

SUYITNO

Saman and Atas Nama Cinta in the View of Canonisation of Literature

ABSTRACT: The polemic of literary legitimation within Indonesian literature in the era of Reformation is triggered by Saut Situmorang (2007)'s essay on "Politik Kanonisasi Sastra" (Politic of Literary Canonisation). The essay has triggered a debate within the field of Indonesian literature, and has received considerable responses from literary critics and the man/woman of letters. This paper questions the legitimacies of Ayu Utami's novel of "Saman" and of Denny Januar Ali's a prose-poetry of "Atas Nama Cinta" (In the Name of Love). The ongoing debate within Indonesian literature is discussed in the discourse of the canonisation of literature and its relation to theory of hegemony and counter-hegemony. However, some man/woman of letters were worried about Hans-Georg Gadamer (1990)'s thesis on the creation of presupposition and perception built on the exposition of historical situatedness. This paper also identifies the existence of oligarchic power relations between the literary agents in the legitimation of Indonesian literary works' quality. There is bias in the mentioned legitimation and the literary community has collusioned to legitimize this literary work. Proper to mention here is the rivalry between KUK (Komunitas Utan Kayu or Utan Kayu Community) and BP (Boemi Poetera or Indigenous). The former is led by Goenawan Mohamad and the later is under the influence of Saut Situmorang.

KEY WORDS: Literary Canonisation; Hegemony; Counter-Hegemony; Literary Legitimacy; Historical Situatedness.

INTRODUCTION

The Reformation era, following the fall of President Soeharto, has changed the politic of literature. Indeed, political system and culture has become the context for the development of literature (Mercer, 2002). It is not easy for man/woman of letters to move from the limit of political system in Indonesia, which very often has had an autocratic nature from the Colonial era, the Old Order era, and the New Order era (1901-1998). By this Reformation

era, the state, namely the government, is no longer able to direct the course of political literature.

On contrary, the government, such as through its semi-official state institution of DKJ (*Dewan Kesenian Jakarta* or Jakarta Arts Council), and its education system, could play a dominant role of mediating people of different conflicting interests, especially within the elements of market, namely the interests of the capitalists who often tie

About the Author: Dr. Suyitno is a Lecturer at the Study Program of Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Department of Language and Arts Education FKIP UNS (Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, State University of Surakarta), Jalan Ir. Sutami No.36-A, Kentingan, Jebres, Kota Surakarta 57126, Central Java, Indonesia. His contact e-mail is: vitsuyitno52@gmail.com

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cooperation with some elements of civil society. In this regard, people often become the victim on the collusion between the elements of market and civil society (Rath, 2011). Accordingly, the government has a crucial role of protecting the interests of its people. This belief has been the conviction of Purwo Santoso (2015), who argues that:

While Indonesians have rejected authoritarianism, they have also expected the state to retain its strategic role in managing public affairs, and particularly welfare provisions. Thus, the fact that the existing mode of governance is more liberalised does not necessarily reflect democratic governance (Santoso, 2015:ix).

Reformation era has brought a new political contestation amongst the elements of civil society, not only between the state and the elements of civil society (Mercer, 2002; and Jayasuriya & Rodan, 2007). These elements of civil society should protect the interests of the people, but they compete with each other to win the support of the interests of the capitalists. Proper to mention here is the rivalry between KUK (Komunitas Utan Kayu or Utan Kayu Community) and BP (Boemi Poetera or Indigenous). Both originates from the same tradition of *Balai* Pustaka (Bureau of Literature) in Jakarta. The former is led by Goenawan Mohamad and the latter is under the influence of Saut Situmorang.

In this regards, KUK represents the mainstream of Indonesian literature as it has strong support from big publishers as well as mass media. Saut Situmorang criticises the legitimation of *Saman*, a novel written by Ayu Utami (2005), as the first winner of novel competion held by DKJ in 1998. The critic also comes from other man/woman of letters, such as: Saut Situmorang (2007); Suyitno (2012); Adi Wijaya (2013); and Taufiq Ismail as cited by Viddy A.D. Daery (2014).

Rivalry between BP versus KUK became tighter when on 3th January 2014, KPG (*Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia*) published a book entitled *33 Tokoh Sastra Paling Berpengaruh di Indonesia* (33 the Most Influential Literature Figures in Indonesia),

which includes Denny Januar Ali as one of the 33 influential man/woman of letters (www. penerbitkpg.com, 15/1/2017). Some were questioning the capability of Denny Januar Ali (2012), who just concerned about literature for 2 years and published one literary of Atas Nama Cinta (In the Name of Love). The book was launched in *Pusat Dokumentasi Sastra* H.B. Jassin (Literature Documentation Center of H.B. Jassin), the center of mainstream literature in Jakarta, Indonesia. The book, of course, was written by man of letters who come from the same literature community of Denny Januar Ali, such as Jamal D. Rahman, Acep Zamzam Noor, and Agus R. Sarjono (cited in Daery, 2014).

Saut Situmorang and his group questioned the legitimacy of KUK's efforts of canonising the literary works as the latter may have being co-opted by big mass media industries. For that purpose, in 2009, Saut Situmorang wrote a book entitled *Politik Sastra* (Politic of Literature) criticising KUK, which pretended to assume the rights of giving legitimacy of Indonesian literature (Situmorang, 2009). This book was recognised by DKJ as the winner of literature critic competition in 2009 (cited in Abrar, 2013).

