

## THE OPERATION OF HEGEMONY IN A DYSTOPIAN SOCIETY IN LAUREN OLIVER'S *DELIRIUM*

### KEBERLANGSUNGAN HEGEMONI DALAM MASYARAKAT DISTOPIAN DALAM NOVEL *DELIRIUM* KARYA LAUREN OLIVER

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#### Abstract

*Delirium* is a dystopian novel written by Lauren Oliver. In this novel, there is a depiction on how power and ruling position could be achieved by utilizing a process of negotiating beliefs and values rather than conducting a full coercive domination. The government as the dominant class in this novel initiates its attempt to gain power and ruling position from the people in the society through indoctrinating ideology by the apparatuses before finally gains the consensus from the dominated class. This study presents the elaboration on how hegemony works in a dystopian society which is influenced by the theme of physical-moral destruction, the embodiment of fear and the set of ultimate rules. As the theoretical framework to analyze the data in the novel, this study utilizes the theory of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci, the conception of ideology by Louis Althusser and the idea about coercive discipline by Michel Foucault. The purpose of this study is to delineate the stages of hegemony operation in a dystopian society and relates them to the actual hegemony of the United States as the alternate setting of the novel. The result of this study elaborates that hegemony is a process of gaining power in which the role of coercive elements in it is still needed in order to preserve the power and authority achieved by the dominant class after indoctrinating its ideology. This explains how both of the hegemony operation conducted by either the government in the novel or the United States is able to remain long and strong as it influences several important sectors such as economic, military, technology, culture and etc. From this result, it can be concluded that *Delirium* as a cultural product acts as one of the hegemonic apparatuses for the United States to strengthen its position as the beacon of the world.

**Kata Kunci:** Dominant Class, Dystopian Society, Hegemony operation, Ruling Position, United States Hegemony.

#### Abstrak

*Delirium* merupakan sebuah novel distopian yang ditulis oleh Lauren Oliver. Didalam novel ini, digambarkan bahwa kekuatan and kekuasaan dapat diraih melalui proses negosiasi nilai dan kepercayaan ketimbang melalui aksi dominasi yang murni menggunakan kekerasan. Pemerintah sebagai eksistensi kelas yang dominan didalam novel ini mengawali usahanya untuk memperoleh kekuasaan terhadap masyarakat distopian *Delirium* melalui proses indoktrinasi ideologi yang kemudian disebarkan melalui beberapa medium sebelum akhirnya memperoleh kekuasaan dari kelas-kelas yang didominasi. Kajian ini membahas tentang bagaimana keberlangsungan hegemoni dalam masyarakat distopian yang cenderung dipengaruhi oleh tema dan karakteristik seperti gambaran mengenai kerusakan pada masyarakat, baik secara fisik maupun moral, perasaan takut untuk menentang kekuasaan and aturan-aturan yang bersifat baku serta mengikat. Kajian ini menggunakan teori hegemoni dari Antonio Gramsci, konsep ideologi dari Louis Althusser dan pemikiran Michel Foucault mengenai disiplin koersif untuk mengkaji dan menganalisis data yang ada pada novel. Tujuan dari kajian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan secara gamblang tahapan-tahapan dalam keberlangsungan hegemoni dalam masyarakat distopian dan menghubungkannya dengan hegemoni Amerika Serikat yang merupakan latar belakang dari novel ini. Hasil dari kajian ini menjelaskan bahwa hegemoni adalah sebuah proses untuk meraih kekuasaan yang didalamnya peran unsur-unsur koersif masih dibutuhkan untuk mempertahankan kekuasaan yang telah diraih oleh pemerintah sebagai kelas yang dominan setelah menanamkan ideologinya pada masyarakat yang didominasi. Hal inilah yang pada akhirnya menunjukkan bagaimana hegemoni, baik itu yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah dalam novel maupun Amerika Serikat, dapat bertahan lama dan kuat karena pengaruhnya pada aspek-aspek penting seperti ekonomi, militer, teknologi, budaya dan lain-lain. Dari sini dapat disimpulkan pula bahwa *Delirium* sebagai produk budaya ternyata juga berperan sebagai salah satu medium bagi hegemoni Amerika Serikat guna memperkuat kedudukannya sebagai lentera dunia.

