

IDEOLOGY IN *THE SCARLET LETTER* BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal ideology in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The data collection methods and techniques used are the reading method and note-taking technique. Data were analyzed based on Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis which focuses on analyzing text dimensions that is syntax analysis (sentence patterns) in the form of interpretation of the meaning of subject-objects. The results of this research show that sentence pattern analysis reveals power in the disposition of subjects and objects in sentences which highlights social hierarchy in the Puritan era. The social sanctions imposed on Hester as a sinner reflect the ideals of morality and holiness promoted by the Puritan government which placed them in a position of moral authority. The woman character (Hester) is depicted as a passive object without power, while the male characters, the priests, the government, and the society, are considered as active subjects with power. Based on dimensions of text analysis, two ideologies were found embedded in the novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne that is the Puritan ideology and patriarchal ideology.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis (AWK), *The Scarlet Letter*, Ideology.

INTRODUCTION

Critical discourse analysis of literary works is a practical implication of conceptual linguistics. At the analysis stage, the practical implications of conceptual linguistics will come into contact with conceptual literature because of the similarity of the object of study, namely the real use of language. In this regard, critical discourse analysis in general can provide an approach that opens new insights for the study of language and ideology and the social changes that accompany them (Schiffrin, 1994: 31). This conceptualization later became widely used and became a common character for most frameworks called discourse analysis, especially critical discourse analysis. This is in line with the opinion of Fairclough, (1995:28-32) & Wodak, (2001:5), that the form of discourse analysis that involves social phenomena in the use of a language is called critical discourse analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis (AWK) is an approach that examines discourse as social praxis. According to Van Dijk (2001), critical discourse analysis focuses on the power and inequalities created in social phenomena. AWK is used to analyze discourse in the realm of politics, race, gender, hegemony, culture, and social class. The field of study is centered on the principles of critical discourse analysis, namely: action, context, history, power, and ideology. The advantage of critical discourse analysis in reviewing ideologies related to various social practices which is a characteristic of its analysis lies in the positioning of ideology and its analysis (Fairclough, 1995: 14). Therefore, in dissecting discourse, interpreters cannot be separated from the factors that influence the formation of discourse, namely culture, politics, ideology, institutions and all

the social factors that surround it. Jorgensen (2007:130) suggests that the main aim of critical discourse analysis is to explore the relationship between language use and social practice. The focus of his attention is on the role of discursive practices in efforts to preserve social order and change. Every communicative event functions as a form of social practice in producing or challenging the order of discourse.

Critical discourse analysis uses discourse as a social practice to cause a dialectical relationship between certain descriptive events and the situations, institutions, and social structures that shape them. In this case, critical discourse analysis sees language as an important factor, namely how language is used to see the inequality of power in society. The main focus of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis lies in the use of discourse as an implementation of the power that surrounds it. In observing how language users have certain ideological values, a comprehensive study is needed. Therefore, discourse studies must focus on the way language is formed and formed from its relationship with the social context in which it occurs (Fairclough 1995:131-132).

This research chooses the literary work of the novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne which was first published in 1850. However, this research uses a novel published in 1994 by Penguin Popular Classics. The critical phenomenon that becomes a problem begins with a tragedy that befell the main character, Hester Prynne. Hester was given social sanctions for the sins she committed in the land of New England in the structure of Puritan society. Hester Prynne, the wife of a prominent family, left Europe and sailed to New England, America. Hester went first, her husband followed later. However, after two years of living alone in Boston, her husband, Roger Prynne, never came to see Hester. Until the incident happened, Hester Prynne had an illicit relationship that was kept secret from everyone. This illicit relationship gave birth to a baby named Pearl. It was at that time that the people of Boston believed that Hester had broken the law and committed a great sin in the land of New England. In the end, Hester was forced by the priests to reveal the name of her child's father, but she did not want to say who the child's father was. This incident made the public and the government suddenly furious and punished Hester for standing on a scaffolding in the middle of the city wearing the scarlet letter 'A' on her chest. This letter is a sign of 'Adultery' or a sinner/adulterer which she must wear throughout her life. This is a social punishment for Hester due to committing a big sin that people will remember for the rest of her lives. Not only that, the government in the city also wants to separate Hester from her daughter Pearl because they think Hester will not be able to raise Pearl properly. This triggers Hester's anger and sadness. In addition, the social sanctions given to Hester by the priests and government in the city made her a person who was dominated by society.