Within those unhealthy rivalries between KUK and BP, Saut Situmorang was reluctantly to receive *Katulistiwa* (Equator) Literary Award. It is likely that this refusal is to protest KUK's blatant efforts of canonisation of literature (*cf* Romli, 2009; and Daery, 2014). In this context, Saut Situmorang (2009) responded, as follows:

[...] I am more concerned about the impacts of this unhealthy competition between the elements of civil society. However, I still have a hope as the existing mainstream of KUK do not come from the monolithic political system and, accordingly, those who are able to convince people at public sphere will win support of the people (Situmorang, 2009).

In this regard, I would like to analyse the rivalry between KUK (Komunitas Utan Kayu or Utan Kayu Community) and BP (Boemi Poetera or Indigenous) in the context of hegemony and counter-hegemony to win the process of canonisation of their works (Abrar,

2013). This study was using a qualitative method with the literature approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; and Teherani, 2015).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Canonisation of Literature Works.

What does it mean by the "canonisation of literature"? To answer this question, I may refer to a 100 years of war phenomenon between France and British. This war started in 1337 AD (Anno Domini). At one upon a time, the British army was able to occupy and control a region for a quit long time. The British troops were so powerful, so that any France troops challenged their authority at this region. One day, an ordinary girl, namely Joan of Arc, felt that she received God's whispering to challenge the British troops and she was able to persuade her fellow village people to attack the British troops. She was successful to expel these British troops (cf Baker ed., 2000; Bennett, 2005; and Born, 2010).

On contrary, a local authority did not happy with this Joan of Arc's success and, accordingly, he spread a rumour that the later had received the whispering of the Satan. He also accused Joan of Arc of employing magic powers for that purpose. In the end, a local authority punished Joan of Arc by burning her to ash. Hundred years later, Christian Church issued a *fatwa* (religious decision) that the burn of Joan of Arc was a big mistake as she became so powerful, because of God's divine revelation, not of Satan's whispering. Accordingly, the Church had canonised Joan of Arc as a Saint to whom people should respect. By doing so, the followers of Christianity would memorise Joan of Arc's heroic struggle for expelling the British troops (cf Baker ed., 2000; and Abrar, 2013).

In literary criticism, the notion of "canonisation" came into prominence in the 4th century, when it referred to lists of texts which were worth of preserving by the Christians. It also referred to some authors whose books will become holy books for Christians. This canonisation implied some criteria for selecting some texts of worth preserving, namely to select the orthodox texts from the invalid creation ones (Kemp, 1948; and Baker ed., 2000).

In the case of the canonisation of Joan of Arc, the "canonisation" was meant to praise a literary work into a prominent position, so that it should be sent down from one generation to the next one (Olive, 2009). One of the criteria to choose a literary work into a canon is that its spirit is relevant to all eras. It also takes some stages to achieve the status of canon, such as it should pass the status of mainstream literary work and can maintain this status for long time. This does not mean that the status of canon at a certain time guarantee the work to preserve its high status for the next time, such as happen to the works of Sir Walter Scott, 1771-1832; and Jane Austen, 1775-1817 (cited in Abrar, 2013).

Sir Walter Scott (1998) wrote some historical based novels capable to awaken the historical memory of the people (Scott (1998). At his life time, it broke a war which had conditioned his works relevant to spirit of the era and, accordingly, his work became the mainstream literary works. This status ran for long time, so that his works achieved the status of canon (Marler-Kennedy, 2010).

On other hand, Jane Austen (2001) did not include the glory of historical epoch in her literary works and accordingly, at that time, her works were not perceived as the mainstream by people. The status of Jane Austen's works changed by passing time: at the 20th century, some people became aware of Jane Austen's works and consequently her works became the mainstream literary works and, then, they obtained the status of canon (Austen, 2001; Austen, 2002; and Wilson, 2017).

In line with this, at this era, Sir Walter Scott (1998)'s works reduced their influence amongst people and their status of canon became questionable (cited in Lestari, 2014). Accordingly, people of literary critic are always aware of political agenda behind the status of canon of the literary works. In the case of KUK (Komunitas Utan Kayu or Utan Kayu Community)'s efforts for the canonisation of literary works, such as through the publication of 33 the most influential man/woman of letters and the conferring of award, some people of literary try to make balancing by developing theory of counter-hegemony, introduced by Antonio Gramsci (1971).

Indonesian democratic political system make possible for them to develop counter-discourse to the existing mainstream literary works (*cf* Gramsci, 1971; Jayasuriya & Rodan, 2007; and Stoddart, 2007).

Public sphere always become arena for political competition as any social phenomena, including literary, involve some people of different social political interests. In this regard, people of literary compete with each other to convince their respective worldview. This competition will result in the birth of the winner as certain socio-cultural context has supported them of being the mainstream people of literary (Faucault, 2000:221). In line with this, literary become a medium for people to impose power as well as hegemony (Bordieu, 2010:22).

Some believe that the supremacy of a class and, thus, the reproduction of its associated mode of production could be obtained by brute domination or coercion. Yet, Antonio Gramsci (1971)'s key observation was that in advanced capitalist societies, the perpetuation of class rule was achieved through largely consensual means — through intellectual and moral leadership. Antonio Gramsci's analysis of bourgeois hegemony was grounded in detailed historical analysis, but it also carried clear implications for revolutionary socialist strategy (Gramsci, 1971).