**Keywords:** Hegemoni Amerika Serikat, Kekuasaan, Kelas Dominan, Masyarakat Distopian, Keberlangsungan Hegemoni.

## 1. Introduction

*Delirium* is a novel written by Lauren Oliver which was published in 2011. The novel mainly tells about the story of a young girl living in a society which sees love as a disease known as *Deliria Amor Nervosa*. This ideology which accuses love as a disease is originated from the government since love as a feeling is seen as something delusional, irrational and capable of destroying human minds whether they have it or not. From this situation, the government is depicted to have taken control of several important aspects in the society such as marriage, job, education, social security and people's relationship in daily activities. Due to this situation, I theorize that the government has conducted a hegemony operation in order to gain power and authority in the society.

For the purpose of analyzing the novel and proving the hypothesis of hegemony operation in the novel, this research utilizes the theory of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci as the main tool to break down the stages of hegemony in depicted in the novel. However, there are also several conceptions and ideas from other scholars such as the concept of ideology by Louis Althusser, the idea of coercive apparatuses by Michelle Foucault and other supporting sources to support the analysis of the data in the novel.

The research also aims to discover the actual hegemony operation conducted by the United States to the world, since the author, Lauren Oliver, also mentioned about the U.S as the alternate setting of the novel. By conducting the data related to hegemony operation in the novel, I expect to seek the answer for the research questions in this research which are, 1) How is hegemony operated in a dystopian society in the novel? 2) What is the contextual background of the novel? And 3) How is the ideological construction beyond the hegemony operation in the novel.

## 2. Research Methodology

This research utilizes a qualitative method in order to analyze the data in the novel which Best stated in the form of words or description of something which is not in the form of number (1981:156). In this research, there are two kinds of data which are the primary data and the secondary ones. The primary data consists of the dialogues, narrations and depictions in the novel related to how the government runs its hegemony operation in order to achieve the power and authority in the society. Meanwhile, the secondary data consists of several sources such as books, journals, papers and mass media, especially those which are related to the U.S hegemony to the world in order to support and strengthen the analysis of this research.

Firstly, it is important to map the stages of

hegemony operation according to Antonio Gramsci in his theory about hegemony. These stages include indoctrinating ideology, the shaping the apparatuses, gaining the consensus, maintaining the power and finally dealing with crisis. However, since the data are taken from a dystopian novel, there are several adjustments, especially how the ruling class maintainance its power within the society. Secondly, after completing the stages of hegemony operation in the novel, I move forward to seek the contextual background of this novel. After learning about the author's background and how Lauren herself has mentioned about the United States as the setting of the novel, I work closely to dismantle how the U.S government could achieve its position as the superpower country in the world. Lastly, this research discusses about the idea construction beyond the hegemony operation in the novel and how it correlates with the actual hegemony operation conducted by the United States.

## 3. Result

According to the data analysis in this research, it is discovered that hegemony operation works through the five stages of hegemony proposed by Antonio Gramsci, starting from indoctrinating ideology, shaping apparatuses, gaining consensus, maintaining power and lastly dealing with crisis. The research has also theorized how the United States has initiated its hegemony to the world since the 1940s, especially after the Second World War until today. The evidents could be learned, firstly from the U.S ideology of Exceptionalism, then the recovery funding provided by the World Bank after the WWII, the Iraq War, and finally the National Security Agency (NSA) mass surveillance program conducted to the countries around the globe. Lastly, this research shows how *Delirium* is considered to be one of the U.S hegemonic apparatuses as it spreads and strengthens the position of the country as the beacon for the world and presents it as a common sense.

## 4. Discussion

Hegemony is the domination of one group to another which is often supported by legitimating norms and ideas. (<https://global.britannica.com/topic>). This definition suggests hegemony as the operation of ruling a particular group or society by negotiating a set of beliefs and values in order to achieve power and authority. Richard J.F Day supports this idea by stating that, "*Hegemony is a simultaneously coercive and consensual struggle for dominance, seen in nineteenth- and twentieth-century marxisms as limited to the context of a particular nation-state, but increasingly*

*being analysed at a global level. It is crucial to note that hegemony is a process, not an accomplishment, that the actions of a dominant group are always open to contestation* (2005:7)

At the first stage of operating hegemony, indoctrinating ideology is essential as it determines the further stages of the operation and gives the dominant class a 'starting place' to run their hegemony. This is depicted in *Delirium* as people are made to believe that love is a dangerous disease which needs to be 'cured'. Frankly, this could be assumed as the start of the hegemony operation.