The Scarlet Letter contains ideologies inserted by the author for certain purposes. Ideology can be analyzed using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis model. Fairclough's critical discourse analysis is based on how to connect micro texts with the macro context of society. Fairclough tries to build a discourse analysis model that contributes to cultural analysis, combining the tradition of textual analysis which always looks at language in a closed space with the broader context of society (Eriyanto 2003:285). Norman Fairclough's critical discourse

analysis is divided into three dimensions, namely text dimensions, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice (Fairclough, 1998: 97). Text dimensions are analyzed linguistically, taking into account the use of diction, word meaning, and linguistic rules. According to Fairclough (1995:2) and Haryatmoko (2019:23), text analysis is considered to have ideological potential, including the combination of all linguistic forms of the text in the form of word repertoire, grammar, syntax, metaphor structure, and rhetoric. Discourse practice is an analysis of discourse practices that involves attention to the processes of production, distribution, and consumption of texts (Fairclough, 1995:9). This shows that a discourse practice will determine whether a text is formed or produced. Fairclough's third dimension is the socio-cultural practice dimension which states that discourse has the potential to influence social structures. This dimension includes economic, political, cultural, and ideological elements (Fairclough, 1992: 66). This dimension of socio-cultural practice relates to contexts outside the text and contexts that contain the context of situations, and institutions to society or certain cultures and politics.

However, this research focuses on text dimension analysis that is syntax analysis (sentence patterns) in the form of interpretation of the meaning of subject-objects in the novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Text dimension analysis was carried out to reveal the ideology inserted by the author in the novel. Fairclough describes the text dimension, namely micro-level analysis as the 'description' stage of the text (Fairclough, 2001: 91). In this dimension, the text is analyzed linguistically, taking into account the vocabulary used, syntax, and grammar which constitute the writing style (Fairclough, 2001: 91 -116). In addition, Fairclough (1995:2) and Haryatmoko (2019:23) state that text analysis is considered to have ideological potential, including the combination of all linguistic forms of the text in the form of word repertoire, grammar, syntax, metaphor structure, and rhetoric.

Critical discourse analysis using Norman Fairclough's model sees discourse that is produced, distributed, and consumed by the audience, becoming an inseparable part of the audience, and even becoming a trace for the audience. At this level, discourse will form an ideology, which can then be called communal ideology. Therefore, discourse plays a role in the formation of social identity (Fairclough, 1995: 40). The ideology in question is the idea or thoughts and power hidden behind a discourse text that is created. Therefore, it is hoped that by using a critical perspective in AWK, researchers can interpret critically to uncover the ideology behind the text of the novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. This qualitative descriptive research can also be used to reveal qualitative information by describing how language is used through the interpretation of the meaning of subject-object to describe the characteristics of a thing, individual or group, situation, or phenomenon. Therefore, this qualitative descriptive research aims to describe how language is used as a form of social practice. This research data is in the form of sentences or dialogue quoted from the novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1994). The data collection methods and techniques used are the reading method and note-taking techniques. Data were analyzed based on Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse

Analysis which focuses on text dimension analysis, namely syntactic analysis (sentence patterns) or interpretation of the meaning of subject objects. The researcher carried out data analysis in several steps, namely (1) data collection, (2) data classification and analysis, (3) presenting the results of data analysis, and (4) revealing the ideology in the novel based on the text dimension analysis that had been carried out previously.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interpretation of subject-object meaning is done by looking at the relationship between the subject and object in the sentence. In this case, subject-object disposition can show the dominant and dominant group. Therefore, the ideology embedded by the novel author can be revealed. The following data shows the relationship between the subject and object in the sentence:

