



AUHTORITARIAN LEADERSHIP IN *COLLABORATORS* BY JOHN HODGE (2011)

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Abstract

The purpose of this analysis is to expose the issue of authoritarian leadership and to know the contribution of the character, setting and stage direction in revealing the meaning of authoritarian leadership. This analysis is related to the concept of Power and Country by Niccolo Machiavelli that is supported by the text and context based interpretation. The result of this analysis shows that the strategies in maintaining the power legitimacy done by a state leader can be seen through performing autocracy and personality cult.

Key words: Authoritarian Leadership, Performing autocracy, Personality cult

A. INTRODUCTION

A country stands well depend on the leadership pattern of its leader. A leader also has full rights to the country he leads. Everything that occurs in the country is a form of action and order of the leader itself. Furthermore, all elements of the country are under the hands of its leader such as law, military, citizens and many more. Moreover, there are many types of leadership system that goes on in each country, one of which is the dictatorship leadership system that have taken place in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union is one of the countries that adheres to a dictatorship leadership system. This system of government places the leader as the highest position in the country. On the contrary, rights and freedoms of the citizens are taken over by the leaders themselves. The Soviet Union is governed by Joseph Stalin who is the leader of the country. He has absolute power and is famous for his cruelty in governing. He runs a government based on the rules and policies he commands. In Joseph Stalin era, rights of citizens are not fulfilled such to give opinions, to be free and many more. It is stated in the book *Stalin and His Repressive Regime 1922-1953* (2012) by The New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education and The Prakhin International Literary Foundation:

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“During WWII Stalin was afraid that parts of the population that suffered from his repressions might support the invaders to topple his regime. Therefore in the course of the war he diverted large military and economic resources, which could be used to fight the enemy, for the deportation of millions of Soviet citizens on the basis of their ethnicity.”
(p.66)

It shows that in his era, the country is full of chaos. He ruled by terror, violence and coercion and millions of his own citizens died during his brutal reign. He does brutal activities in order to make Soviet Union in safety and increase its economic aspect. Moreover, to destroy all matters which tend to give threatens toward the country and his position. Besides, he ignores moral values in governing in the Soviet Union.

Joseph Stalin is known as a leader who has absolute power and an image as an authoritarian leader in his government. Absolute power means complete authority to act in area and not restrained by surveillance. It can be the forms of freedoms of speech, press, and religion which are limited by the leader. Authoritarian leadership is how a power can be achieved and used in government by a leader of the country. In *Cambridge Dictionary* (2019) authoritarian is defined as demanding total obedience to those in position of authority while in *Macmillan Dictionary* (2019) the term leadership is defined as the position of being the leader or being in charge of a group, organization or country. In other words, authoritarian leadership can refer to the sly acts are done by a leader in maintaining the power legitimacy in the government.

Authoritarian leadership denotes that power is in the hands of a leader. Ideally, it has the capacity to produce consistent results nationwide. The directions that are given by the leader in charge then be implemented to create measurable results over time. Furthermore, it provides an increase in productivity. Manufacturing and agricultural activities are changed to new levels. The only households which tend to see their wealth grow from their employment or actions are those who hold high-level government positions. In addition, it has strong and top military armies.

However, authoritarian leadership in this case is a reflection of social reality in literary works. It creates an authoritarian leadership system with individual freedom is limited. People are forced to obey strict rules and laws. Moreover, the leaders tend to do the personality cult to portray their images as heroic figures toward the citizens through propaganda and mass media.

Authoritarian leadership can refer to the sly acts done by Joseph Stalin as a leader in the government of Soviet Union in maintaining the power legitimacy. However, this acts bring misery towards the citizens of the country. As described in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2019):

“These implicated even more victims until Stalin himself reduced the terror, though he never abandoned it. Stalin’s political victims were numbered in tens of millions. His main motive was, presumably, to maximize his personal power.”

Based on the question above, it can be seen that Stalin’s government brings a misery and oppression into citizens’ life. With his absolute power, he takes over the citizens and forces them to follow his rules and policies without having high humanity and any consideration. Moreover, he tries to achieve his goals with doing violence. The citizens of Soviet Union experience physical and mental abuse during Joseph Stalin era.

In addition, authoritarian leadership of Joseph Stalin in Soviet Union also creates his ideal figure as a hero through propaganda and mass media. He has an absolute control over the mass media such as art institutions. Further, he builds a relationship in cooperating with an influential person in the country and tries to give doctrine frequently. He does exploitation towards the art worker and gets profits for himself only.

