MAINTAINING SUPERIORITY THROUGH DECEPTIVE IMAGE IN DAN BROWN'S *DECEPTION POINT*

THESIS

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ABSTRAK

Irwandi. 2008. Maintaining Superiority Through Deceptive Image in Dan Brown's *Deception Point.*

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Skripsi ini merupakan analisa dari novel *Deception Point* (2001) yang ditulis oleh Dan Brown. Permasalahan yang dibahas dalam novel ini ialah bagaimana orang-orang yang berkuasa dalam suatu negara mempertahankan superioritas mereka melalui penciptaan image atau reputasi yang bersifat menipu (deceptive image) dan sejauh mana karakter dan setting mengungkapkan usaha mempertahankan superioritas melalui image yang kamuflatif. Tujuan penganalisaan ini ialah untuk mengetahui sejauh mana novel *Deception Point* memperlihatkan usaha mempertahankan superioritas melalui image yang kamuflatif. Penganalisaan ini difokuskan pada karakter dan setting yang didasarkan pada teory *hegemony* dan *domination*.

Hasil penganalisaan memperlihatkan bahwa orang-orang yang berkuasa mempunyai kecendrungan untuk mempertahankan kekuasaan dan superioritas mereka dengan menciptakan reputasi yang menipu masyarakat. Hal ini diperlihatkan oleh tiga orang karakter dalam novel yakni Senator Sedgewick Sexton, President Zachary Herney dan pemimpin lembaga intelegensi William Pickerrings. Ketiga karakter diatas membangun reputasi mereka melalui wacana-wacana penting dalam negara seperti kepentingan ekonomi nasional, kebanggaan nasional dan keamanan nasional. Melalui ketiga hal diatas mereka berhasil membuat masyarakat terpedaya dan tidak menyadari tujuan dan intensitas mereka yang sebenarnya.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Backgrounds of the Study

Human beings are social creatures that need the existence of others to support their live. With that reason, they predispose to live in groups, communities, organizations, countries, and nations. Living among this kind of social form has made life start to be complicated and uneasy. All people try to fulfill their own needs. Besides, they have a tendency to do whatever it takes in order to gain this point even if it contradicts with social necessity and sake. These conditions become the most common and crucial causes to bear conflict and chaotic events in human social life.

The social complexity has also become worse due to the reality of human propensity to gain power and honor among their groups. Most people want to make themselves different from other person in such levels of achievements whether it is in social strata, race, spiritual, and moral. This human stratification phenomenon creates binary positions among society; the superior and inferior classes. The first class has a quality that is higher than the second one. They have more influences and power among the other groups. Because of that, they have a propensity to be the dominant class, which is able to control many areas of lives.

When people gain a level of superior in life, they have a tendency to maintain it. For that reason they have a strong motivation to appear as a good person and have fine status among society. In this point, people have an intense

consideration about their reputations or images. They also become sensitive about the opinion of public about them, especially about their position, job, and personality. Therefore, people will try to create a good image or reputation as an effort to gain or maintain their superiority.

Someone's image or reputation reflects their quality in front of public. Wikipedia defines image as "something that is reflected or the character projected or given by someone to the public" (2008). The definition above implies that image is a perception that created by a person in order to get a good opinion about their identity from society or public. In short, people can create their own image in order to be looked as good person so that the public will accept and appreciate them. This reality becomes the point where the purity of the image is questionable and can be argued. It also opens up the discourse to argue the possibility of fake images.

The fake image can lead public toward misinterpretation about someone identity. It has a tendency to be deceptive and to cover up the truth. Dealing with this issue, Jean Baudrillard in his *Simulation* stated that there are four phases of fake image.

> This would be the successive phases of the image:
> 1. the reflection of a basic reality
> 2. masks and perverts a basic reality
> 3. masks the absence of a basic reality
> 4. bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum.
>
> The first phase the image is a good appearance - the representation is of the order of sacrament. In the second, it is an evil appearance - of the order of malefice. In the third, it plays at being an appearance - it is of the order of sorcery. In the fourth, it is no longer in the order of appearance at all, but of simulation (1983).

These phases implies how image run from its genuine reflection toward a pure fake. Besides, it shows that image can give misinterpretation and false recognition toward someone identity. This condition suggested that it is not good to believe someone's image or reputation totally.

Baudrillard in *Simulation,* added that the "transition from signs which dissimulate something to signs which dissimulate that there is nothing, marks the decisive turning point" (1983). The creation phase in the process of changing the reality toward image by human is the crucial point. It is the spot where the reality possibly changes into fake. This process involves human intention and aim that really influence the final end of image.