The acquisition of consent before gaining power is an obvious implication and, here, Antonio Gramsci (1971) offered a distinction between two strategies: war of manoeuvre (in essence a full frontal assault on the bourgeois state); and war of position (engagement with and subversion of the mechanisms of bourgeois ideological domination). But, it is important to recognise that Antonio Gramsci understood hegemony not simply in terms of ideas, but also in relation to processes of production (cf Gramsci, 1971; and Rosamond, 2016).

It is believed that modern Indonesian literary started with the birth of *Balai Pustaka* (Bureau of Literature) publisher in 1917, in Jakarta (Teeuw, 1972). Now, *Balai Pustaka* tradition represents into two groups, that are: KUK (*Komunitas Utan Kayu* or Utan Kayu Community) and BP (*Boemi Poetra* or

Indigenous), which compete with each other to impose their respective hegemony. It is likely not easy for elements of civil society to unify and support each other in the efforts of containing the hegemonic power of the state. They often do not aware of their actual threat from the potential danger of state institutions. Moreover, they often fight each other based on religious and ethnic identities. Last but not least, they often face problems from their counterparts, namely state institutions and the market. Accordingly, they fail to formulate the proper role of civil society in the modern political system (Mundayat, Narendra & Irawanto, 2012:78).

From the early birth of modern Indonesian literary, the men/women of letters are under the dominant influence of H.B. Jassin.¹ There exists a belief amongst Indonesian people of literary critic that a literary work receiving praise from H.B. Jassin is a qualified literary work. In line with this, a literary work which has not received praise from him is considered as an unqualified literary work (Mahayana, 2007; and Ferdinal, 2013).

This issue has received a strong critic from Ajip Rosidi (1973), in his writing entitled "Lampu Merah buat Jassin" or "Red Traffic Light for Jassin" (Rosidi, 1973:91-106). Now, the hegemony of literary critic under the dominant influence of Goenawan Mohamad, continuing the centralistic tradition from H.B. Jassin with its central base in Jakarta (Mahayana, 2007; and Ferdinal, 2013). In this regard, I consider this centralistic tradition as a kind of hegemony, constituting a one step to the "canonisation".

In line with this, I may see this centralistic tradition within Pierre Bordieu (2010)'s three forms of legitimacy: (1) Specific

¹H.B. Jassin was born in Gorontalo, North Sulawesi, but then spent his life from 1940 to 2000 in Jakarta and had the experience of working to the first Indonesian publishing house created by the former Dutch colonial government, *Balai Poestaka* (Bureau of Literature) in 1940-1947; and also with some Indonesian elite literary criticism magazines, such as *Pandji Pustaka* (Flag of Literature) in 1942-1945, *Pantja Raya* (Great Five) in 1945-1947, *Mimbar Indonesia* (Forum of Indonesia) in 1947-1966, *Zenith* in 1951-1954, *Sastra* (Literature) in 1961-1964 and 1967-1969, and *Horison* in 1966-2000. H.B. Jassin was the monolith of Indonesian literary criticism as he was often called as "Indonesian Literary Pope". See, for further information related to H.B. Jassin, Maman S. Mahayana (2007) and Ferdinal (2013).

legitimacy, namely legitimacy given by a group of man/woman of letters to other man/woman of letters, and this kind of legitimacy is parallel to the principle of arts for arts; (2) Bourgeois legitimacy, that is legitimacy given by the capitalistic agents and/or the state institutions to the dominant fractions of the man/woman of letters; and (3) Popular legitimacy, that is the recognisance of the literary work by people massively (Bordieu, 2010:35).

The Legitimation of Saman. The hegemony of the Jakarta-centralized Indonesian literary works legitimation, which now lies on the hands of Goenawan Mohamad with his KUK (Komunitas Utan *Kayu* or Utan Kayu Community), is actually the passing of the pole from the H.B. Jassin's centralistic tradition of Indonesian literary criticism. Goenawan Mohamad, a senior Indonesian poet and writer who has been involving in Indonesian cultural politics since the feud between MANIKEBU (Manifesto Kebudayaan or Cultural Manifesto) versus LEKRA (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat or People Cultural Institution), a leftist cultural organization under the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia or Communist Party of Indonesia) in 1960s, is well known to his anti-Communist view (cf Ismail & Moeljanto eds., 1995; and Supartono, 2000).

H.B. Jassin, an Indonesian literary critic and author, was also well known with his anti-Communist perspectives. Indeed, both Goenawan Mohamad and H.B. Jassin were the signatories of MANIKEBU in 1963. Goenawan Mohamad can be said as having the same side with H.B. Jassin since 1963, in Indonesian literature issue.²

Tensions within Indonesian literature came ahead when Saut Situmorang (2009), a Batakness³ poet who resides in Yogyakarta, argues that Goenawan Mohamad inappropriately endorsed Ayu Utami's novel of *Saman* (2005). The literary critic previously sparked the resistance, such

as Katrin Bandel (2008 and 2013), who considers that KUK as a group of Indonesian literature critics and man/woman of letters who implement their oligarchic hegemony within the Indonesian literary world (Bandel, 2008 and 2013:97-113).