It has been sixty-four years since the president and the Consortium identified love as a disease, and forty-three since the scientists perfected a cure. Everyone else in my family has had the procedure already. My older sister, Rachel, has been disease free for nine years now. She's been safe from love for so long, she says she can't even remember its symptoms (Oliver, 2011:3)

From the quotation above, it is assumed that the government, as the dominant class in the society, has successfully indoctrinated their ideology to the people in *Delirium* society, banishing love from the minds of each individual, through a long time process of negotiation by utilizing several mediums or apparatuses such as family, school, mass media and etc. As it is depicted above, the whole process of indoctrinating ideology does not only work as an ultimate order from the upper class to the lower or the subordinate ones, but it becomes such a long preserved value which is practiced and embraced by all members of the society. Furthermore, the strong suggestion of being 'safe' after following the government's obligation seems to fulfill both the subordinate class' necessity for living well and the dominant class' interest for gaining the consent and leading position in the society. This situation in which the subordinate class does not feel any pressure for believing and practicing what the dominant class has indoctrinated to them is depicted to have triggered the ground of hegemony operation, instead of a full coercive domination.

Moreover, it is also depicted that there is a bold difference between those who have been 'cured' from *deliria* and those who have not, which causes a strict distinction between people in the society. The elaboration of this condition is further depicted in Lena Halloway's story, the main character of this novel who has not been cured, in which she assumes *deliria*, the love disease, as a living parasite inside of her body.

I don't like to think that I'm still walking around  
with the disease running through my blood.  
Sometimes I swear I can feel it writhing in my veins  
like something spoiled,  
like sour milk. It makes me feel dirty It reminds me  
of children throwing tantrums. It reminds me of  
resistance, of diseased girls dragging their nails on the  
pavement, tearing out their hair, their mouths dripping  
spit  
(Oliver, 2011: 4).

The condition depicted above has led the majority of people in *Delirium* society to bear no choices but to get rid of 'love' by means of accepting the government's solution and being 'equal' with those who have been cured previously. As it is also depicted above, the impression for being the 'cured' has driven the majority of people who have not been cured to remove their *deliria*, the love disease, as soon as possible. This obviously places those who stand with the government, the 'cured', on the higher ground which gives them several privileges for living in the society, such as the public trust, the allowance for being outside of the house after 10 o'clock at night, the access to government's building and etc. Being depicted that way, the resistance should find their existence to be the lowest group in the society as their rights are stripped down due to the rejection of the government assumed-to-be 'righteous' ideology.

From this situation, it is important to note that the indoctrinated ideology here has rooted deeply in people's unconscious minds until it reaches a point where it is capable of driving them in fear and craziness before the day of their 'curing' procedure. This is positive to the further stages of hegemony operation as the ideology is successfully indoctrinated and unconsciously leads the people to fulfill the dominant class interest for domination. It is also depicted that by exterminating 'love' as a feeling and irrational behavior, people in the society are expected to significantly increase their capability as a human being which results in more productivity and contribution, especially to the government and society. The government as the dominant class in this novel is depicted to have initiated the process of domination by creating a situation in which they are needed by the society.

The dominant class' ideology does not walk on its own. This is elaborated in Gramsci's theory of hegemony which suggests the utilization of apparatuses as the mediums for ideology to be spread and shaped in a particular society. In this novel, there are four main apparatuses to distribute the government's ideology to people in the society. These

apparatuses are manifested in the form of family, school, a believed literature and mass media.

Family plays a great role for constructing and shaping children's mindsets and characters at their early years. This is the reason why Gramsci adds the role of family members, especially parents, to bear the process of distributing and spreading a particular ideology given by the dominant class in its community or society for the first time. It is assumed that by shaping the mind of people at their childhood through a process of indoctrinating ideology, they are easily to be lead and controlled by the dominant class. In the novel, *Delirium*, there is a depiction on how people in the society, especially the young ones, are willing to embrace what their family members have done and believed before they were even born, in order to be equal and accepted.