The implication of the phenomenon above can be found in daily life, especially among political field. At this area, someone's image or reputation become more crucial since those politicians or leaders have to gain public trust and support in order to achieve their positions and purposes. This condition is clearly reflected in campaign time in which they use as a moment to spread out their (good) image.

Some politicians also create their image in order to maintain their superiority. Their superiority is connected with the position they had. At the time they are assigned as power agents by the public in a certain social agency such as in economy, militaristic and government, they will have a social control. This social control is their superiority (Van Dijk, 1999). In their effort to maintain this position, they tend to use some idealistic perceptions about economy, national pride and national security in the society to cover up their own purpose. In the

surface, those politician images show that their actions are for public sake but actually, they have different missions.

In Indonesia, the phenomenon above is shown at the new regime era. The leader of this regime, Soeharto, runs his government by using the hegemonic principle that blind up Indonesian public perception about the politics. Deceptively, this regime uses Pancasila and UUD 1945 enforcement as the reason of their political actions. The regime constructs certain principle and pattern to run the idealisms. It misleads the people of Indonesia into a narrow perspective about Pancasila and UUD 1945. By doing so, the regime is able to maintain its status quo for a long period. Moreover, the regime often abuses people who have different opinion about national situation with military force and social discrimination. As the impact, most of the people in that era should accept the idealism of the nation as the regime wants them to accept. They are trapped in the way of thinking of the regime and politically lost their freedom.

The phenomenon of image which can lead people toward false recognition and misunderstanding can also be seen in the literary work. The novel *Deception Point* written by Dan Brown reflects it. At a glance, the story seems to show how one big scientific discovery can change politic circumstances in one nation. In fact, the story show how some powerful people in the society maintain their superiority by using deceptive image that blind up public perception. Moreover, the story reveals how a "big man" in a nation maintains his superior position which connected toward their political and social status by camouflaging their real personality.

1.1.1   Maintaining Superiority through Deceptive Image

There are two important terms in this analysis to be clarified. They are superiority and deceptive image. The first term deal with someone's quality that is different and higher than others. This quality is called superiority. The meaning of this word in *Roget's New Millennium* (2008) dictionary is the quality of being at a competitive advantage or the state of excelling or surpassing or going beyond usual limits. This word has a synonym with the word dominant and supremacy that have a meaning exercising influence or control. From this definition, superior person can be described as a person who rules or guides other. They are the characters set above and immediately to one side of another character. It means that a superior person is a powerful person who has capability to control and influence others.

The second term is connected with public opinion toward someone's identity. Public recognizes someone from the impression he display in his personality, manner and attitude. These values construct someone image, which will be used by the society as the references to identify someone. *Roget's New Thesaurus* (1995) defines image as the opinion or concept of something that is held by the public. It also said that image is the character projected to the public, as by a person or institution, especially as interpreted by the mass media. *Wikipedia* (2008) also stated that image is drawn from a mental picture about something that is not real or present. This site gives an argument in questioning the pureness of the image. Image also can be described as the character projected or given by someone to the public: appearance, impression. The word "given" in

this quotation shows that image is consciously planned and reflected by someone no matter what his/her intentions.

Image can also be seen as psychological term. At this area image deals with the word persona. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2000), image in psychological term is used to describe a personal façade that one presents to the world. Carl Jung in Guerin's *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (1999) also supports this idea and added that image is our social personality, a personality that is sometimes quite different from our true self. He defines it as a persona; the mask that we show to the world. In his view, the occurrence of image reflect human endeavor to achieve psychological maturity and to adapt with the relationship in social life.

The word "deceptive" has a meaning to cheat or to defraud something. It also can be described as an adjective that designed to deceive or mislead either deliberately or inadvertently. The definitions above show that the word deceptive is related to an ability to make someone or public believe what is not true or fail to believe what is true. This word also described that the subject of it has an intension to give incorrect understanding and perception. It is supported by the definition from *Merriam Webster Dictionary* (2008) which defines it as the word that tends and has power to deceive. Rely on both words definitions above, deceptive image can be described as a consciously and intended character projected or given by someone to the public in order to mislead them toward false perception and understanding. This term occurs in human social lives mostly in the field of politics. The political campaign and maneuver by politicians and

institutional leaders are proper samples of its application in social lives.

