

Reader Response on Public Figure Opinion in Social Media

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the public's reception of essays by Indonesian public figures, namely Dahlan Iskan, on social media. The ease with which social media is used to communicate has increased the involvement of the audience in receptive to a work. In fact, audience receptions on social media are often used as a reference in assessing whether or not a work is good. Therefore, research on reader reception on social media is interesting to do. This research uses qualitative methods and the research approach used is reception study. In this study, the theory of active audiences in the form of the encoding-decoding model proposed by Stuart Hall is also used. The results showed that there were three typologies of audiences in receptive to Dahlan Iskan's essays, namely there were four models of readers in receptive to DI essays on social media. The four reader models include (a) dominant-hegemonic readers, (b) negotiating readers, (c) oppositional readers, and (d) recreational readers. The categorization of this reader model is based on the position of the reader towards the text being received. Apart from these four categories, ideological-political readership models are also found, namely readers who are not dominant, negotiating, in opposition, or recreational. Readers of this model respond to the work by relating it to political conditions. Whatever works are received, readers of the ideological-political model always relate the content of the work and comment negatively on the political conditions in Indonesia.

Keywords

Reader Response, Reception, Public Figure, Social Media.

Introduction

The reader's reception of a text is one of the barometers of the success of the text in conveying a meaning. The breadth of acceptance of the text by the audience is one indicator that the text is good. In addition, the more active participation of the audience, the better the text because it means that the text provides opportunities for the audience to interpret the text and reproduce the text in other forms.

In reception analysis, the role of the reader is very important. It can be said that the role of the reader completely reverses the current paradigm which usually places the reader as a party who does not know anything about the text or the creative process of the text. In reception analysis, the reader is actually given the main function because it is the reader who enjoys, evaluates, and makes use of the text that is read. On the other hand, writers must be temporarily side-lined.

In perceiving an article—as a form of communication, audiences are divided into two categories, namely passive audiences and active audiences (Hall, 1980; Wood, 2007). Passive audiences are audiences who do not give an explicit reception so that the reception is not visible and tends to be interpreted as not giving a response. The active audience is an audience that actually and periodically shows their reception of a communication. However, actually passive audiences are audiences who give their own meaning to a form of communication (Hall, 1980) and this meaning does not always have to be made explicit. Thus, it is also not appropriate to call them passive audiences.

The concept of an active audience is a form of progress in believing that humans basically have intelligence and autonomy so that they should have natural power to use and interpret media (Croteau & Hoynes, 2002). This audience activity is not only limited to the process of interpreting messages, but also to the process of using messages socially, including their use to reproduce texts by giving new meanings (Castell, 2007). Moreover, with the rapid development of the use of social media as a medium of communication, the activeness of this audience is also suspected to be higher. Audiences are also free to interpret and reproduce media texts based on the issues they are interested in (Purnamasari, 2018).

One of the texts that has received many responses from readers is the essay by Dahlan Iskan (DI). DI is a former journalist, media entrepreneur, as well as a figure who has a lot of political influence in Indonesia (Tapsell, 2017). As a former journalist, DI is an active person in writing. Until now, DI always publishes his writings every 04.00 am through his Facebook account. The article is also always published on the Disway website. DI's writings are his critical views on events, phenomena, or issues that are currently being discussed. Armed with experience as a journalist and a bureaucrat, DI is able to express his ideas and views on an issue very deeply.

DI's activity in writing actually cannot be interpreted solely as a form of his hobby/habit in writing because he is a former journalist. Moreover, DI's activeness in writing can also be interpreted as an effort to maintain its power and influence in the media world. This is in line with the opinion of Hardy (2014) which states that media owners use certain methods to exercise market power. Through the writings he publishes every day, DI wants to continue to exert its influence through the dissemination of its critical views to the public. Thus, the audience is unconsciously led to the ideas of DI and is also unconsciously under the "influence" of DI thoughts.