In this regard, KUK tied cooperation with Katrin Bandel and Saut Situmorang are not alone in their opinions about this issue. A number of Indonesian literature critics and man/woman of letters outside the circle of KUK have since formed a resistance alliance called *Jurnal Sastra Boemipoetra* (Journal of Indigenous Literature). It is interesting that the alliance is called *Sastra Boemipoetra* or "Indigenous Literature". *Bumiputra*, or Indigenous, literally translates as "the son of the land" (Mason & Omar, 2003).

In the name of the resistance alliance, it is written in the old spelling *Boemipoetra*, which may be interpreted into two ways. Firstly, it may be because the old spelling implies the revolutionary era when such spelling was used. Another interpretation, secondly, for the use of old spelling may be because Indonesian literary and literary criticism has not been progressed from the long-standing tradition, where Jakarta-based critics constantly become the standard of any Indonesian literary quality (Mahayana, 2007; and Ferdinal, 2013).

It is interesting to discuss the point of intersection between Jurnal Sastra Boemipoetra and the literary works of KUK. It appears that KUK's control over the Indonesia mainstream literature is currently disputed. Several well-known Indonesia man/woman of letters under Jurnal Sastra Boemipeotra group have been questioning KUK as the authoritative figure to hold the power of legitimation over Indonesian literature. For example, Saut Situmorang (2007 and 2009) considers that the ideological foundation of KUK is identical to its previous man/ woman of letters from MANIKEBU, who were apolitical to Soeharto's autocratic regime. In relation to Saman, Ayu Utami's novel, Saut Situmorang also evaluates this novel apolitical (Situmorang, 2007 and 2009).

It is ironically that KUK's women novelists are considered of having political

²Goenawan Mohamad praises H.B. Jassin and Andries Teeuw as the two prominent Indonesian literary critics. See, for example, Korrie Layun Rampan (2000) and Maman S. Mahayana (2007).

 $^{^3\}mbox{An}$ ethnic group from the land of Batak in North Sumatra, Indonesia.

implication by man/woman of letters from the previous MANIKEBU. The later believe that the works of these women novelists have gender political awareness. Indeed, they have openness in their prose, including their brave of getting off their cloth (*cf* Ismail & Moeljanto eds., 1995; Supartono, 2000; and Situmorang, 2007:8).

On contrary, KUK believed that Ayu Utami was introducing the idea of feminism into Indonesian literature. Actually, there is nothing wrong with feminism, but Ayu Utami introduced this idea of feminism in term of body-sexually-women-minded. In fact, this novel received positive responses from same people as it has been re-printed 28 times in 2005 (Suyitno & Nugraha, 2014:34). Indeed, it does not imply that majority of Indonesian agreed with this kind of sexual themes and vulgar writings style as we should consider the idea of silent majority in Indonesian society.

Accordingly, issues occur when the literary works of KUK are the ones highlighted the most in mainstream literature. Some argue that this is due to powerful relationship between Jakarta-based man/woman of letters and major publishers; and, accordingly, the literary works coming from outside the circle of KUK considered as peripheral works. In other words, the manifestation of literary works being placed at the core or the peripheral of literary studies may be considered as a form of labeling between "high literature" (the mainstream) and "low literature" (the peripheral). If that is so, if the legitimation of quality literature is only made under KUK's control, situatedness is constructed.

This is inappropriate, since it means KUK will have unlimited power and that the free market of literature will be controlled by only a select few. Another negative implication from this is that the rise of a literary oligarchy that may result in a domino effect, focusing on just a small amount of stories and depriving the public of the full repertoire of Indonesian literature.

Saut Situmorang (2007) provides a simple illustration on the danger of the literary oligarchy, where he voiced his concerns on the makings of hegemony as literary-political

media. In his paper, "Politik Kanonisasi Sastra" (Literary Canonisation Politics), Saut Situmorang evaluates that the KUK has become a powerful oligarchic judge on the quality of Indonesian literary works and has noteworthy entries into the history of Indonesia literature. In his essay, Saut Situmorang supplies evidence of the existing collusion on the appraisal of literary works that KUK legitimized as good quality literary works (Situmorang, 2007).

Katrin Bandel (2013) concurs with Saut Situmorang (2007), and echoes the same concerns in her work entitled *Sastra Nasionalisme Pascakolonialitas* (Nationalistic Literature in Postcolonial). As noted by both of these scholars, there is a lurking danger from the KUK hegemony that controls Indonesian literature. How irony, while the Indonesian local writers are called for creativity and more works, there is instead a central group (within the capital city) that determines the legitimation of the quality of Indonesian literary works, which promotes mostly the works of writers affiliated with it (Situmorang, 2007; and Bandel, 2013).

The strongest evidence of KUK's positioning as a literature-legitimation authority is the appointment of Ayu Utami (2005)'s novel entitled Saman as the prizewinner of novel writing contest held by the DKJ (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta or Jakarta Arts Council) in 1998. Some man/woman of letters and literary critics from BP (Boemi *Poetra* or Indigenous) considered that DKJ had been infiltrated by the syndicate of man/woman of letters and literary critics of KUK. Apart from that, there also exist some conspiracies for giving mutual legitimacy amongst man/woman of letters from KUK, such as clearly appear in Denny Januar Ali (2013)'s work, published in website on 16 July 2013 (cf Utami, 2005; Ali, 2013; and Bandel, 2013).