"Maintaining Superiority through Deceptive Image" in this analysis is an effort to maintain domination and power by using a fake reputation which consciously intended so it will lead public into misunderstanding and misinterpretation. In this study the dominations are operated in certain discourses of social live such as ideology, economy and militaristic. For that reason, superiority in this analysis is connected with characters positions, which shows their supremacy in the ideology, economic necessity and militaristic dominance in the society.

1.1.2 A Brief of Dan Brown

Dan Brown was born on June 22, 1964. He grew up as the eldest of three children in Exeter, New Hampshire and graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy, a decidedly up-market school where his father was employed as a math teacher, in 1982. His mother, Constance, was a professional musician principally involved in performing sacred music.

His career as a writer was inspired by *Doomsday Conspiracy* which he had found on the beach whilst on holiday in Tahiti in 1994. In 1995 Dan Brown and Blythe, (who later becomes his wife), wrote, under the pseudonym Danielle Brown *187 Men to Avoid: A Guide for the Romantically Frustrated Woman*. The following year Dan Brown became a full-time writer. He published his first thriller, *Digital Fortress*, in 1998. He went on to write *Angels and Demons* and *Deception Point*. In the early pages of *Deception Point* there appeared an Acknowledgement where Brown thanked "Blythe Brown for her tireless research

and creative input." *The Da Vinci Code* which seems also to have benefitted from such "research and input" was published in March 2003 and sold 6,000 copies on the first day - going to the top of the New York Times' Best Seller list in the first week of publication (Brown, *Biography* 2008).

Brown's works shows his interest in secret societies and organizations like NSA, the Vatican, NRO, and Opus Dei. He surprised by the government's apparent ability to "listen in" and began researching the intelligence community's access to civilian communication. In one dialogue of his official website, he stated that his interest in secret societies was influenced by his historical background that surrounded by the clandestine clubs of Ivy League universities, the Masonic lodges of Founding Fathers, and the hidden hallways of early government power (Brown, *Biography* 2008).

Brown's works in this secret society is supported by some researches from his wife and his friends. From these sources he creates the novels that show the ways these secret societies maintain their position and purpose. Besides, his works tend to expose some information about organizations which have a power to control social lives.

1.1.3 *Deception Point*

Dan Brown's *Deception Point* is a novel which talks about politic and science. In this novel Brown shows how a "big man" in the society politically reacts toward a big scientific discovery in order to gain their own purposes. Actually, the novel itself reveals an effort to maintain superiorities by using deceptive image. This condition is represented by some actions taken by three

characters in the story. Each of them is an aristocrat who has high position among the US society especially in military and politics. Considering their superiorities, they do everything it takes to defend it. The most effective ways to defend such superiorities is by creating a deceptive image. This kind of image has capability to manipulate society so that they will have a good perception about someone. This good perception is the most important thing for the politicians to gain public attention and support. By having both they will able to maintain their superiorities. There are two main ways to create a deceptive image. They are political campaign and political maneuver. Those actions are done by three characters. They are Sedgewick Sexton, Zachary Henrey,and William Picerrings.

The first character is Senator Sedgewick Sexton. He tries to create a reputation as the man who will rescue America from economical outspending insufficiency. His effort is shown in his political campaign and political maneuver. In all his campaign he tend to make public believe that the president support toward NASA foundation is a big mistake. He open up public perception about the emergence of educational foundation in order to make NASA budgeting seems irrational and useless. This campaign make public believe that he is the national savior from economical outspending insufficiency and support him in the next election. Unfortunately, the image that Sexton reflects to public actually refers to the opposite direction. Actually, his main purposes is only to maintain his own economical wealth.

The second character is President Zachary Henrey. He is the man who is respected and honored by his employees and most of American's institutional

leader. He has an image as the man who sustains American pride and supremacy in science. He creates this image by using the political campaign. His campaign persuades public to consider NASA as the symbol of American supremacy. Most of people around him accept and support this idealism. They agree with the decision to keep NASA monopoly in space research and its huge foundation as an effort to maintain American supremacy in science. This idealism is the hegemonic power that can maintain Herney's real intention. His support toward NASA is only a game, because he actually considers it as a hobby. Herney true intention is only to maintain his own dignity and honor as a president.

The last character is William Pickerings. He is the leader of the NRO, the most secrecy agency of the USA which has a function to maintain American national security. He makes some secret political maneuvers such as directing NASA fake discoveries and controlling secret military action in the name of national security emergency to have good reputation. As the impact of those actions, he is called as the Quicker by his employees. Most of governmental staffs in Washington also agree with it. They believe that Pickering is the man who will carry on American military power above others nation in the world. Unfortunately, this image does not reflect the truth about Picerings. His only intention to do his job is his own traumatic fear about the death of his daughter. He maintains his position because he fears that the NRO will lose the power if it leads by other person who has different idealism with him.

