

## THE ABUSE OF SYMPATHETIC POWER TO COUNTER HEGEMONY

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### Abstract

Sympathy may be generally defined as a support given to other who is believed that he/she is undeservedly suffering or misfortune. Identical to the positive notion of 'support', the practice of sympathy in the society portrays deviating purpose. Powerless can effectively appeal to the sympathy of their counterparts for their own strategic gain, and more specifically, that this powerless individuals can leverage their weaknesses through the strategic use of sympathy in order to mitigate the disadvantages of lacking power. This powerless strategy may even be used to maintain their relation with the powerful. It calls sympathy as means of resistance. These phenomena will be noted as the abuse of sympathetic power. This article is intended to explore the practice of sympathetic power to counter hegemony. It attempts to portray the sympathetic power's potency as means of resistance to counter hegemony. The area of inquiry constricted into the specified context of Minah's Cocoa Beans Stealing Case in 2009. The study will be conducted by combining Fairclough's CDA model with Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly by considering interpersonal metafunction proposed by Halliday. Based on the analysis, Minah appeals sympathy by exposing her innocence and all the characteristics that she naturally possess. She was able to influence court decision to set her free even all the evidences prove her for committing the crime of stealing.

**Keywords:** sympathy, counter-hegemony, power

### Introduction

Sverdlik (2008, p. 5) characterizes sympathy as moral emotion which involves the *belief* that someone is (undeservedly) suffering or misfortune. To express sympathetic feeling one should belief that other is undeserved to suffer from something or that other is in misfortune. The belief plays central role in the practice of sympathy. In the situation that someone has no belief that other is in the situation above, he may not have sympathetic feeling or willing to express his sympathy. In other words, sympathy may be generally defined as a support given to other who is believed that he/she is undeservedly suffering or misfortune.

He further emphasizes that as an emotion, hence, sympathy may be manifested externally. This means that, first, the expression of the emotion in the person's body may be observed especially from the face, posture and movement. Second, emotions typically are *motives* that lead a person to act intentionally or, at least, incline him to act intentionally. ('Emotion' and

'motive' both derive from the Latin *movere*, to move.)

Accepting support from others, one may notice and feel, whether the support is based on sympathy or just fulfilling the sense of responsibility, by their facial expression, posture or movement. As it is possible for others provide support to our suffering or misfortune based on the sense of responsibility.

Believing that one provides support to our suffering based on the sense of responsibility, we may have no bond of emotional feeling to him. Even we may still accept the support or later do the same thing to him which is possibly done on the same basis.

Speaking to this bond, Hochschild (1983, p. 18) quoted by Clark (2011, p. 291) emphasizes that group members create sympathy "accounts," or "margins," for each other. Sympathy is a type of "feeling currency" that people hold "on account," ready to give to each other in the future.

At this point, it seems that it is common for people to remember and then believe that on which one gives sympathy to him, he will think and believe that it is necessary to provide sympathy whenever he needs it.

Sverdlik also stresses that the practice of sympathy may provide reason, he refers to it as *motives*, why people behave in such a way. Thus, sympathy has potency to influence people decision which is manifested into their attitude.

Moreover, sympathy psychologically motivates the prosocial behavior (Hume, 1888, p. 52 in Decety & Chaminade, 2003, p. 128). Prosocial behavior refers to voluntary actions that are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals. It refers to a pattern of social activities including sharing, comforting, rescuing, helping and donating (Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder & Penner, 2012, p. 5-6). To this behavior, our minds are mirror to one another: they reflect one another's passions, sentiments, and opinions. We may feel what others feel and imagine if such situation happens to us.

Research reveals how sympathy has potency to trigger altruistic desires. Altruistic desires is the motivation to help others out of pure regard for their needs rather than how the action will benefit oneself (Buss, 2015, p. 81). It happens as overt motivation for prosocial behavior. It is triggered when the self covertly (and automatically) resonates with the other (Decety & Chaminade, 2003, p. 128).

As one believes that someone is undeservedly suffering from something or misfortune he is then motivated intrinsically to release his burden/ suffering for the sake of him. His action possibly influences others and makes them believe and then willing to do the same action. This certainly will be a massive action of prosocial behavior.

