does not even dare to sit. The trainman really feels like he is an inferior human being in front of the two *Raden Mas*. He feels happier

standing like that because it is natural for the low-caste person like him to act like that. It seems that he does not know that there is another rule or custom that allows everyone to sit down while having a conversation. On the other hand, the trainman only knows the custom that does not allow him to sit while having a conversation with his superior. He cannot think of the alternative condition where he can sit in front of Minke. Thus, it means that the trainman naturalizes the ideology of feudalism about the caste system and custom.

Rationalization

Rationalization that is implemented by the feudalists in *Footsteps* connects the justification of their ideas to the God's will. In the time when capitalism start to dominate the Dutch-Indies, feudalism also give justification to their own attitude so that they can sustain the power and interest they have. The case of rationalization could be seen when Minke's mother opposes Minke regarding his decision to help the farmers in Java. The farmers are faced by the problem where the sugar

syndicate plans to reduce the land rent. Minke has an intention to support the farmers in fighting for their right that is snatched by the Dutch. To his mother's idea regarding the farmers' low status, Minke asks:

"And who decide this, Mother?"

"They who are the most powerful among all the men, that which is more powerful than all men. Have you ever seen a farmer in any wayang story? Never. Because they are just not there. There are only the kings, the knights, the priest. The closer a person works to the land, the less honor there is to him, the less he is thought about by anybody (p. 408)."

In this rationalization process, Minke's mother gives three reasons to rationalize the idea of feudalism that considers the farmers as low human being. These rationalizations may give advantages to two dominant classes in the novel. First is the capitalist class, who is advantaged because the ideas teach the farmers to not fight their superior. The ideas also teach that the farmers should not be cared by other people. Thus, the capitalist can gain more profits by reducing the land rent. The second are the feudalists that can maintain their domination toward the lower class.

Conflicts of Organizations

Naturalization

The actions and ideas of *Boedi Oetomo* are not only deals with legitimating the power of the government, but it also has a connection with feudalism. As mentioned before on the section of the conflicts between the feudalists and the commoner, Minke meets his old friend, Sadikoen, who has become the member of *Boedi Oetomo*, on their journey to attend the *BO* congress (p. 270). In the middle of their conversation, Sadikoen starts a polemic against Minke's article in his newspaper that teaches the public to use boycott. He argues that the information contained in the article contradicts the *priyayi*'s belief in which each person is different in their status. Then he states:

"We were born into a world where there are already raja and their families, where there is already a government with its priyayi. There are those who are honored, and those who have no honor, and there are those who are humiliated, because that is the world. There are men and there are women. There are the high and the low. There is the earth and the sky. There are the poor and the rich. You were taught in school too that for everything there is a plus and minus..." (p. 269)"

Naturalization in this passage is shown by Sadikoen that believes people are already born into the caste in this world and this condition will remain unchanged. It is even compared to the axioms that there are men and women, the earth and the sky, etc; the condition that will last forever. However, what is natural for the feudalists only give advantages to persons like the noblemen. Sadikoen urges Minke should not teach anything that can ruin the status quo because he himself, as a Javanese feudal, does not want to lose any privileges. Thus, by being reactionary and believe that the caste system is eternal; Sadikoen naturalizes the Javanese feudalism ideology about the caste system.

CONCLUSION

his study is conducted to construct ideologies in the novel. It can be concluded from the analysis that the dominant class ideologies constructed in Footsteps are capitalism and feudalism. This study also finds there are five ideological features in the novel. The ideological features used in helping or serving

capitalism are legitimation, rationalization, action-oriented, and universalization. These features used generally by the characters in the novel to maintain the domination and advantage of the Dutch capitalist class toward the colonized Dutch-Indies society. Meanwhile, the ideological features used by the feudal class and its compradors are naturalization and rationalization. The uses of ideological features are related to the efforts of the characters in convincing Minke of the ideas of feudalism that only give advantages to the feudal class.

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