Everyone else in my family has had the procedure already. My older sister, Rachel, has been disease free for nine years now. She's been safe from love for so long, she says she can't even remember its symptoms.

I'm scheduled to have my procedure in exactly ninety-five days, on September 3. My birthday. After the procedure I will be happy and safe forever.

That's what everybody says, the scientists and my sister and Aunt Carol.

(Oliver, 2011: 4- 5)

As it is stated above, there is a tendency, for children and teenagers under the age of 18<sup>th</sup> years old, to follow and accept what their society, especially their families, have prescribed for them. From Lena Halloway's perspective, the main female character in this novel, the youngsters in *Delirium* society are left with no option but to preserve the values, ideologies, and beliefs which are inherited by their parents to them. No doubt this condition acts as the primary ground for the ruling class' ideology to be spread, inherited and lasted for generations.

From the discussion about the role of apparatuses above, it is assumed that the dominant class in this novel has successfully achieved its consent for domination. The sign of this gained consensus could be traced from how the government's power of domination grows stronger and starts to branch its influence through several important aspects in life such as occupation, education, social relationship and etc. This is why within this stage, the government is no longer hold the position to be the dominant class but already as the ruling one due to its strong and wide-scale domination.

For the most part, the government has been successful. We haven't seen a war since the border was closed, and there is hardly any crime, except for the occasional incident of vandalism or petty theft. There is no more hatred in the United States, at least among the cured. Only sporadic cases of detachment—but every medical procedure carries a certain risk (Oliver, 2011:71)

The quotation above validates the consent gained by the government in the society. In fact, it is depicted that through a long time of believing to the government as the ruling class, the society is far from any serious danger and the state of imbalance. Although, there are still few breakouts happening occasionally, the big picture that people are protected from the harmful disease of *Deliria* is still dominant to be found in the society. This is also an evident on how the government's cure for *Deliria* works as it leads people in *Delirium* society to behave and only think about improving the society through their contribution. That is why there is less incident found after the majority of people are cured. Moreover, after gaining this ruling class status, the government is expected to carry its domination into the next level that is by maintaining the power through the coercive apparatuses. The involvement of this apparatus could only be triggered once the dominant class is assumed to be the ruling one as it has gained the trust and the bond from the submissive class. This is important as the ideology only could not stop the sporadic cases of detachment coming from the uncureds and the resistance movement.

According to Gramsci, the anticipation of crisis command is necessary to be conducted in order to maintain the power and the ruling position in the society (Gramsci's selected writings, 1916-1935: 307). Based on this statement, I find out that the stage of maintaining power by Antonio Gramsci which emphasizes the use of coercive force, has surprisingly developed into several ways which are heavily influenced by the elements of dystopia in this novel.

Fifty years ago the government closed the borders of the United States. The border is guarded constantly by military personnel. No one can get in. No one goes out. Every sanctioned and approved community must also be contained within a border—that's the law—and all travel between communities requires official written consent of the municipal government, to be obtained six months in advance. This is for our own protection. Safety, Sanctity, Community: That is our country's motto

(Oliver, 2011: 70)



After the consensus is achieved and the trust from the submissive class is present, the further domination of the ruling class through its hegemonic position is started. The form of this further authority could be interpreted as a way to limit and border the submissive class' movement in order to keep the achieved consensus intact. This is discussed in Gramsci's theory of hegemony which implicitly reminds the ruling class not to be overjoyed by its ruling position after the consent is achieved since the whole hegemony operation itself is merely a process (Day, 2005:7).

In the novel, it is depicted that in order to maintain the ruling position and the achieved consensus, the government conducts several ways of limiting the people's actions such as guarding the city border by the force of military personel and forbidding any effort of going in and out of the society without the government's permission. By doing this, it is expected that people as the submissive class shall never know and learn what lies beyond the walls which circled around their society because once they are exposed to the 'world' other than the one which they have been indoctrinated to by the ruling class, the possibility of questioning and resisting the ideology in their society is increased significantly. Therefore in order to prevent this from happening, limiting their access of gaining knowledge and information is also essential as a way to preserve the achieved consensus.