1.2 Problem of the Study

The novel *Deception Point* shows the effort to maintain superiority by using deceptive image. It shows in characters action. In order to keep their power, each character spread out their deceptive images which are able to mislead society. These actions are done for political purposes and connected to the process of domination and hegemony. Base on that, the research question of the analysis will be formulated as follow:

1. How does the whole novel reveal an effort to maintain superiority by using deceptive image?

2. To what extend do character and setting reveal the character's deceptive image that used to maintain their superiority?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this analysis is to reveal how deceptive image is used to maintain superiority in novel *Deception Point*. Besides, this analysis is done to find how far characters and setting reveal the used of deceptive image to maintain superiority.

1.4 Previous Study

Analysis and critics toward Brown's novel *Deception Point* have not been found yet but there are some analysis related to the topic. The first analysis is written by Gavin Miller with the title *Cognition and Community: The Scottish Philosophical Context of the "Divided Self"* (2000). In this analysis Miller applied R.D Laing's argument about "divided self" which show human tendency to create

different perception when they are in a community. Miller stated that the dualism of the self is aroused as the impact of ontological insecurity which is caused by lack of explicit opinion on such issues as the status of universals, or the reality of mind and matter. From philosophical point of view of Hume, he notices that human dualism of the self is the way to react toward condition that different human achieve different attribute and respect.

The second analysis is *The Psychology of Self-Deception as Illustrated in Literary Characters* written by Christopher Frost (2007). In this analysis Frost focuses his analysis on psychology perspective. Based on Freud theory, Frost shows that human tend to deceive themselves when facing information that challenge their self-images. The reason to do this action is the disturbing realization from the information which arouses the anxiety and fear. Those feeling are the main explanation that changing human sense of self. The self-deception is influenced by human habits and attention. Human sense of self is constructed from material to which they have attended. Base on that human will create their personal representation according to their experiences.

Both analyses above have various ways in interpreting human deceptive image. They also enriched the knowledge about the topic. Those works give an input toward this analysis which due to human's reason in creating false image or personality. Yet different from both of them, the center of attention of this analysis is in political perspective under the title "Maintaining Superiority through Deceptive Image". Moreover the analysis focuses on characters and setting which aim to reveal the topic of analysis.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This analysis is mostly related to American political perspective which deals with hegemony and domination. The term of hegemony firstly comes from Antonio Gramsci's *Selection From Prison Notebook* (1991) who was an Italian political theorist. He defines hegemony as the process by which the dominant classes or fractions, through their privileged access to social institutions (such as the media), spread values that reinforce their control over politics and economy. Therefore, hegemony is a medium to reinforce control and maintain power. The hegemony will create a dominant ideology which is a common sense of assumptions that spread out in society. It will lead the society to have a thought and mindset which advantage the dominant classes. By having this, the dominant classes will be able to maintain their superior position or power.

Dealing with power, this analysis is more specifically at forces of restraint and the ways hegemonic forces consolidate the status quo. Hedges's *New Historicism Explained* (2000) sees this phenomenon as state power. He sees that in maintaining state power, the hegemony strengthens the power and domination of certain people or group especially in the politic area. Though this hegemonic power may (at some end point) rely on the threat of punishment, it is not necessarily relied on actual physical enforcement on a day life basis. This hegemonic power tends to appear as ideological rules or system which has purpose to support social necessity. It is also shaped by social institution which refers to government or the leader. By those reason the process of maintaining power is run well.

The dominant class has many ways to perform domination. Hedges in *New Historicism Explained* (2000) stated hegemony as the processes by which dominant culture maintains its dominant position. There are some ways to do the domination such as: the use of institutions to formalize power; the employment of a bureaucracy to make power seem abstract; the inculcation of the populace in the ideals of the hegemonic group through education, advertising, publication, etc.; the mobilization of a police force as well as military personnel to subdue opposition.

Related to the topic, domination in this analysis is consolidated by publication, it is represented by political campaign and maneuvers. Those actions contain an effort to be appeared as a good person or leader. The dominant classes in the story which represented by Zachary Herney, Sedgewick Sexton and William Picerring tend to trick public by creating good image which can influence and change public perception. The perception itself is the main object of the analysis.

