

POWER AND DOMINATION OF ALEXANDER REFLECTED IN LUCY CRUICKSHANKS' *THE TRADER OF SAIGON*

Renata Bunga Tresna

Fakultas Ilmu Budaya / Sastra Inggris

Universitas 17 Agustus 1945

Surabaya

ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze Alexander's power and domination in the novel *The Trader of Saigon* by Lucy Cruickshanks. The objective of the study is to describe the background of Alexander's power and domination, Alexander's power and domination towards Vietnamese girls, and Alexander's power and domination towards Hanh. Theory of hegemony is used to represent Alexander power and domination. This study uses qualitative research, as the data used are words, sentences, or phrases from the novel *The Trader of Saigon* by Lucy Cruickshanks. His background as Russian, army, and a businessman become a main attraction to fool Vietnamese girls who are innocent and uneducated. In addition, Alexander's background can trap an uneducated Vietnamese girl named Hanh. He made her trusted him and in the end he successfully sell her in the black market.

1. INTRODUCTION

Basically, Hegemony is a study about power and domination from a higher class to the lower class. Hegemony has become a common issues nowadays, as there are so many issues of it. Every time we open internet, television, or even newspaper, realizing it or not, hegemony always has it's own place in the everyday news. The latest example of hegemony is about coronavirus which become everyone's talk lately. Besides the impact on health, another impact which is also widely discussed is the economic impact, especially for workers. Because of the corona virus, many workers end up losing their jobs. This is where the hegemony starts. The owners of companies affected by the virus, decided unilaterally to lay off some workers to minimize losses. The owners of the company, can be said as the higher class, and the workers are the lower class who need a job. Thus, the boss has the authority to dismiss workers unilaterally because they have money and power.

Novel *The Trader of Saigon* talks about a man named Alexander who dominates Vietnamese people with his power. He run a dark business in Vietnam. He uses his power and domination to trap Vietnamese people, especially Vietnamese women to sell.

Human trafficking sounds familiar for some people. Human trafficking is the most inhuman crime. Every human being has the same right to live and be treated like other humans. Therefore, human trafficking is an unforgivable thing. No human can think of himself as superior to another human being only because of his position and money. And in this novel, the way how a person can be superior among another is well defined. The way how they treat a lower class and how they fool them.

Poverty is the most common reason why people can be easily hegemony by the higher class. People who trapped in poverty are tend to be able to do anything to continue their lives. Even they can do crimes when they are stuck in

the urgent situation, such as, robbing, gambling, or even dark trafficking. They have no choice but doing those things. When people from a higher class offer them a help, they would barely accept it. This is when the hegemony begun.

In this journal, researcher uses qualitative method as the data taken from the novel is in a form of sentences and conversation of the characters.

2. DISCUSSION

There are several reason how hegemony can happen, or the way how hegemony occurs. In the novel *The Trader of Saigon* by Lucy Cruickshanks define hegemony by the character of Alexander and the way how he hegemony Vietnamese people. He uses his money and power to manipulate Vietnamese women and sell them to the black market.

First, his background as a Russian. Russian has a different place in Vietnam. They are always identically with people with a high social status. After the ended, the only foreigner left in Vietnam are Russian. Some of them come to Vietnam after a war to run a business in there. Russian spoon feed the government to smooth their business in there.

Not every person in Vietnam can be close with Russian, especially women. Only women from a high social status can be close with them. In this novel, Alexander uses his background as a Russian to manipulate Hanh. He pretending to interested to Hanh and manipulate her.

Second, his background as an army. Army always identically with a strong man with his tall and big body. Army are always become a perfect symbol of protection. Alexander joined army when he was 18. Being an army was not his will, but it become a responsibility for every young man at that time.

With his background of army, he fool Vietnamese women by acting he wanted to be their protector and make them feel safe being with him.

Third, his background as a businessman. Being a businessman means, he has a lot of money. In this world, having money means

having everything. Everything can always be done easily when we have money. In this novel, the writer show how Alexander manipulate his target by the money he own. Sometimes to trap his target, he pretend to be a boss with a lot of money who recruit employee for his company. This method always work. He can get a lot of goods to sell at once.

After get out of army, Alexander got difficulties to live in Vietnam. After that, he met Herder, later become his boss. Alexander always want to proof to herder that he is good on look for target to sell.

- **How Alexander's power dominate Vietnamese girls**

Vietnamese girls are tend to be innocent and uneducated. After the war ended, most of Vietnamese women lose their men. Their father, their brother, or even their husband. After losing their men, they have struggle to keep living. Moreover, staying in a harm country like Vietnam is not such as an easy thing. They have to deal with Party, the ruler of Vietnam and even crimes which happened every day.

This is what Alexander looking for. A gap that will makes him easily fool them. If he offer them a help, they would barely accept it. Another character of Vietnamese women who trapped in poverty is that they always dreaming about marrying a good man with a good life. They want to upgrade their lives by marrying a city man with a lot of money. Such a traditional simple thought. This is why Vietnamese are easily fool. Alexander can pretend that he interests to them and sell them.

- **How Alexander's power dominate Hanh**

Hanh is a village girl who live only with her sick mother after the death of her father years ago in a war. She works for Dinh in the city, but unfortunately, he never paid her. Hanh works hard every day to buy medicine for her mother.

One day, Alexander was looking for another target to sell when he saw Hanh in the squat. He try to be close to Hanh to get her attention. But Hanh is a little bit different with another

Vietnamese women. She is a bit hard to get. She doesn't barely accept money Alexander give to her, not like another Vietnamese women. The only way to get her attention is by pretending that he interested to her. Hanh is always dreaming about having a better life by having a good husband. And being close with Russian is like a dream come true for her. She used to see only a high class girl who can be closed with Russian. And now Russian is interested to her, she thought.

She tell her best friend, Thuy about Alexander. But Thuy seems suspicious to Alexander. Wen Thuy try to warn Hanh about Alexander, Hanh got mad and leave Thuy. She thinks that Thuy jealous on her because she is close with Russian.

One day, Hanh got robbed. Her ration book was stolen. Ration book is the only precious thing she has. She and her mother only rely on that book every day, as Hanh never get paid. Alexander helped her. He give her some money, she doesn't accept it in the beginning, but she has no choice. She have to buy medicines for he mother, and that is more important than her ego.

Not so long after that, Hanh's mother was dead. Acting like a hero, Alexander helped her bury her mother and even cook for supper funeral. He convince Hanh, that she has no one now. Alexander offer Hanh to follow him to Saigon. He promise that he will look after Hanh and help Hanh to find a job in the city. Hanh was unsure about what she will do without her mother. But finally she agree to follow Alexander to Saigon. That is how Alexander successfully fool Hanh.

3. CONCLUSION

From all the discussion above, can be concluded that there are several factors that emerged hegemony or how hegemony can occurs. Power and money are the most prominent factor here. When a person have money and power, the can easily hegemony another class.