This phenomenon also occurs in postmodernism era. Several countries adopt that kind of dictatorship leadership system such as Soviet Union, China, Germany, Indonesia and many more. Power concentrates in the hands of the leaders which make them have big control over all elements in the country. The issue about authoritarian leadership is interesting to be analyzed. Leadership in Soviet Union by Joseph Stalin has made the citizens lose their rights to get freedom. In addition, Joseph Stalin leadership is sly acts to maintain his power legitimacy in longer decades in the Soviet Union. This sensitive issue is also exposed in many literary works. One of them is in the play entitled *Collaborators* (2011) written by John Hodge. This also becomes the main reason why this play is tempting. Further, through the play, the writer exposes the story of government system in Soviet Union.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The analysis of play script *Collaborators* (2011) by John Hodge is done through text and context-based interpretation. Fictional devices such as character, setting and stage direction are used to reveal the meaning of the play script. These devices are related each other. Character is used to reveal authoritarian leadership by analyzing character attitude, behaviour and action. Setting has a function to show the situation, atmosphere, and condition face by the character. Stage direction is used to describe how the character behaves physically or mentally. In addition, these elements are analyzed based on the concept of power and country by Niccolo Machiavelli.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section reveals the issue of *Authoritarian Leadership* by using fictional devices such as character, setting and stage direction. There are two

strategies used by main character to maintain the power legitimacy in the government.

1. Performing Autocracy

Performing autocracy seeks to perpetuate the power of a leader. It refers to the main character; Joseph Stalin as a leader of Soviet Union. He uses the fear of disorder to justify his rules. He has full rights in the society. He does coercion towards citizens. He takes control all aspects over the citizens. He forces them to obey the rules. He limits their rights to run the live. He put aside morality. Moreover, he put all elements under his own power.

In this dialogue, Soviet Union citizens are being oppressed under the regime of Stalin. They are suspected as traitors against the country. In fact, it is a strategy to reduce any matter which brings a threat into the leader veiled intention. This fact can be depicted in the quotation below:

Bulgakov: Did the food go down well?

Yelena –

Yelena: Men and women are being arrested, for nothing at all. Every morning, another apartment is empty. And the first question they are asked is: who is in this conspiracy with you?

Bulgakov has no reply.

Yelena walks across to the gramophone.

She places a record on, winds it up, and drops the stylus in place.

It is their tune.

She looks at her husband. He cannot meet her gaze.”(p.51)

The dialogue above occurs between Bulkagov and Yelena which both of the characters are representatives of Soviet Union citizens. Implicitly, through the fictional devices; setting, it can be pictured that Joseph Stalin's firmness in the government make the citizens have to follow and obey strict rules while citizens' lives are limited by the policies that have implemented. Therefore, a form of performing autocracy is pictured in the utterance "*arrested*". It reveals that he uses fear of disorder to justify his rules. This is done solely to create a country in safety and peaceful and lead to reach the global domination. In fact, it is actually a veiled intention, namely to maintain its legitimate power within the government for longer decades. Therefore, the feeling of safe that should be obtained by the citizens in their own country brings misery into their lives and has an impact on their survival. All their rights in several aspects of human social life are limited

Moreover, the phenomenon above also shows the relation between the concept of power and country proposed by Niccolo Machiavelli. From the utterance "*arrested*" it shows a key concept of his theory which is called by *virtue*. It means that for a leader who wants to stay in power should be feared by anyone including his own citizens and needed to use force. In this analysis, Stalin tries to

be feared rather than be kind to mobilize the country in his way. As a result, it makes him respected by them. A leader is limitless in acting and leading his country as Joseph Stalin does. This condition is depicted in the following dialogue below:

Vladimir: Do you know what's happened?
He's issued mass-operation orders. They identify the numbers—the quotas –

Bulgakov: To be arrested and shot.

Vladimir: All across the Soviet Union.

Bulgakov: I know. But it's all right. You see, I didn't sign them.

Vladimir: What?

Bulgakov: The operational orders – I didn't sign them, I refused.

Vladimir: What are you talking about? These are orders from Politburo, from Joseph Stalin himself. They don't need the signature of some fucking writer.” (p.61)

Based on the dialogue between Vladimir as a representative of the state apparatus and Bugakov as a representative of Soviet Union's citizen, it is revealed that the main character has an absolute power in the society. He has full rights and high control in the society and all elements of the country. He plays his role as a leader in strong power that is not in accordance with aspects of morality. From the statement "*These are orders from Politburo, from Joseph Stalin himself. // They don't need the signature of some fucking writer.*" it can be showed that a decision and action are taken depend on people who have absolute power. A leader needs to be skilled and planned to take profit of the limitations of human nature, that is, many people are easy to deceive and manipulate. Moreover, this phenomenon relates to the key concept of the theory. Based on the utterance "*to be arrested and shot*" describes the term "*coercion*" found in the theory. It shows that a leader needs to ignore moral considerations entirely and rely on everything, things of strength and cunning. Therefore, negative traits are needed in order to advance the country and maintain power well. This condition also depicted in the following dialogue below between Vladimir and Bulgakov:

Bulgakov: So where are we going?