It becomes a common fact that the existence of power in a particular society is always followed by a resisting movement. This is elaborated in Gramsci's theory of hegemony in which he stated, "ignoring, and even worse, disdainig, the so-called spontaneous movements may often have bad and serious consequences (1996, 48). From this conception, it could be understood that the need for expelling the source of crisis should be given as a top priority since it possess a chance to ruin the hegemony operation. In *Delirium*, the picture of this crisis is depicted by the existence of a resistance group called The Invalids and lovers that could not stand the repressive life constructed by the government.

Every couple of years the Invalids—the people who live in the Wilds, the unregulated land that exists between recognized cities and towns—sneak into Portland and stage some kind of protest. One year they came in at night and painted red death skulls on every single one of the known scientists' houses. Another year they managed to break into the central police station, which coordinates all the patrols and guard shifts for Portland, and move all the furniture onto the roof, even the coffee machines.

(Oliver, 2011:61)

The Invalids' resisting movement is considered to be a guerilla action since they do not seek to combat the government directly, but they choose to send threats through the property belong to the government. This is caused as they lack of support from the people living inside the society and heavily outclashed by the government domination. Therefore, even when they represent a resisting movement to the ruling's ideology, they do not posses the strength to alter the situation as the government domination is already established through several important aspects that hold the interest of the majority. Leaving alone the existence of the Invalids as the outcasts, lovers and sympathizers who dwell secretly inside the walls of society find life to be more difficult to survive for. This is initiated as their environment is surrounded by an invinsible 'prison' of anti-love ideology which forces them to live under the pressure and the possibility of getting punished as the consequences of their belief in love.

Until the procedure has been perfected, until it has been made safe for the under-eighteens, we will never be totally protected. It still moves around us with invisible, sweeping tentacles, choking us. I've seen countless uncureds dragged to their procedures, so racked and ravaged by love that they would rather tear their eyes out, or try to impale themselves on the barbed-wire fences outside of the laboratories, than be without it  
(Oliver, 2011:6)

The lovers and symphatizers in *Delirium* society would rather die for believing in love than to continue their life without it. However, their willingness to sustain even the worst possible treatment from the government and the cruel condition they are experienced would never be seen as an heroic action against the domination of the government, but rather as a pathetic example for those choosing the wrong path. This happens as the majority of people in the society have been influenced by the government's ideology through several apparatuses such as family, school, *the Book of Shhh* and mass media. As the result of this influence, the people, especially those who stand with the government, should no longer recognize anyone infected by *Deliria* as complete human. This triggers a condition in which lovers and symphatizers in *Delirium* society are similar to those terrorists trying to ignite their own ideology and being alienated because of it.

Moving forward to the contextual background, I discovered that there are similar conceptions and situations between the government's hegemony in the novel and the one conducted by the U.S government to

the world. This idea is also supported by the author of *Delirium* through her online interview with the *Goodreads*.

In the novel, the government is depicted to have utilized its dominant ideology by mentioning love or *Deliria* as a dangerous disease which needs to be cured. Through this single ideology, the government is able to achieve the ruling position in the society and dominate its people as the aftermath result. From this situation, it could be noted that by giving the influence about the danger of love to the people, the government in *Delirium* is assumed to have constructed its position to be the ideal leading entity which is capable of pointing out the rights from the wrongs. This could be seen through how the government sets the position of the cured to be the role model of people living in the society while abusing the existence of the Invalids and lovers who rather be infected by *Deliria* than to live without it. The urge for leading the people to follow this ideology has brought the government in the novel into operating hegemony as its way to dominate.

A similar conception to this ideology is actually discovered to exist in the United States, known as the *American exceptionalism*. Mark Beeson through his paper entitled *The Rise of the 'Neocons' and the Evolution of American Foreign Policy* defined this term to be the belief that the U.S is a unique country with a possibly God-given historical mission which has shaped U.S foreign policy and given rise to the idea that America and American values must provide a beacon for the world (2004:9). Through this theoretical concept, the U.S government has hegemonized its position to be the ideal leading country of the world thus initiated its domination to the other countries as a noble intention. This implication is related to how the government in the novel establishes its position to be exceptional by leading the society into the anti-love environment.