1. “Man had marked this woman’s sin by a scarlet letter, which had such potent and disastrous efficacy that no human sympathy could reach her, save it were sinful like herself.” (Hawthorne, 1994: 75)

The sentence above is a declarative sentence that places "man" which refers to society and Puritan officials as the subject and "this woman's sin" which refers to Hester as the object. In this sentence, society and Puritan officials are the subjects who act, namely marking Hester's sin with a scarlet letter which has a strong and detrimental impact. On the other hand, Hester is depicted as an object that accepts the action and has no power to change the situation. This pattern reflects the social inequality that exists between the rest of society and Hester herself. Additionally, the Puritan officials have the authority and power to determine Hester's fate, while Hester has no control or power to fight back.

The community's actions show discrimination against Hester. This also shows hegemony which refers to the power held by Puritan officials. Hegemony can be interpreted as ideological domination that refers to the Puritan legal system. In the case of Hester's sin of adultery, the Puritan officials used hegemonic power in implementing social instruments without considering law and justice.

2. “It would be greatly for the public behoof, if we women, being of mature age and church-members in good repute, should have the handling of such malefactresses as this Hester Prynne” (Hawthorne, 1994: 43)

The visible sentence pattern is Hester as the passive object and society as the powerful subject. This can be seen from the role assigned to them in the sentence. First, Hester is depicted as a passive object. Hester is mentioned as "this Hester Prynne" indicating that she is a subject who is ordered or treated by someone else. She is considered a "malefactress" or evildoer by society. In this context, Hester has no power or authority to influence society's views or treatment of her. Hester must accept the judgment and punishment determined by society while society is depicted as the ruling subject. They are referred to as "we women" which shows that they have the power and authority to take action against Hester. Society assumes that they, as adult women and upstanding members of the church, should have control over Hester's treatment

and make decisions on Hester's punishment. Society is depicted as having the power to determine how Hester should be punished.

3. "This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die. Is there not law for it? Truly, there is, both in the Scripture and the statute-book. (Hawthorne, 1994: 44)

In the sentence above, it can be seen that Hester is described as a passive object. She is referred to as "this woman" which indicates that she is an object that is ordered or treated by others. Hester is considered a source of shame for society. In this sentence, the author describes the character Hester who does not have the power or authority to influence society's views or treatment of her. Hester must accept the judgment and punishment prescribed by them. In addition, society and the priests are depicted as powerful subjects. They are referred to as "us all" indicating that they have the power and authority to take action and determine Hester's fate. The people and the priests thought that Hester should be put to death because she had brought shame to them. They expected punishment based on the Scripture and the statute-book, as the basis for their actions against Hester.

4. "Thus she will be a living sermon against sin, until the ignominious letter be engraved upon her tombstone." (Hawthorne, 1994: 53)

The sentence above is a declarative sentence. The subject of this sentence is "she" which refers to Hester and "a living sermon against sin" as an explanation in the sentence. This sentence shows that Hester is seen as someone who must suffer and is a living warning about sin. In this sentence, it shows Hester as a passive subject and punishment as a complement that binds her. Hester is the subject who receives punishment and becomes "a living sermon" against sin. The punishment in question refers to the scarlet letters that must be carved on his tombstone. This pattern reflects the hierarchies of power and social control that existed at the time and context in which the story takes place. Hester is considered a sinner who must accept the punishment determined by society. Hester has no power or authority to change or resist the punishment, so she is a passive subject in this situation.