Vladimir: To make an arrest.

Bulgakov: An arrest! Who?

Vladimir: I don't know. Some loser. We've been up all night. About one in the morning. The phone rings. It's my boss, screaming at me. 'Someone's been plotting against Stalin. Get out there, Make further enquiries.' So we've been all over town, begging rides from one place to another. How do they expect us to arrest people –

without a car? What way is that to run an organ
of state security?" (p.47)

The dialogue above reveals implicitly through setting that in strengthening the power legitimacy by the main character, he has to separate political affairs and morality. For him, both of these two are in different fields and have nothing to do with one another. Therefore, things that can interfere and affect him, a leader is required to put forward his logic rather than his morality. Further, it is emphasized in the utterance "*Someone's been plotting against Stalin. // Get out there, make further inquiries.*" can be pictured that a leader also assigns his people to do surveillance on anyone, anywhere and anytime frequently. All citizens' activities are supervised by secret police. In doing their duties they are also facilitated by various facilities, one of which is transportation for the smooth process of activities. In this case, it can also be described that an authoritarian leader tends to be strict in achieving his interests. By glance, it is said that this phenomenon relates to the concept of power and country which states that a leader must use of various elements to emit political actions and other armed forces along with the distinction between political practice and personal morality.

2. Personality Cult

The second strategy is doing personality cult. It is a strategy to maintain power legitimacy in longer decades by the main character as a leader in Soviet Union. It is a situation in which a political leader is deliberately presented to the people as a great person uses mass media and any form of demonstration. It refers to a leader; Joseph Stalin who is able to control a group of people through the sheer force of his personality. He creates his ideal figure as a hero in propaganda and mass media. He has an absolute control over the mass media. Furthermore, He does cooperation with an art worker as an influential person in the country. He tries to give doctrine frequently. He does exploitation towards the art worker. He gets profits for himself only.

Stalin holds absolute power over the country. His power makes him able to do whatever he wants. He creates the ideal figure as hero through propaganda while doing exploitation towards an individual or art worker. The following dialogue pictures this argument:

Vladimir: Stalin's date of birth?

Bulgakov: Twenty-first December 1978.

Vladimir: Good citizens! So, in celebration of his forthcoming sixtieth birthday, what you're going to do what we respectfully invite you to do – is to write a play about the early life of our great leader, Joseph Visarionovich Dzughshvili, a.k.a. The Vohzhd. It's going to be a surprise!

Bulgakov: I think you want someone else.

Vladimir: Not at all! We want you. You know, you're actually one of his favourites. You wrote that one about the family in Kiev."
(p.12)

Explicitly, the dialogue shows that the main character through his people asks Bulgakov as one of influential citizens does an honour job as a playwright to make a play about himself. Moreover, through setting the dialogue pictures a form of personality cult done by Joseph Stalin in portraying himself as a figure of hero in Soviet government. This strategy leads to attract citizens' sympathy in giving popular supports to him. As a result, citizens indirectly dictated that his leadership leads the country to remain in a safe condition. The utterance "*what you're going to do what we respectfully invite you to do – // is to write a play about the early life of our great leader, // Joseph Visarionovich Dzughshvili, a.k.a. The Vohzhd.*" reveals that Stalin tries to build a relationship and involves influential people in realizing his goals. Through that play, it can be implemented in citizens' perspective that he deserves to be a great leader and is able to sacrifice himself for the sake of the interests of the country. Therefore, based on that explanation, the term "*manipulation*" can be a key term relates to the concept of power and country. A leader must be able to take profits of the situation to maintain his existence, instead of maintaining the country in safety.