*Delirium* depicts a situation in which the government offers the medical procedure for curing *Deliria* as the only solution available for those who seek happiness and safety in the society. This is actually done right after the ideology of *Deliria* has gone viral and started to inflict madness. From this situation, it could be noted that, in order to initiate its hegemony operation, the government constructs its position to be needed by the society in which it dominates. This could be discovered from how the government provides the cure at the moment when the people are desperate and afraid to be infected by *Deliria*. As the result of this action, it is found out that the people are easily to be influenced and controlled into further domination such as limiting their movement, surveilling their behavior

and even stripping their rights of freedom in the society.

This image on how the government emerges as the 'savior' of humanity in the novel is similar to how the U.S government has lead the World Bank to provide funding and economic assistance to the European countries, such as France, which were devastated by the Second World War in the 1940s. At the moment when those countries were at their vulnerable condition and in dire need of help, the U.S played its role to provide the 'cure' for their recovery. It is then discovered that through this movement, the U.S government is able to establish its dominant power in the world, especially by positioning itself to be needed for the war recovery and the development of countries. As the result of this event, the U.S government gained its position to be the leader of the World Bank in 1944 and remains that way even until today.

Throughout the history of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World bank), the United States has been the largest shareholder and the most influential member country. U.S. support for, pressure on and criticisms of the Bank have been central to its growth and the evolution of its policies, programs, and practices.

(<http://www.cadtm.org/Domination-of-the-United-States>)

From the quotation above, it is obvious to understand that the U.S government has achieved its vital role in the world by controlling the policies and practices done by the World Bank. This triggers a situation in which the United States is assumed to have gained its leading position which is inspired by its exceptionalism, after playing dominant in the process of the world recovery from the war. As the result of this condition, it is then assumed that the country holds the final decision for every proposal that are sent to the bank. France, for example, in 1947, was allowed to lend money for the purpose of its country recovery in the post war period. Netherlands, Denmark, Luxemburg and even India followed the movement by proposing loans for the similar interest ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)). From this situation, it could be noted that the U.S government's leading position which is represented through the World Bank, is implied for not only accountable to the bank operation, but it is also responsible for hegemonizing the other countries about whether or not a particular decision is truly realized.

Exercising coercive apparatuses as the anticipation of crisis command is indeed necessary (Gramsci's Selected Writings, 1916-1935: 307). However this

could only be conducted after the dominant class has transformed its position to be the ruling one in a particular society. In the novel, the stage of implementing coercive apparatuses is genuinely started once the government's anti-love ideology is accepted by the people in the society. The form of this coercion is then manifested through the role of the Regulators, keeping the society from any *Deliria*-infected behaviors such as kissing, hugging and socializing with people from the opposite gender. Although the disciplining action depicted in the novel is harsh and severe as the government allows the Regulators to execute the immediate punishments such as beating and shooting to the accused ones, this act of coercion turns out to be effective in order to seize and contain the resistance movement initiated by the Invalids and lovers in the society. This could be seen through how the government is able to suppress the the Invalids' resistance and prevent Lena and Alex from running away to the Wilds. This is all done in order to preserve the hegemony and the government's ruling position in *Delirium* society.

In the real world, the example of the U.S coercive apparatuses could be learned from the history of the Iraq War in 2003. In that war, the U.S formed a coalition army along with its allies such as Australia and the United Kingdom in order to assault Iraq due to its possession of WMD (Weapon of Mass Destruction). The world criticized the action since the U.S government did not pursue any diplomatic approach first but directly called for the war.

Ten years ago today, the world saw what was by some accounts the largest single coordinated protest in history. Roughly 10 million to 15 million people (estimates vary widely) assembled and marched in more than 600 cities: as many as 3 million flooded the streets of Rome; more than a million massed in London and Barcelona; an estimated 200,000 rallied in San Francisco and New York City. From Auckland to Vancouver — and everywhere in between — tens of thousands came out, joining their voices in one simple, global message: no to the Iraq war (<http://world.time.com>)

It is believed that the war would only cause both of the sides suffer as it also could trigger another war as a form of retaliation. Having a similar conception for resisting against the idea of military aggression, the anti-war movement was also initiated by several world leaders such as the France Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, the South Africa 7<sup>th</sup> President, Nelson Mandela and Pope John Paul II who decided to back up the protestant mob and deliberately stated their strong condemnation against the war. (<https://www.britannica.com>) However, due its

superiority and major influence to the countries of the world, this was all ignored by the U.S government as on March, 20th 2003, the the coalition army began to launch a bombard campaign on Iraq ignoring the world biggest anti-war protest in history and leaving the Iraqians to have no option but fighting back