5. "They averred, that the symbol was not mere scarlet cloth, tinged in an earthly dye-pot, but was red-hot with infernal fire, and could be seen glowing all alight, whenever Hester Prynne walked abroad in the nighttime" (Hawthorne, 1994: 74)

This sentence is a declarative sentence which places the subject 'they' as the people who judge Hester, and the object 'the symbol' which refers to the character Hester as an object that is considered to be connected with crime and is shunned by society. In this sentence, the subject-object pattern shows Hester as the passive object and the government as the powerful subject. Hester is explained as "the symbol" which does not only consist of "scarlet cloth", but also has a deeper meaning. Hester is considered an object that represents sin and is thought to have terrifying power. On the other hand, the government and society in this story are considered as powerful subjects. They are the ones who determine the meaning and interpretation of the symbol. Society considers the symbol to be something associated with hellfire and can be seen burning when Hester walks at night. They have the power to determine how the symbols are

interpreted and how Hester should be punished. This pattern reflects the dynamics of power and social control that exist in *The Scarlet Letter*.

6. "Woman, transgress not beyond the limits of Heaven's mercy!" cried the Reverend Mr. Wilson, more harshly than before." (Hawthorne, 1994: 58)

This sentence is an imperative sentence or command sentence given by Reverend Mr. Wilson to Hester. The subject of the sentence is "Reverend Mr. Wilson" and "woman" (Hester) is objects who receive orders from Reverend Mr. Wilson. In the sentence above, Reverend Mr. Wilson shouted warning Hester to *transgress not beyond the limits of Heaven's mercy*.

In this context, Reverend Mr. Wilson highlights the dynamics of power and the role of religion in the novel, where Hester as a female character is considered an object bound by religious authority represented by the orders of the Reverend Mr. Wilson. However, this certainly contradicts the duties of the pastor as explained in the Bible, where the pastor is supposed to pay attention to the congregation and kindly rebuke the congregation whose lives deviate from the Christian faith.

7. "Good Master Dimmesdale," said he, "the responsibility of this woman's soul lies greatly with you. It behooves you, therefore, to exhort her to repentance, and to confession, as a proof and consequence thereof." (Hawthorne, 1994: 56)

The quotation is a statement sentence or declarative sentence. This sentence consists of 2 sentences which are used to convey information or statements. The content of this sentence is in the second sentence. Therefore, the subject of this sentence is "you" which refers to Good Master Dimmesdale who has responsibility for the woman's soul. The object in this sentence is "her" which refers to Hester. This sentence shows a subject-object pattern that places Hester as a passive object and the priests as powerful subjects. In these sentences, Governor Bellingham tells the priest Dimmesdale that the responsibility for Hester's soul rests with him. They emphasize that Dimmesdale must encourage Hester to repent and confess her sin as proof and consequence of her repentance. In this context, Hester is considered a passive object because the responsibility for Hester's fate and repentance is placed on Dimmesdale. Reverend Dimmesdale is considered to be the party who has the power and authority to influence Hester in this matter. In contrast, Hester is not given an active role in the conversion or decision-making process. He was considered to be the party who had to be influenced and directed by the priests.

The analysis of this sentence also highlights the dynamics of power and gender roles in the novel, where the governor and priest as men characters have the authority and power to regulate and direct Hester's life, while Hester as a woman character is considered an object that must submit to the will of the law. This also strengthens the patriarchal hegemony represented by men characters over individual woman characters. They not only impose punishments for their violations, but also ignore their needs and rights as individuals. In this context, it shows relationships that reflect the gender power imbalance and lack of empathy towards woman in Puritan society at that time.

8. “At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead.” (Hawthorne, 1994: 44)

This sentence is a statement sentence or declarative sentence. This sentence is the public's desire for the government to give appropriate punishment to Hester Prynne. This can be seen in the subject in the sentence, namely "they" which refers to the government, and "the brand of a hot iron" as an explanatory complement which refers to the object of the character (Hester) who receives the action. The people hoped that the government would place a hot iron brand on Hester's forehead. Thus, it can be concluded that the quote above shows how the government and society want a heavier punishment for Hester. This also shows the power of the government and society in determining Hester's fate.