In this regard, Denny Januar Ali (2013) tries to canonise *Saman*, Ayu Utami (2005)'s novel, considered as one of the 21st most influenced literary works in Indonesia within the spanning time from 1920 to 2013 (Utami, 2005; and Ali, 2013). Unbelieving, Denny Januar Ali (2013) evaluates *Saman* fall into

all categories of a qulified literary work that are inovation, influence, and participation (Ali, 2013). In this context, Suyitno & Dipa Nugraha (2014) said, as follows:

We really have a big doubt on the influence of *Saman* when Denny states that *Saman* has provoked controversy in society. This controversy implies that this novel has not yet received unconditionally by the society. This novel has little effect on the silent majority of Indonesian people as the latter value the novel based on their cultural backgrounds. People cannot cope with feminism issues being provoked vulgarly and boldly by Ayu Utami. This means that this novel does not represent universal value and, accordingly, it poses an obvious problem for canonisation (Suyitno & Nugraha, 2014:38-39).

I also identify the reader-response of more than dozen of Indonesian literature academics to the novel and find that it is arguable that *Saman* is a high-quality literary work. In general, they share the same conclusion that *Saman* is nothing new in articulating women's voice in Indonesian literature and is too much exploring sexual theme (Suyitno, 2012).

In line with this, Saut Situmorang (2007) argues that *Saman* is not the only evidence of the practice of oligarchic power relation by Goenawan Mohamad and KUK (*Komunitas Utan Kayu* or Utan Kayu Community), but also making *Saman* as a sole case is misleading (Situmorang, 2007). Katrin Bandel (2013) also argues that the polemic against the oligarchic power relation in Indonesian literary world is not merely as narrow as the legitimation case of *Saman* or Ayu Utami as a person (Bandel, 2013:97-113).

The discussion of KUK's literary legitimation of *Saman* is a matter of paramount importance. If the Indonesian man/woman of letters outside KUK turn a blind eye to KUK's domination of Indonesian literature, then, it may result in the death of potential multi-creativity from regional writers outside Jakarta's writers circle of KUK. If the labeling of good quality is the privilege of KUK, a quality literary work will always rise only from within the circle of KUK. This will impact negatively to the development of regional man/woman of

letters, considering their distance from KUK, which is based in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta.

The play of power relation by Goenawan Mohamad and KUK is often overlooked by many Indonesians, due to their historical situatedness which is influenced by the mass media, bookstores, and mainstream publishers (Gaynor, 1997; and Bandel, 2013). Moreover, the school curriculum has also taught the common doctrine on the operationalization of canonization (Sheffy, 2014). For a literary work to be called as "beautiful and high quality", it has to be recognised by KUK, while those works that do not receive legitimacy from KUK are ignored or having little chance of being praised onto Bourdieuian web of oligarchic power channeling through the influence of KUK (Bordieu, 2010).

Further, this rigid legitimation has even shown its influence outside of the KUK, when Made Oktavia Vidiyanti (2008), from *Balai Bahasa Surabaya* (Language Institute of Surabaya), suggested *Saman* along with some other literary works be canonised during the 19th International Conference on Literature in Batu, Malang, East Java, despite some resistance from some Indonesian writers, literary critics, and academics (Vidiyanti, 2008).

Judgment about the quality of an artwork is always related to audience reception (Gemtou, 2010). How an audience interprets a literary product is based on factors, such as the audience's cultural background and history as well as the presuppositions the receptors have of the literary product. In this context, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1990) argues that the understanding and interpretation of an object depends on the object's historical situatedness with the interpreter/ receptor (Gadamer, 1990). For example, the perceptions of aesthetics, sense-making, and meaning-making cannot be divorced from the construct of historical situatedness, since no interpretation is textually static/fixed.

Everything is contextual and depends on the contiguous conditioning of the "when" or "where" of both object and subject: its historical situatedness. This can be seen clearly from the perception of beauty and criterion of aesthetic that are ever-changing, differing through time and across cultures (Fallon, 1990:80-109). It is difficult to define an object as "beautiful", since there is a tendency to use personal, qualitative, and tentative definitions of beauty (*cf* Freedman, 1986; and Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986:12).

This, in turn, supports Hans-Georg Gadamer (1990)'s fundamental thesis that aesthetics, perception, and interpretation are historically situated. Hans-Georg Gadamer contends, as also cited by David Weberman (2001) that "[h]istory does not belong to us; we belong to it" (Gadamer, 1990; and Weberman, 2001:256). Therefore, all of our understanding, perceptions, and aesthetic sense can never be separated from our historical situatedness. David Weberman (2001) argues that our judgment on anything is the result of the interactional situation between us and the object within the binding situatedness (Weberman, 2001:256-257).

Situatedness is and can be constructed by the praxis of the power holder. This power holder has the ability to condition a situation where public may usually follow on a particular developing narration, even in the contexts of defining and articulating beauty and aesthetic. The Indonesian literary tradition has witnessed Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, becoming the center of the oligarchy practices in Indonesian literary works. In his book entitled A Literary Mirror, I Nyoman Putra (2011) discusses how the legitimation tradition of Indonesian literary works is centralistic and overtly Jakartaminded, even though there have been efforts to diminish the practices of always using Jakartanese literary critics as national standard (Putra, 2011).