Hume, Decety and Chaminade further illuminate that through operating the sympathy a person possibly influences others emotion which then may be reflected in their

point of view, moral judgment as well as action upon certain social phenomenon.

Illuminated the possible sympathetic power it is interesting to uncover its practice in society. Identical to the positive notion of '*support*', the practice of sympathy in the society portrays deviating purpose. Realizing the potency of sympathy one may think to benefit himself through the practice of sympathy that he issued. Thus, the sympathizee does action to release one's suffering or burden (even just expressing it), not merely for the sake of the sympathizer, rather he does it because he serves the other purpose for his own benefit. It often happens in the administration relations involving state and citizen. Referring to Conover research (1988), Piston (2014, p. 79) concludes that sympathy for low-status social groups can be a politically consequential phenomenon, motivating individuals to support policies intended to aid such groups. On the other hand, sympathizer, the one who is believed to be supported/ helped, which is powerless can effectively appeal to the sympathy of their counterparts for their own strategic gain, and more specifically, that this powerless individuals can leverage their weaknesses through the strategic use of sympathy in order to mitigate the disadvantages of lacking power (Shirako, 2011, p. 44). This powerless strategy may even be used to maintain their relation with the powerful. It calls sympathy as means of resistance. These phenomena will be noted as the abuse of sympathetic power.

This article is intended to explore the practice of sympathetic power to counter hegemony. It attempts to portray the sympathetic power's potency as means of resistance to counter hegemony.

For the sake of the study, hegemony will be interpreted as the movement of power. This view considers the nature of the relationship between power and and those who exercise it, objected to it or make it possible. It perceives power as external/ outside to its subject or whether it is internal/ inside to it (Antoniades, 2008, p. 8).

Following Foucault, power is perceived as something which is not just essentially possessed by institution and used oppressively against individual or group. It is more like something that acts and operates in a certain way, it's more a strategy than a possession. He sees it as coextensive with resistance; as a productive factor (Balan, 2010, p. 56).

In this sense no subordinate group is totally powerless. This group may have strategy to resist the powerful domination.

In line with the idea above, Gramsci in his theory of cultural politics defines hegemony as coercion and consent relation in which to hegemonize the subordinate groups the dominant one cannot just operating coercion, but it needs to forge alliances and win the consent of popular group (Ives, 2004, p. 70). From Gramscian perspective hegemony is not a top – down model of power in which it operates one way from the ruling class to the subordinate groups but it is dynamic process which taking into account the practices and ideas of subordinate groups (Smart 1983 in Klein, 2014, p. 9). Additionally, Hall concludes that culturally both dominant and dominated groups are caught in the circularity of power in which certain cultural forms predominate over others (Hall 1986 in Klein, 2014, p. 11). Thus, no party possesses complete control over others. It opens a chance for the subordinate groups to challenge and exercise its power toward the ruling class. These ideas provide a base for countering hegemony.

### 1. Minah's Cocoa Beans Stealing Case

Attempt to reveal the potency of sympathetic power to counter the hegemony will be conducted within the inquiry area of Indonesian society. This area of inquiry constricted into the specified context of Minah's Cocoa Beans Stealing Case in 2009.

This case is about a grandmother of seven who was charged with stealing three pieces of cocoa fruit and subjected to 18 days of house arrest before being dragged to court

to receive a suspended sentence. It refers to the case of Minah, 55, an illiterate grandmother from a small village near Banyumas in Central Java. Minah was confused that, after having returned the cocoa fruit to the plantation, owned by PT Rumput Sari Antan, and having apologized profusely, they still reported her to the police.

### 2. Hegemony as Movement of Power

This view is proposed by Antoniades (2008, p. 10). It necessitates the examination of nature of the relationship between power and those who exercise it, objected to it or make it possible. Power may possibly move from one party to another. Two issues are of specific importance here: (a) Is power an external characteristic (e.g. weaponry) or something that defines the internal composition of its subject (e.g. identity)? In the first case, it can be said that power is something that is external/outside to its subject, whereas in the second case it is internal/inside to it. (b) Does power aim to change only the external behavior of its objects or does it aim to affect their internal composition and identity. In the first case, power targets the 'outside' of its objects, i.e. their external behavior, whereas in the second it targets their inner nature. The movement of power may be illustrated by the following table.