9. “Speak to the woman, my brother” said Mr. Wilson.”(Hawthorne, 1994: 57)

The sentence above is imperative. This sentence shows a sentence pattern that places Hester as a passive object and the priests as powerful subjects. This can be seen from the role of each word in the sentence. The word "speak" is a verb that shows the action carried out by the subject. In the sentence, the subject of the verb "speak" is a priest, represented by the pronoun "my brother" which refers to Reverend Dimmesdale who was given the right by Reverend Mr. Wilson to speak to Hester. Meanwhile, Hester is mentioned as the object of the sentence. The object is the recipient of the action of the subject. Hester is mentioned as "the woman" in this sentence. Hester does not perform any actions, only being an object that receives commands from the priests. Therefore, the subject-object pattern in the sentence suggests that the priests have power and control over Hester, who is considered a passive object. This reflects the patriarchal and sexist views that were still dominant at that time, where women were considered objects that had to be dominated and controlled by men.

10. “Exhort her to confess the truth!” (Hawthorne, 1994: 57)

This sentence is a command sentence or imperative sentence. Imperative sentences are used to give orders, instructions, or advice to someone. However, the sentence comes from Pastor Wilson who gave orders to Reverend Dimmesdale regarding Hester's punishment. In this sentence, the subject is "you" which is not mentioned explicitly. This subject refers to the person who was given the order or instruction, that is Reverend Dimmesdale. The object in the sentence is “her” which refers to Hester who is asked to admit the truth. In the sentence above, it can be seen that the government permitted Hester to admit the truth. Hester is considered an object that must be influenced or ordered by the government. In contrast, the government is considered a powerful subject because it has the authority to order and regulate Hester's actions.

11. “the child shall be well cared for!—far better than thou canst do it!”
(Hawthorne, 1994: 95)

The sentence above is a statement or declarative sentence. This sentence came from a priest addressed to Hester Prynne. In this sentence, the subject is "the child" and the object is "thou" (you). The subject "the child" is the focus of the statement in this sentence. The object in this sentence is "thou" (you), which refers to the person being spoken to, which is Hester (the child's

mother). In this sentence, the word thou or "you" is used to refer to Hester who is considered by the priest to be unable to care for the child properly. The sentence depicts Hester as a passive object and the priest as a powerful subject. First, the words "the child" show that the child is an important subject in the sentence. However, the sentence emphasizes that the child will be well cared for by the priests, not Hester. This shows that Hester is considered incapable of caring for the child. Second, the word thou or "you" in the sentence refers to Hester, which shows that Hester is considered inferior or powerless in this context. The sentence implies that Hester was unable to do what the priests were able to do to care for the child. Thus, the subject-object pattern in the sentence shows Hester as the passive object and the priests as the powerful subjects. This reflects the social hierarchy and authority that existed at the time and place the story took place.

12. "Clergymen paused in the street to address words of exhortation, that brought a crowd, with its mingled grin and frown, around the poor, sinful woman." (Hawthorne, 1994: 72)

In this sentence, there is a sentence pattern that shows Hester as a passive object and the government as a powerful subject. The subject of the sentence is "Clergymen" (priests). They are the people who act in this sentence, as in the following quote "paused in the street to address words of exhortation". Besides that, the object in this sentence is "the poor, sinful woman".

In the context of this sentence, Hester is described as a passive object because she is the recipient of the actions of the priests who stopped to give advice or teaching to the people when Hester was on the city street. Hester, who is helpless, also has no control or power to change the situation. In contrast, the priests "clergymen" are depicted as powerful subjects because they have the moral authority and power to judge and advise society to make Hester an example of sin and error. Their actions attracted the attention of the people around them, which is reflected in the sentence with the words "brought a crowd, with its mingled grin and frown". This shows an imbalance of power between Hester as a passive object and the government (the priests/clergymen) as a powerful subject in the context of this sentence.

13. "Care must be had, nevertheless, to put the child to due and stated examination in the catechism, at thy hands or Master Dimmesdale's." (Hawthorne, 1994: 97)

In this sentence, there is a subject-object pattern that shows Hester as a passive object and has no power over her child, while the government (the priests and governor) is the powerful subject. The subject in this sentence is "care". Although "care" is not a person, in this context, it represents the church government or competent authority (governor). The object in the sentence is "the child" (Pearl).