DI essays seem to appeal to audiences. This can be seen from the many responses from DI essay readers. These responses took the form of various modalities, including giving likes, giving emoticons, giving comments, redistributing essays, and reproducing DI essays into other writings by journalists or civilians. In addition, the response from readers to DI essays is also very fast. This is indicated by the many responses received from readers in a short period of time, for example in a day getting a thousand likes and emoticons. In addition, DI essays are also usually re-shared by their readers. The use of the network system also allows the DI writings that were shared by the reader to be re-shared by the circle of the first reader's network. This is what makes the reception opportunities for DI critical essays wider. In fact, sometimes DI essays become news topics (made news by) certain newspapers.

As a writing that contains personal views, it is very possible if the DI essay is interpreted in various ways by its readers. In this case, the reader has the power or the right to create meaning freely. In addition, DI's "position" as an influencer will also create a domino effect in the social media space where all readers can participate and actively participate in responding to the article. Moreover, DI essays are published on social media that are open and accessible to anyone so that they can be interpreted differently, depending on the knowledge, opinions, and experiences of readers (Purnamasari, 2018). Essay is a medium to convey meaning. However, the meaning conveyed by the author is not always directly

proportional to the meaning of the reader. This means that the meaning received by the reader may be different from the meaning conveyed by the author.

The large number of responses to DI essays is also inseparable from the use of social media as a channel for disseminating essays. As is happening today, the socio-cultural reality seems to have undergone a change (Couldry & Hepp, 2016), namely from a real socio-cultural reality to a virtual socio-cultural reality. This virtual socio-cultural reality has provided a community (virtual community), a form of reality (virtual reality), and a separate form of space (cyberspace) that is different from the real socio-cultural reality. This reality then also gives rise to group identities in cyberspace whose identities are used for expression among group members. This expression is carried out very massively and even today it is possible that people spend more time interacting in cyberspace. Moreover, in expressing in the virtual world, the psychological distance between the communicants is seamless so that the expression between the communicants can be very high.

The existence of the internet and social media has significantly changed the pattern of human communication (Jenkins, 2006). Jenkins emphasized that there was a change in media convergence which led to a change in the active media audience. In the previous era, people's activity towards the media was only limited to being active in choosing the media (such as choosing programs that were considered interesting or according to needs) or responding to events that were considered bad. However, in the era of the internet and social media, people are not only active in choosing the desired source of information media, but are also actively involved in processing, changing, creating new media, or evaluating the information presented in the selected information sources. Jenkins calls this phenomenon "participatory culture". This participatory culture is characterized by the active involvement of the audience in creating, shaping, reshaping, responding, or disseminating content. In other words, the media is now not only a source of information, but also an environment for expression and an opportunity to realize one's communicative needs (Dunas & Vartanov, 2020).

Staggenborg (2005) which states that social media has become a medium for social movements to increase awareness about social injustice and help participants reimagine a new social world. In fact, Tufekci (2018) mentions that the social progress achieved in the Arab Spring would not have been possible without the use of digital technology, such as the use of Twitter, to mobilize and raise public awareness to campaign for social progress. However, social media can also be used to divert public attention and become a medium for releasing citizens' political involvement (Hodgkinson, 2008).

The results of Storer & Rodriguez and Staggenborg's research show that social media can not only be used as a medium to express and convey information, but can also be used as a medium to raise awareness to the public about a problem. This means that social media can also be used as a medium to perceive content (information, phenomena, events, or works presented on social media). In simple terms, the reception of content on social media can be in the form of commenting, giving likes and dislikes (like-dislike), giving certain emoticons, or retweeting or sharing content.

Based on the rationalizations that have been put forward, it appears that the audience's reception of a work/object/thing has a very strong influence on the socio-political life of the audience. For this reason, it is very interesting to do research on the reader's reception of DI essays as a national figure. The findings on the critical reception of readers towards DI essays can be used to justify DI's success in conveying its ideas to the public and the audience's critical view of issues and factual phenomena in society.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach and reception research, especially reception in the media. Junus (1985) stated that in the reception, readers' contributions are collected which determine the direction and outcome of the meeting between the work and the reader through various aspects and methods. Meanwhile, according to Hall (2003), reception analysis is an analysis that focuses on individual attention to the process of meaning and deep understanding of the media and the way readers interpret media content. Reception analysis shows that the approach to the work cannot only be based on the text, but must give place to the individual role, namely in the process of interacting with the text. This means that individuals play an active role in interpreting the contents of media texts by giving meaning to their understanding of the text.