Table 1. Hegemony as a Movement of Power

	Out	In
Outside	hegemony is conceptualized as the possession of overwhelming power (in terms of material capabilities) and the instrumental use of this power to secure leadership or dominance in world politics	hegemony is conceptualized as a specific strategy aiming at generating shared beliefs and a commonsense – the aim is to achieve leadership or dominance on the basis of consent rather than coercion
Inside	hegemony is conceptualized as a sociocultural project aiming to	hegemony is conceptualized as a diffused and decentered

generate imitation within world politics, while assuming the existence/possibility of different socio-cultural projects and ways of being	apparatus of (bio) power aiming at the control and governing of human life from its interior
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to Warsono (2007), several steps will be taken in analyzing the data. The steps of analysis will be exemplified as follows:

1. Reading the text to have comprehensive understanding of their content. This comprehensive understanding of the text content forms the basis for further analysis.
2. Grouping the text into sympathy appeal, sympathetic statement/ action and subsequence of sympathy.
3. Translating the text into target language (English) and numbering the lines for ease of references.
4. Following Martin and Rose (2003), then the text will be broken down into chunks or clauses for further analysis.
5. The next step will be analyzing the smallest units – words of appraisal devices expressed in the transcript based on the appraisal system network offered by Martin and Rose (2003), which concerns with the system of attitude, the system of amplification, and the source of attitude.
6. The last step is analyzing the discursive practice and the socio-cultural practice surrounding the creation of the texts.

## Methodology

### 1. Research Design

This study will combine Fairclough’s CDA model (1992) and Haliday’s interpersonal metafunction realized through appraisal devices following a model proposed by Martin and Rose (2003).

Critical Discourse Analysis is a three dimensional framework, which includes the analysis of the text, the discursive practice and the socio-cultural practice (Fairclough as quoted by Titscher et al., 2000, p. 150).

### 2. Data and Source of Data

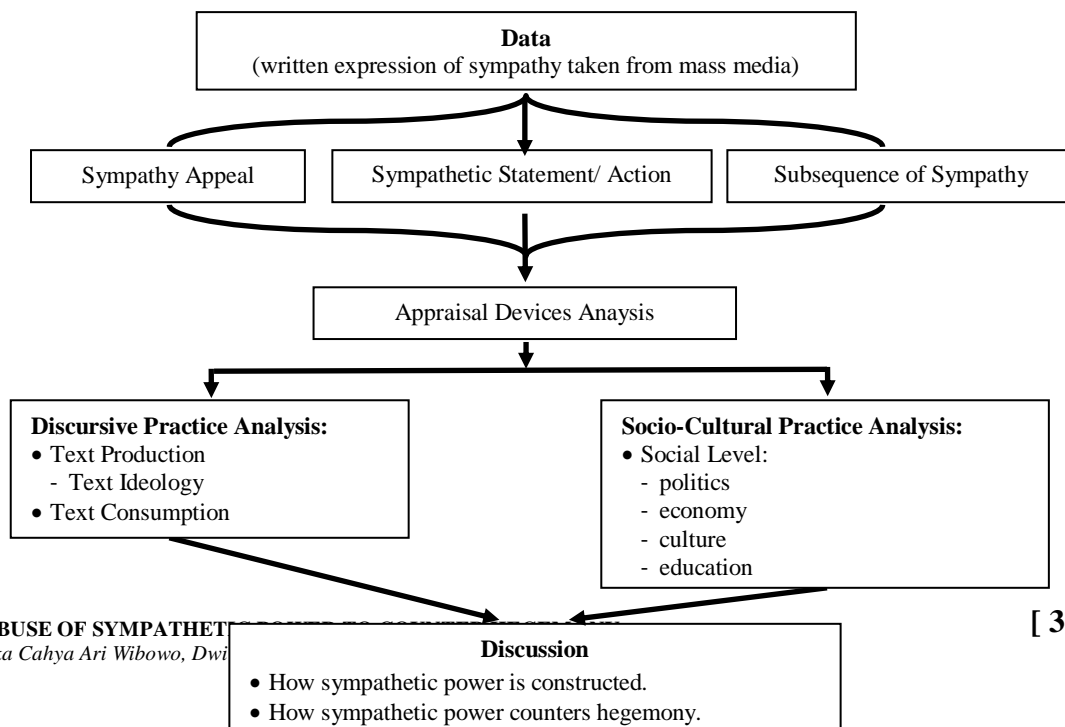
The data used in the study is the written expressions related to the practice of sympathy of Minah’s case which taken from mass media.