The Legitimation of Atas Nama Cinta. On Friday, 3 January 2014, the KPG (*Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia*)⁴ released a book entitled

33 Tokoh Sastra Paling Berpengaruh di Indonesia (33 the Most Influential Literature Figures in Indonesia) at the PDS (Pusat Dokumentasi Sastra or Center of Literature Documentation) of H.B. Jassin. As the title suggests, it contains a list of 33 the most influential man/woman of letters in Indonesia. DJA (Denny Januar Ali) is named as one those figures (Ali, 2014). This is a remarkable admission, given that Denny Januar Ali – a person who has only been known to the Indonesian literary public for two years and has only one literary work, Atas Nama Cinta (2012) – is ordained as one of the most influential man of letters in Indonesia.

The reason for this given by the book is because of his development of a new genre in the Indonesian literatures, *Puisi-Esai* (Essayistic Poem). This essayistic poem genre, which first appeared in the book of *Atas Nama Cinta* (published by Rene Books in April 2012), received positive endorsement from Indonesia's top man/woman of letters and cultural figures (Ali, 2012). Epilogues from noted literary and cultural figures, such as Sapardi Djoko Damono, Sutardji Calzoum Bachri, and Ignas Kleden, are supposedly to strengthen the power of justification and legitimation of DJA's work (Ali, 2012; and Damono, 2012).

Before the phenomenon of the legitimation of DJA's literature is analysed, it is important to consider DJA's background. He rose to prominence in the field of political marketing. His prowess in political marketing led to him being proclaimed as "the Indonesian king maker", due to his influence in more than a dozen of successful political campaigns in Indonesian national and local elections (Eni, 2013).

Given DJA's background in political

This magazine helped eliminate Extremism and Communism, and support pro-Americanism in the Suharto's government era (1966-1998). It is noteworthy to mention that H.B. Jassin spent most of his entire literary criticism career in *Horizon* magazine.

⁵PDS (*Pusat Dokumentasi Sastra* or Center of Literature Documentation) is a non-profit library which collects and preserves Indonesian literary works. It is named after a prominent Indonesian literary critic, Hans Bague Jassin or H.B. Jassin.

⁶Denny Januar Ali is popularly known in Indonesia as a political marketing consultant. He is most well-known as the pioneer of the use of survey in the Indonesian political contests and he introduced the service of political consultant to the community.

⁴KPG (*Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia*) is under Kompas-Gramedia mass media, book stores, and publishing group. Kompas-Gramedia is now the biggest and respectable publishing house in Indonesia. Started its business in 1963, through *Intisari* magazine, the founders (Petrus Kanisius Ojong and Jakob Oetama) later published newspaper of *Kompas* in 1965 as anti-leftist newspaper. KPG itself was established in 1996, to publish popular academic and scholarly books. Interestingly, Goenawan Mohamad has long been closely affiliated to Jakob Oetama in a literature magazine of *Horizon*.

marketing, it is logic and relevant to analyse DJA's position in Indonesian literature through the lens of that field. DJA skillfully marketed himself within the Indonesia literary field by organizing a national contest to review his literary works with a total prize of 100 million Indonesia Rupiah (Ali, 2012). This was DJA's earlier penetration towards the grassroots of Indonesian literary works.

Despite it being considered a smart move, Katrin Bandel (2014) criticises DJA as creating a mass confusion between the quality and popularity of a literary work. DJA's work was endorsed nationally not just with endorsers from noted figures and a bigprized national competition to attract public interest, but also with a claim about the staggering statistics of his website visitors, showing the popularity of his work and the so-called new genre it brought to Indonesian literature (Bandel, 2014).

The dissemination of a candidate's exclusivity, or in this context the "exclusivity" of a poetry-essay work, is common within the field of political marketing. For instance, it has been discussed in P.F. Lazarsfeld & H. Gaudet (1944) and E. Katz (1971)'s studies of political elections in the United States of America (cf Lazarsfeld & Gaudet, 1944; Katz, 1971; and Fill, 1999); and political marketing in Indonesia by Marzuki Alie (2010). DJA has taken advantage of endorsements from powerful people in Indonesia to market his poetry-essay works, such as Sapardi Djoko Damono, Sutardji Calzoum Bachri, and Ignas Kleden (Alie, 2010; and Ali, 2012).

Maman S. Mahayana (2012) concurs with Katrin Bandel (2014), when they argue that the senior man/woman of letters who have shared their reviews on poetry-essay cannot be considered as providing legitimation over the quality of the poetry essay (Mahayana, 2012; and Bandel, 2014). Leon Agusta (2013) has also even argued that the claims about the contemporaneity of DJA's style of poetry are disputable, since Toeti Heraty (2000) had previously applied a similar unconventional poetry technique in her novel entitled *Calon Arang* (Heraty, 2000; and Agusta, 2013).

In addition, Maman S. Mahayana (2012) also states that Ridwan Saidi (2008)'s lyrical

poetry entitled *Lagu Pesisiran* (Coastal Song) uses footnotes; therefore, poetry-essay is not the first poetry in Indonesian literature for the use of footnote (Saidi, 2008; and Mahayana, 2012). DJA's implementation of political marketing studies in the field of literature is evidence of what Firman Venayaksa (2014)'s terms as literary manipulation through social engineering. When it comes to social engineering, it cannot be argued that DJA is one of the best in this field in Indonesia. It is understood that political marketing relates to social engineering (Venayaksa, 2014).