Aside from the implementation of the coercive apparatuses for maintaining the ruling class power in a particular society, the act of constant surveillance and monitoring people in the submissive class, are also important in order to preserve the hegemony operation. *Delirium* supports this assumption by depicting the act of wiretapping communication devices done by the government to the people in the society. Through the government's listening device embedded in phones and other communication devices depicted in the novel, there is a situation constructed in the society that the government as the ruling class is everywhere, watching and monitoring the people's behaviors and activities. As the result of this surveillance, the ruling class is able to fend off the strike from the resistance and preserve its hegemony operation in the society.

Discussing about the act of surveillance, according to the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), the U.S government is also discovered to have conducted a secret domestic spying information program to the hundreds of millions Americans by collecting their phone calls and internet communications since 2001. The program is intended to prevent and protect the U.S capitol from the terrorist attack, especially after the occurrence of the 9/11 incident.

News reports in December 2005 first revealed that the National Security Agency (NSA) has been intercepting Americans' phone calls and Internet communications. Those news reports, combined with a USA Today story in May 2006 and the statements of several members of Congress, revealed that the NSA is also receiving wholesale copies of American's telephone and other communications records. All of these surveillance activities are in violation of the privacy safeguards established by Congress and the US Constitution ([www.eff.org](http://www.eff.org))

According to the quotation above, the surveillance program was firstly discovered in 2005, which should leave an implication that the U.S government have successfully managed to sabotage tons of American communication devices for 4 years straight without any problem. It was later when the media broke the news about the NSA (National Security Agency) and what it did to people, the majority of Americans started to urge the U.S government to stop collecting information without their allowance. As the result of this reaction, the U.S government, through the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) signed a renewal

procedure for the NSA to continue on 'spying', but with a specific requirement. Later it was discovered that the NSA could still 'spy' to any foreign targets believed to be the seed of terrorism, but not to the Americans domestically. However, this agreement was informed to be broken, since in 2009, according to Eric Lichtblau and James Risen in the New York Times, the NSA still collected the data from Americans and described the practice to be significant and systemic for the procedure against terrorism.

The situation was worsened as in 2013, Edward Snowden, a former contractor of the CIA, revealed how the U.S government, through the NSA, have done more than just surveilling the Americans for any possible attempt of attack directed to the country, but it also have spied on 193 countries in the world.

The National Security Agency exempted four countries from its list of places where it could rightfully intercept information, leaving the world's 193 other countries open to surveillance, according to a new set of top secret documents leaked by Edward Snowden. Four countries that had signed a no-spying agreement with the U.S. — Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand — were declared off-limits by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, the *Washington Post* reports, but the court approved a list of 193 countries where the NSA could legally conduct surveillance. ([www.time.com](http://www.time.com))

Due to this discovery, this time, the international world criticized how the U.S dare to spy on them secretly and demanded the program to be stopped immediately. However, this suggestion was argued by the former president of America, Barrack Obama, who defended the program by mentioning the fact that it have averted at least 50 threats since 2001, directed not just to the U.S capitol, but also to the other countries such as Germany ([www.newamerica.org](http://www.newamerica.org)). After a long debate about whether or not to keep the surveillance program, it was later in the late of 2015 that the NSA was informed to have yanked its expansive surveillance program by cutting the access to analyze its database of collected information due to the U.S Freedom Act issued by the advocates and Congress in 2015. However, for the purpose of keeping the program from going dissaray, the agency decided to keep the database of the surveillance information for their own record. Even until today, there is still no guarantee whether the program has truly ended or simply just taking a short break. As long as the database of the collected information still exists, there is always a chance for the program to be restarted into its original purpose ([www.fortune.com](http://www.fortune.com)).