Moreover, he tends to give doctrines through propaganda towards the citizens. They believe that as a great leader, Stalin is able in pushing the country into a new level in some aspects. The following dialogue depicts this idea:

“Stalin: Neither was I! Once upon a time. So what I did was, I worked it out as I was going along, Like I'm not qualified to write a play. – but I'm doing the best I can. That's all anyone can ask you. This is what it's like when you govern. You sit here, in an office in Moscow. And out there, there's a hundred million peasants who cannot read. They hate you. They don't trust you. But you have a country to run. Targets to fulfil. An industrial base to secure, to expand. You have cities waiting to be fed. No one says It's easy! But someone has to do it. Someone has to be in charge. Who's it going to be? A forward-looking progressive regime swept to power on a popular revolution, or a bunch of unelected self-interested farmers? (p.37)

Through literary devices; character, it can be understood that Joseph Stalin as a representative of a leader uses propaganda to smooth his action. The propaganda in this dialogue is pictured in the utterance "*This is what it's like*

when you govern. // You sit here, in an office in Moscow. // And out there, there's a hundred million peasants who cannot read. // They hate you. // They don't trust you. But you have a country to run. // Targets to fulfil. An industrial base to secure, to expand.// You have cities waiting to be fed. // No one says It's easy! // But someone has to do it. // Someone has to be in charge. // Who's it going to be?" which shows that through giving doctrines, indirectly citizens have pictured his image as an ideal figure that should be respected. Later, he gets popular support and sympathy from his citizens. Besides, they are actually manipulated by telling persuasive and interesting ideas or promises. In this case, Stalin tries to convey that he is able to increase the level of government into a new change. Implicitly, a key concept relates to the theory is "*manipulation*" which means it can create a support from the citizens against existing power.

Furthermore, he put himself as the one who holds absolute power over the country. This fact is proved in the following dialogue:

“Vladimir: ...

Vladimir produces a typed letter and reads.

‘I can exist no longer, I am persecuted by authority ... my work is banned from the stage ... I have been brought to the verge of a nervous breakdown and request that you have me exiled from the USSR ...’ And then?

Bulgakov does not reply

‘Perhaps you’ve forgotten. You write your whiney, self-pitying letter. And then one day, in your shitty little apartment, the telephone rings, and it rings, and eventually, you answer it. Do you remember?’

Bulgakov: Yes.” (p.18-19)

...

“Bulgakov: They did.

Vladimir: He rescued your career.

Bulgakov: Rescued it from his own oppression.

Vladimir: Let’s not split hairs. The point is: he gave you a second chance. *The White Guard went on at the Art Theatre. Eight hundred performances later, you were the toast of Literary Moscow. Now don’t you owe him something? ...*“ (p.19)

Implicitly, the dialogue above reveals through setting and stage direction that the main character also has absolute control over all institution such as art theatres in Soviet Union. All literary works that will be published depends on his permission whether it is done by famous authors or isn't. This explanation is emphasized by the utterance *“I can exist no longer, // I am persecuted by*

authority ... // my work is banned from the stage" it shows how Stalin's policy has created a hole of death for many art workers. It also means that he put all state elements under his oppression regime. Further, through stage direction "*Vladimir produces a typed letter and reads*" it pictures one of Stalin's policies. Every single activity is recorded by secret police under his command.

Moreover, in the utterance "*The point is: he gave you a second chance // The White Guard went on at the Art Theatre. // Eight hundred performances later, you were the toast of Literary Moscow.*" pictures that how literary works are not allowed to publish and performed easily in the authoritarian regime. It is caused that a literary work is a reflection of social reality which means it can reveal the depravity of an individual or organization. Also, a leader tends to give a solution to the citizens in fact it is a strategy to smooth his true intention. Therefore, based on the explanation above, it can be showed a key concept relates to the theory. The word "*manipulation*" suits to explain two utterances above. According to the theory, besides to be cruel, a leader tends to do manipulation in the society to achieve important goals.

To conclude, the quotations above show two strategies in maintaining power legitimacy in the government by a leader: Performing autocracy and personality cult are applied as a strategy or sly acts to maintain the power legitimacy in longer decades by a leader. These strategies are effectively hide Joseph Stalin true intention which to strengthen his power in the government. Through performing autocracy, he put the power under his hands. He uses fear to disorder his rules. He controls over the citizens and limit their rights. He even does coercion towards them. Meanwhile through personality cult, this strategy is effectively used to set up the citizens' perspective in considering Joseph Stalin as ideal figure in the country. Mass media and art institutions are under his controlled. He builds a relationship with an influential person in Soviet Union. Then, he controls and exploits him well. The profits are gotten for himself only. Moreover, character, setting and stage direction help to disclose Stalin's strategies in reaching his goals.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The issue of authoritarian leadership can be revealed in the play script written by John Hodge, *Collaborators* (2011). Literary devices such as character, setting and stage direction contribute in uncovering the meaning beyond the play script. Text-based and context-based also plays the crucial role in discovering the issue of authoritarian leadership. This analysis also deals with the concept of power and country by Niccolo Machiavelli. Authoritarian in this analysis refers to the sly acts done by Joseph Stalin as a leader of Soviet Union. Through literary devices, it can be examined that Joseph Stalin applies sly strategies to maintain his power legitimacy in longer decades.

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