During the marketing for his poetry-essay, DJA came up with a groundbreaking move of collaborating with a well-known institution of MURI (*Museum Rekor Indonesia*), an Indonesian version of the *Guinness World Records*. Through DJA's self-proclamation of his wonderful creation, the genre of poetry-essay, MURI agreed to convey award to DJA based on the art differentiation: e.g. that *Atas Nama Cinta* is the first literary book to be published on a web page; and that it is the web's most frequently accessed literary work; and that holds the record for the book with the highest numbers of artwork media re-expressions (LSI, 2012).

There is inappropriate conduct in MURI's confirmation of DJA's poetry works as a phenomenal literature. In the field of literature, the quality of a literary work does not depend on how popular that work is. It is unusual for a literary work to become so popular it becomes a bestseller, despite its quality or lack thereof (Swirski, 1999). Striking blow comes from Huzer Apriansyah, the one of the winners of poetry-prose review competition, who returns his present to Denny Januar Ali following his publication of 33 the most influential literature figures in Indonesia, which does not include some influential man of letters to them, such as Kuntowijoyo, Umar Kayam, Seno Gumira Aji Darma, and Sindhunata.7

Does the demonstration of DJA's orchestration make him worthy to be

⁷As cited in http://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/
pemenang-lomba-puisi-esai-kembalikan-hadiah-uang-kedenny-ja.html [accessed in Solo, Indonesia: February 15, 2017].

one of the man/woman of letters figures named in the book of 33 Tokoh Sastra Paling Berpengaruh di Indonesia (33 the Most Influential Literature Figures in Indonesia)? I may say so. Albeit, Katrin Bandel (2014)'s questions the meaning of "influential", pointing out that DJA became deeply involved in the field of Indonesian literature through his political marketing (Bandel, 2014). It is also interesting to note that for Sapardi Djoko Damono, the work of DJA is still considered groundbreaking in the field of literature for its use of new features, such as detailed footnotes, within poetry works (Damono, 2012).

It is, however, I do not agree to the idea of labeling the most influential man/woman of letters based on political inclination or the support of a powerful financial sponsor. In this regard, I agree with Saut Situmorang (2007) that the effort of legitimizing the quality of literature through literary oligarchy, namely the politics of literature canonisation, is harmful and possibly ruining the potency for Indonesian literature from flourishing outside the circle of KUK, *Komunitas Utan Kayu*, or Utan Kayu Community (Situmorang, 2007).

In relation to DJA's case, Firman Venayaksa (2014) contends that there are inappropriate circumstances. It is also not a coincidence that the book of 33 Tokoh Sastra Paling Berpengaruh di Indonesia has also listed Ayu Utami as one of the influential woman of letters and accordingly KUK, the organization that endorsed the canonisation of Saman, has not challenged the listing of DJA (Venayaksa, 2014). This demonstrates a sort of mutualism within the phenomenon of the polemical legitimation of literature over Saman and Atas Nama Cinta. The endorsers of Saman turned a blind eye to the polemic of the book about the 33 Tokoh Sastra Paling Berpengaruh di Indonesia in listing DJA as one of the influential men of letters, since Ayu Utami is also amongst those who are listed in the book. Thus, in other words, this book has become a sort of supporting legitimacy for Ayu Utami.

In this regard, I am concerned with the historical situatedness (or object-subject connectedness based on their shared standpoint in time) is manifested within all forms of reception and interpretation. Based

on the reviews of Saut Situmorang (2007), Maman S. Mahayana (2012), Leon Agusta (2013), and Katrin Bandel (2014), addressing the circle of oligarchic privilege within the Indonesian literature is not an easy issue to solve (Situmorang, 2007; Mahayana, 2012; Agusta, 2013; and Bandel, 2014).

Qinimain Zain (2007) disputes this, claiming that it is only as a variation on the point of appraisal reference and there is nothing to worry about regarding the condition of Indonesian literature at this moment, where the literary representation of Indonesianess is not just a mirror of the criterion and selection approved by Goenawan Mohamad and KUK (Zain, 2007).

If the presupposition in the reception and interpretation is bound by the situation of object-subject during their connection and it is constructed by the rigid oligarchic privilege within the field of Indonesian literature, then, it may result in a disaster for Indonesian literature. When this literary oligarchy is constantly being unfair, then, the presupposition that is attached – due to its abundance, massively used and displayed – to the Indonesian literature community is pertinent to the doctrine of the throne holders of oligarchy.

The currently occurring polemic is not as simple as the difference in points of reference between the conflicting parties. It was, however, triggered by the marginalized, communal, and massive concern and awareness of those who question the ongoing literature oligarchy. These opponents strive to oppose oligarchy with the concern that if current practices of literary recognition continue, then, eventually literary works that fall outside the favour of the literary oligarchy will be confined to oblivion, not read by many Indonesians as they should be.

Referring back to Hans-Georg Gadamer (1990)'s thesis on historical situatedness in the appraisal of things, then if this oligarchy is left as it is, it may result in imminent danger towards Indonesian literature, with a sole beauty standard of literature created as a product of massive dissemination by the power holders of the oligarchy (*cf* Gadamer, 1990; and Weberman, 2001). It is dangerous

for Indonesian literature if this monopoly on the praxis of appraisals continues, because of the history and perception of the audience on the value of a literary work's beauty will always rely on and be depended upon the appraisal of the oligarchic power holders.