From this history of the NSA mass surveillance program, it could be taken into consideration how the United States, through its propaganda, is able to

develop the program from the domestic purpose of defending the country against terrorists into the expansive act of monitoring countries in the world. This could be analyzed as the U.S government method for gaining the upperhand on international negotiation and convention in order to preserve its leading position in the world. Although, in the end of it, the program was demanded to be stopped, especially after Snowden brought it up to public, the U.S government decided not to fully eradicate the program into pieces as it still keeps the database of it until today. Through the NSA mass surveillance program, the U.S government could be assumed to have managed both defending the country from the act of terrorism and also maintaining its position as the leading country in the world by monitoring the other countries. Aside from the apparatuses mentioned by Gramsci in his theory of hegemony such as religion, education, family and mass media (1999:337), another medium which could be utilized to spread the dominant ideology in hegemony operation is cultural product such as literature. *Delirium* supports this finding by depicting how the *Book of Shhh* (Safety, Health and Happiness Handbook) is recognized as the 'bible' of the society due to its educative content about the government teachings and *Deliria*-related information. Through the book, people become aware of the danger of love and its terrible effect in life. The book has also lead them into taking the cure and supporting the government as the leading entity in the society. From this impact caused by *the book of Shhh*, it could be noted that the role of literature in the hegemony operation is proven to be effective and supportive for the other apparatuses to spread the dominant ideology. This could be elaborated as the book is also used as the main source of knowledge in the society and especially the school.

In the reality, *Delirium* as the American novel which brings the issue of the U.S domination through its hegemony as the context, could also be assumed to have spread the ideology about the U.S ruling position in the world. The reason could be traced from how it constructs the government to be the leading class in the society along with its hegemony operation. Through out the story, it is also discovered that the novel creates a situation in which the government's domination to the people in the society is strong and immune to the resistance movement, such as the Invalids and the lovers. This is proven as the novel positions the government as the ruling class until the end of the story. Understanding this conception, it is then important to notice that *Delirium*, as a cultural product, has indoctrinated the ideology of the U.S government being able to gain its leading position and keep it firm from the resistance. The novel has also made its readers to be aware of the U.S domination existence in



the world. This could be elaborated that while the *book of Shhh* in the novel is depicted to have lead the people into believing the government's anti-love ideology, *Delirium* makes a way for the world to acknowledge the United States of America as a dominator of the world.

After analyzing the data in the novel and its contextual background, hegemony as a process of gaining power turns out to be an effective wide-range scale authority capable of manipulating several important sectors from the subordinate subjects such as economic, military, political, technology and cultural. Beginning in the suffering period after the Second World War in the 1940s, the U.S government firstly initiated its domination through the economic sector by leading the World Bank to provide funding for those countries devastated by the war. As the result of this action, the United States gains its position as the leading country of the world represented by its lasting ruling position in the World Bank since 1944 until today.

This is actually what *Delirium* tries to construct, that the hegemony operation possessed by the United States of America, is both suprisingly effective and also difficult to bring down as it covers a wide range authority and has taken a long time of process to stand and rise like we notice today. To challenge and resist the hegemony, either it is in the novel or in the reality, means attempting to ruin the ruling class' hegemonic influence in every sectors it governs. This is a big homework to do since when one of the sectors is able to be ruined, the others would pop out and patch the missing link. This is why even when the world has heavily criticized the U.S aggressive military movement towards the Iraqians in the Iraq War in 2003 for some mislead accusation of WMD and the discovery of the NSA mass surveillance program in 2005, the truth has spoken that none of these critics has significantly modify the fact that the United States of America is still in charge for the world's leading country and the one holding a dominant vote for the international decision.

### Conclusion and Suggestion

Hegemony is indeed a process of gaining power and authority from a particular group in a society through a process of negotiating beliefs and values. However, it does not ignore the role of coercive apparatuses completely. From *Delirium* which is a dystopian novel, the elaboration of stages in hegemony operation is presented to picture the actual hegemony conducted by the United States in the reality. As the range of the U.S

hegemony to the other countries in the world has taken control of several important aspects in life such as economic, military, technology, cultural and etc, I conclude that its hegemony is difficult to be taken down. Lastly, all of the discussion about the hegemony operation above have also proven that *Delirium*, as one of teen novels, is worth to be taken seriously since it carries the issue of the U.S hegemony for the young readers to embrace as a common sense.

As the researcher, I hope that this thesis could provide and contribute to the English Studies especially in the analysis of hegemony in literature. I also hope that the discussion and the analysis in this thesis will be developed by future researchers in any possible way by taking the new perspective and method of approaching the data related to hegemony operation.

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