## Findings and Discussion

This study will analyze the appraisal devices employed in the text which refers to Martin and Rose (2003) and continuously apply Critical Discourse Analysis which refers to Fairclough (1992). Thus, referring

The procedure of data analysis will be summed up in the diagram below:

Diagram 1. Procedure of Data Analysis



The data analysis in this study will be done in three steps which then will result in three forms of analysis: first, the analysis of text; second, the analysis of the discursive practice which refers to the process of text production, and text consumption; third, the analysis of the socio-cultural practice.

### 1. Analyzing the Text

In analyzing the text, the study will employ appraisal devices suggested by Martin and Rose (2003), which concerns the system of attitude, the system of amplification, and the source of attitude (engagement). Attitude involves affect, judgment/ appreciation. Amplification comprises grading, including force and focus. Source covers source of evaluations, whether monogloss or heterogloss.

### 2. Analyzing the Discursive Practice

Discursive practice is the link between text and social practice. Based on Titscher et al (2000, p. 150), there is a connection between the socio-cognitive aspects of text production and interpretation. Thus, this level is closely related to the textual level. Further, the analysis of discursive practice includes not only a precise explanation of how the participants in an interaction interpret and produce text, but also the relationships of discursive events to orders of discourse, that is a matter of interdiscursivity.

The analysis of discursive practice focuses on the production and consumption of a text. Text is produced through discursive practice. Text involves complicated and complex discursive practice. This practice determines how the text is formed. Fairclough as quoted by Eriyanto (2001, p. 317) in Oktavianti, there are two sides of the discursive practice. They are the text production and the consumption. The text production closely relates to the intentionally designed pattern of a certain text while the text consumption firmly relates to the

interpretation of the speech target audience toward the text.

### 3. Analyzing the Socio-Cultural Practice

Fairclough suggests that a fully rounded Critical Discourse Analysis should involve an analysis of the text's "socio-cultural practice", or "the social and cultural goings-on which the communicative event is part of" (Fairclough, 1995a, p. 57). This level of analysis "may be at different levels of abstraction from the particular event: it may involve its more immediate situational context, the wider context of institutional practices the event is embedded within, or the yet wider frame of the society and the culture" (Fairclough, 1995a, p. 62).

## Discussion

The data is group into three categories. They are sympathy appeal, sympathetic statement/ action and subsequence of sympathy. Sympathy appeal is analyzed in order to reveal how the sympathizer pattern/ strategy to get others sympathy which later influence them for his own benefit. Sympathetic statement/ action is analyzed to reveal whether the sympathizer strategy already meets his target; in this case getting sympathy from sympathizer. The subsequence of sympathy is analyzed to review whether the appeal is genuine or a mere strategy. It is also intended to measure the effectively of sympathy as strategy to counter hegemony.

### 1. The Sympathy Appeal Analysis

#### a. Appraisal Device Analysis

The appeals for sympathy are made by Minah, her family and local social activist. Based on the appraisal device analysis they appreciate the action of taking those three cocoas positively. It is indicated by ten positive appreciations in the appealing text. On the other hand they appreciate negatively the action taken by Rumpun Sari Antan ltd. which brings this case to trial. It is indicated by seven negative appreciations in



the text. In the analysis it is also revealed that Minah also shows her confidence to face her case. It is indicated by the use of monogloss source of attitude (*pronoun I, my*). She also tries to portray herself as a persistent personality. It is indicated by positive affect (*“I am not giving up”*). She also implicitly tries to exploit her sadness and poverty. It is indicated by four negative implicit affect (*“I was accused to take three cocoas”, “Somebody reported me to the police”, “I managed by myself. No one gave me money”, and showing emotional expression when mentioning the cost to trial*). Her son also evaluates the judge who will lead the trial morally positive. It is indicated by the positive moral judgment toward the judge (*“We just hope that the judge may give his sense of justice to our parents”*).