In this regard, I agree with A.E. Priyono, S.A. Prasetya & O. Tornquis (2003), who offer a *consociational* political arrangement to restrain from the rise of oligarchic power, such as their statement as follow:

At this point in time, there is a need for a more *consociational* political arrangement that might allow for broader representation, coalition, compromise, and strong minority rights.

Moreover, whilst decentralisation [...] opens up the opportunity for decentralised despotism (Priyono, Prasetya & Tornquis, 2003:9).

CONCLUSION

DJA (Denny Januar Ali)'s self-proclamation as one of 33 the most influential literature figures in Indonesia was a controversial decision, as he was a new poet with only one published book. Indeed, he has popularized successfully a poetry-essay genre into Indonesian literature. For that purpose, he writes a book titled Atas Nama Cinta (In the Name of Love) and orchestrates it through some media such by organizing a national contest to review his literary work and by collaborating with MURI (Museum Rekor Indonesia), an Indonesian version of the Guinness World Records. DJA also writes a book of the 33 Tokoh Sastra Paling Berpengaruh di Indonesia (33 the Most Influential Literature Figures in Indonesia). explaining his innovation of poetry-prose style to Indonesian literature. Apart from this, Huzer Apriansyah protested this controversial book as it does not include some influential man of letters to them, such as Kuntowijoyo, Umar Kayam, Seno Gumira Aji Darma, and Sindhunata.

In this regard, I evaluate that the publication of this book is one effort for canonisation in Indonesian literature. Another kind of canonisation is pursued by the effort of co-legitimizing amongst the writers circle of KUK (Komunitas Utan Kayu

or Utan Kayu Community) through their works. For example, this book is not opposed by the man/woman of letters from the KUK, as it also lists Ayu Utami. It is likely that this book becomes a form of mutualism between the endorsers of *Saman* and the endorsers of the poetry-essay anthology, *Atas Nama Cinta*. This book becomes an additional justified argument to sustain Ayu Utami's label of prominent woman of letters.

The polemics over Saman and Atas Nama Cinta, explored in this article, should make one realize that there is a play of oligarchic power relation in Indonesian literature and it has actually been existing from a long time since the H.B. Jassin's era. The play of oligarchic power relation in Indonesian literary world may get another evidence from Frankurt Book Fair in 2015. This event invited Indonesia as an honored guest and Goenawan Mohamad became the head of national committee for the event. Some Indonesian writers, such as A.S. Laksana, Linda Christanty, and Eka Kurniawan gave negative criticism towards the way the committee chose writers and literary works.8

The phenomenon of *Saman* and *Atas Nama Cinta*, in the competitive space of power, has provided the awareness that the constellation arena of literature represents the influence of oligarchic power, a web of endorsers as Bourdieuian thesis has a plain example in Indonesian literary world (Bordieu, 2010). Some men/women of letters from BP (*Boemi Poetra* or Indigenous) are concerned about the manipulation of historical situatedness, which has become paramount in understanding the legitimation of *Saman* and *Atas Nama Cinta*.

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1990)'s thesis on

⁸A.S. Laksana (Sulak) and Linda Christanty wrote on their Facebook statuses about the fairness and criterion used by the national committee for the event. Their criticisms are then reported by CNN (Cable News Network) Indonesia and some national online newspapers through articles, such as "Seleksi Penulis Frankurt Book Fair 2015 Dirundung Kritik"; "Memanfaatkan 1965 sebagai Tema Frankurt Book Fair 2015"; and "A.S. Laksana Uraikan Bagaimana GM dkk Promosikan Laksmi Pamuntjak". Eka Kurniawan, a young Indonesian writer, wrote also on his blog about the ignorance of national committee to consider taking suggestion from regional critics and writers about the selecting of writers and literary works for the event, in his writing "Ketidakhadiran di Frankurt Book Fair 2015".

the change of aesthetic perception, in the case of *Saman* and *Atas Nama Cinta*, can be seen from the effect of the co-legitimizing practices between the endorsers of *Saman* and the endorsers of *Atas Nama Cinta* (Gadamer, 1990). Accordingly, man/woman of letters and literary critics of BP tried to develop a counter-hegemony through their works in order to delegitimize KUK's efforts of canonisation. Partly, it was successful that in 2007, DKJ (*Dewan Kesenian Jakarta* or Jakarta Arts Council), state institution for managing arts and culture, confered award to Saut Situmorang (2009) for his book entitled *Politik Sastra* (Politic of Literature).

In the view of Bourdieu's three forms of legitimacy, *Atas Nama Cinta* may fall into the popular legitimacy, meanwhile *Saman* tends to bourgeois legitimacy, especially the capitalistic agent (Bordieu, 2010). In this regard, the state institution tends to become arena of contestation between the man/woman of letters from KUK and BP. Within democratic state, the government should play a role of balancing to the existing political contestation amongst the conflicting groups.⁹

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- ⁹*Statement:* I, hereby, declare that this article is my original academic work, so that it is not product of plagiarism, due to all sources used and cited in the analysis are showed clearly and available in the References. This article is also not submitted, reviewed, and published yet in other scholarly journals.

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