In this context, Hester is depicted as a passive mother because she has no power or control over her child. This sentence implies that the church government had the power to examine Hester's children in terms of religious knowledge through examination in the catechism. Hester was thought to have no choice or power to determine how her child would be examined but had to submit to the decisions of the governor and the priests. They, represented by the word "care"

in the sentence, are depicted as powerful subjects because they have the authority to determine how Hester's child will be examined in terms of religious knowledge. This also shows an imbalance of power between Hester as a mother who has no power over her child, and the government as a subject who has power in the context of this sentence.

14. “Moreover, at a proper season, the tithing-men must take heed that she go both to school and to meeting.” (Hawthorne, 1994: 97)

In this sentence, there is a sentence pattern that shows Hester as a passive object and has no power over her child, while the priests are the subjects who have power. The subject in the sentence is "the tithing-men". They are the people who act in the sentence, namely "must take heed", while the object in the sentence is "she" (Hester). In this sentence, Hester is described as a passive object because she has no power or control over her child. This sentence highlights the priests who have the power to ensure that Hester takes her child to school and to church. Hester does not have the right to determine whether her child should go to school and church but must submit to the decisions of the church government. The priests, represented by the phrase "the tithing-men" in the sentence, are described as powerful subjects because they have the authority to ensure Hester's obedience in sending her child to school and church. This also shows an imbalance of power between Hester as a passive object and has no power over her child, and the church government as a powerful subject in the context of this sentence.

15. “Then, and there, before the judgment-seat, thy mother, and thou, and I must stand together. But the daylight of this world shall not see our meeting!” (Hawthorne, 1994: 130)

The conversation fragment above consists of 2 sentences. In this sentence, the sentence pattern that appears is Hester as the object who is passive and has no power, while Reverend Dimmesdale is the subject who has power. This can be seen from their role in the sentence. Hester is depicted as a passive object and has no power. She is mentioned as "thy mother" which suggests that she is a subject who is ordered or treated by others. She has to stand on the judgment seat along with Reverend Dimmesdale and their child, which shows that Hester has to face the consequences of her actions. However, Hester does not have the power or authority to change the situation. She must accept her fate and face the punishment prescribed by Puritan society. On the other hand, Reverend Dimmesdale is depicted as a subject who has power. He is mentioned as "I" which shows that he has control and power over the situation. This can be seen in the second sentence, where Dimmesdale states that their meeting must not be known to the public, showing that Dimmesdale has the power to decide how and when to reveal himself as a sinner. He has the power to influence or direct the decisions and actions related to the situation. In the context of the novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, this sentence pattern regarding subject-object placement reflects the social hierarchy and gender roles that existed at that time. Hester as a woman who is considered sinful is considered an object that must submit to the authority and rules set by powerful men such as priests and governors. Meanwhile, priests and governors had moral authority and power in society, which allowed them to influence the lives of others.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literary text analysis of *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, it can be concluded that the analysis of sentence patterns reveals the relationship between subjects and objects in the novel which highlights the social hierarchy of the Puritan era. In data analysis, it illustrates the moral idealism held by Puritan society in punishing sinners. The social sanctions imposed on Hester as a sinner reflect the ideals of morality and purity promoted by Puritan leaders, who often placed them in positions of moral authority. Besides, Hester is depicted as a passive object without power, while the priest, governor, and society are considered as active subjects with power. This reflects the social hierarchy of the time which emphasizes Hester's low position in society. Therefore, two ideologies are found conveyed in the novel *The Scarlet Letter*, namely Puritan ideology and patriarchal ideology. Puritan ideology is reflected in the depiction of a harsh society and strict morality, where Hester is punished and ostracized for her actions which are considered sinful. Meanwhile, patriarchal ideology is reflected in the depiction of strong gender roles, where men figures have dominant power and authority in social groups.

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