The perception which comes from the dominant class is consciously made. It comes to public in the form of image. The dominant choose the information or data which suits the image they want to be portrayed. Then it will be spread out to public through the media and publication. What public had received is only a simulation. Baudrillard in *Simulation* (1983) stated that simulation is made by the process of dissimulate, it has a meaning to feign and representing what one not has. "To dissimulate is to feign not to have what one has. To simulate is to feign to have what one hasn't. One implies a presence, the

other an absence." The simulation does not represent the true simulator and will create a false recognition. In this case, media and publication is a tool to shows the simulation. Human will achieve the deceptive understanding because the information comes indirectly. The tendency of deceptively image also found in psychological term. Jung in Guerin's *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (1999) called this phenomenon as persona. It is a mask someone shows to the world or society. This is the personality which often different with one true self. In order word, this personality is social personality which is unconsciously made to adapt with the social complexity.

The analysis of this novel is supported by context-based interpretation. This approach sees that there is a strong interconnection between the text and what outside of it such as; history and social phenomenon (Tillard in Selden, *Literary Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* 1993). In this analysis, the text is examined base on its historicity that can be related to politic, social, economy and ideology. The relation between the text and literary works must be seen from broader perspectives which questioning the objectivity of the history itself. For that reason the interpretation of the text should be done by sharper eye which can catch all distortion from all perspectives to reveal even the most insignificant problems. Since the focus of the analysis is connected with the American political perspective, the context which will be used in this analysis is its political background and circumstances.

The analysis of this novel is done through examining its fictional devices. There are two devices, which is focuses of analysis; character and setting. The

first is important to reveal the meaning of the story. Madden in *Exploring Fiction* (1999) stated that the analysis of the character can be done though their action, dialogue, how they react toward the circumstances and what other character state about them. The observation toward character is helped by the description from narrator.

Other element that used in this analysis is setting. It contains the location and the atmosphere of the story. Both of them give direct and indirect impact toward character and conflicts of the story. Madden in *Exploring Fiction* (1999) stated location as a media to show when and where the story taking place. The atmosphere comes from the mix of location and variable circumstances. It supports and complements the conflict and characters in order to convey the story's meaning.

1.6 Methodology

In analyzing this novel there are two elements used as focuses of attention such as characters and setting. Those elements are analyzed through the perspective of domination and hegemony. In this story, characters are described by the text and narrator explanation. Some of characters' conversation in the story are used in revealing the meaning of this analysis. Furthermore, it will be supported narrator's explanation about characters.

Setting is a crucial element in the story that would give a description about its background. The political circumstances of the story is main element which important to show characters' motive and attention to create their deceptive

reputation. Through both of them, the analysis is related to American political perspective and connected with domination and hegemony.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

Dan Brown's novel *Deception Point* reveals the efforts taken by some higher level persons in the country to maintain their superiority by using deceptive image. All of them are succeed to gain their effort because they have a reputation that connected with three major discourses among society. The character Sedgewick Sexton connected his image with the economical policy. The character, Zachary Herney connected his image with the issue of National Pride. The last character, William Pickering, connected his reputation with the emergence of national security.

The character Senator Sedgewick Sexton is able to mislead public because he represents himself in front of them as the national hero of national economic outspending. This effort is supported by his correct decision in giving good promises toward public. He provokes national awareness toward the economic insufficiency. Besides, he gives public the sense of Liberalism.

The character Zachary Herney misleads public with the issue of national pride. His political campaign and maneuvers lead public to believe that NASA is the symbol of National pride. Through this public assumption, he finally maintains his intention to support his feeling of admiration toward the institution of NASA.

The last character, William Pickering uses the issue of national security to mislead national leader and his staffs. It makes them failed to recognize his real

intention. His political maneuvers which helped him to maintain his powerful position in military and politics support his effort to prevent his traumatic experience about the death of his daughter.

The three characters in this novel can be seen as the representative of the current politicians in the world who use many discourses and major problems in their society as a mean to built their reputation. Through those means, they also cover up their true intentions that often contradicts with public expectation. In other word, the novel shows that the image and reputation which are reflected by some people to the public tend to mislead them into false understanding.

In reality, the phenomenon of deceptive image occurs in certain aspect of social life, especially in political area. Commonly, it can be found in campaign time where many politicians compete each other in order to achieve public support. Public should be wisely enough to face this phenomenon. In order to prevent public deception, they have to be aware with the politician's reputation and image. Moreover, public should have the ability to distinguish the politicians' intention from their actions and words.

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