#### b. Socio - Cultural Analysis

There is an attempt to exploit Minah’s natural potency likes innocence as uneducated suburban old woman. It is indicated by Minah’s son statement that he does not know what a lawyer is. The attempts also made by Minah herself during the trial. She interprets picking the cocoas but not taking them home cannot be categorized as stealing. Then her decision to ask for an apology breaks her effort to not be categorized as stealing (impliedly she pleads guilty). Contrasting statement also happens when she says that she cannot accept that somebody reports her to police as she is insisting to do nothing (she does not do stealing). On the other hand, when the judge whether she pleads for guilty she convincingly admits it. Culturally, innocence is still valued positively by local people as well as people in common.

### 2. Sympathetic Statement/ Action Analysis

#### a. Appraisal Device Analysis

The sympathetic statements are made by Muslih Bambang Luqmono, SH. The trial judge, Irman Gusman, The head of Council

of Regional Representatives (DPD), and Patrialis Akbar, Minister of Law and Human Rights. Based on the appraisal device analysis, the trial judge surprisingly appreciates what has been done by Minah positively. It is indicated by five positive appreciations in his verdict. He also judge Minah personality positively (*“Her spirit should be appreciated. She attends the trial on time even tired and distressed”*). Moreover, dealing with the case those three people Muslih Bambang Luqmono, SH., Irman Gusman, and Patrialis Akbar are regretting; why the case should be trialed. They provide nine negative appreciations. Patrialis Akbar even implicitly shows his pity to Minah. It is indicated by two negative implicit affect (*“She is just an old woman. The judge even cried seeing her on trial”*).

#### b. Socio - Cultural Analysis

Sympathetic Action is also shown by the judge by directing the trial question to a social phenomenon which easily drags the people emotion which is “poverty”. He suddenly asks about the cost to go to trial. As if he wants to persuade the public and make the legitimacy that what he will do later (set Minah free) is a moral obligation. Thus, it shouldn’t have brought controversy.

Based on the appraisal device and socio cultural analysis we may note that those people feel sympathy to Minah. They also refer to ‘poverty’ and ‘the state of being old’ as reasons to give sympathy to Minah which turns out corresponds to Minah’s effort presenting her own image to appeal for sympathy.

#### c. Subsequence of Sympathy Analysis

Subsequence of sympathy analysis is conducted to review whether the appeal is genuine or a mere strategy. It is also intended to measure the effectiveness of sympathy as strategy to counter hegemony. The subsequence of sympathy analysis involves the statements of sympathizer (subordinate party), and superordinate party. It involves Minah and Sumarno (the head of PT Rumpun Sari Antan).

Minah shows her happiness; free from being sentenced to jail. Surprisingly, she gives negative appreciation toward what she had done (“*I will not do it again, taking the cocoa in the plantation*”). This inconsistency may reveal that her appeal was actually just a strategy to avoid the punishment (being sentenced to jail).

Further, we may notice that in her appeals for sympathy she polishes herself positively and emphasizes negative toward RSA ltd. This correspond to Van Dijk (1995) theory of Ideology. He states that the one who tries to instill her ideology to others tends to emphasizes positives things about him and emphasizes negative things about his opponent. In the essence, ideology is interpreted as the idea which is expressed through communication. This ideology controls the circulation of messages in society (Fairclough, quoted by Jorgensen and Phillips (2007, p. 139) in Oktavianti). In this case through her ideology Minah wants to control the public opinion that she is innocent. This confirms that her appeal for sympathy is a mere strategy.

Analyzing Sumarno (the head of PT Rumpun Sari Antan) statement, it is revealed that the company accepts the judge’s verdict. It is indicated by his positive appreciation toward the judge’s verdicts (“*We are also already willing with the judge’s verdict*”). This indicates that there is a movement of power from the RSA ltd (superordinate party) to Minah (subordinate party). Thus, it may be concluded that through manipulating the sympathy, Minah may counter the hegemony of RSA ltd. In this case, hegemony is interpreted as the movement of power. This view considers the nature of the relationship between power and and those who exercise it, objected to it or make it possible. It perceives power as external/ outside to its subject or whether it is internal/ inside to it (Antoniades, 2008, p. 8).

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