Text receptions on social media are a little different from traditional text receptions. This relates to the type of text on social media which is very open and can be consumed by anyone and at any time. In addition, texts on social media are very likely to be received openly without time constraints, in contrast to traditional texts whose reception is not as open as texts on social media (Livingstone, 2004). In addition, the reception of texts on social media is methodologically different from traditional text receptions. In the traditional text reception, the reception is individualistic and carried out for a specific purpose and within a certain time. Therefore, the appropriate method for the reception of traditional texts is an interview or a questionnaire. However, text receptions on social media are public, conducted openly, and can be done at any time. That is, after a text is

published, readers can openly give their reception on the spot. Therefore, reception data can be obtained directly, while interviews do not have to be conducted (Mathieu, 2015).

The data in this study are discourse units and discourse sub-units that fully describe the reader's response to DI essays on social media. The relationship between discourse units and discourse sub-units is revealed in sentences, sentence clusters, and multimodal contained in a collection of responses that form discourse units or discourse sub-units. The discourse units and sub-units reflect the reader's critical reception of the DI essay. The reception was obtained from the results of observations and documentation of reader receptions for DI's critical essays on social media. In addition, the results of field notes are also used as data in this study to understand the context of the reader's response to the DI essay. The data collection technique was carried out by downloading reader responses to DI essays on Facebook. The responses are downloaded on an essay with a predefined topic. The responses that were downloaded included comments, multimodal, as well as new discourses/texts which were responses to DI essays. The next data collection technique is in-depth observation of the responses of the netizens that have been downloaded. Observation of this response was carried out to answer the problem formulation that had been set at the beginning.

Results and Discuss

In this study, found four models of readers in perceiving DI essays, namely (1) dominant-hegemonic readers, (2) negotiating readers, (3) oppositional readers, and (4) recreational readers. Of the four reader models, the most common model found was the dominant reader with a total of 418 responses. The oppositional reader model was found in 257 responses, the negotiating reader was found in 138 responses, and the recreational reader was found in 87 responses.

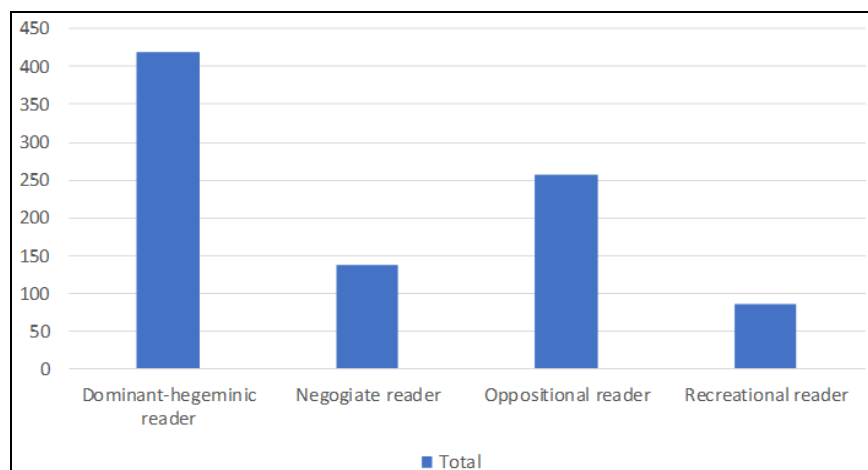


Figure 1 Reader's Model in Receiving DI Essays

The dominant reader is the one who accepts and shares the message received because of the cultural similarity between the producer and the recipient of the message. In this model reader, the producer conveys the message and the reader receives it. The message conveyed by the producer coincidentally is also liked by the readers. So, in this position the reader will receive the full meaning desired by the message maker. In other words, the message that has been created and delivered by the producer can really be taken for granted by the reader.

Negotiating readers are readers who negotiate or find a middle ground between the encoded messages and their conditions. In this case, the readers are willing to accept the dominant ideology that is generally presented in the message, but they will make some exceptions that are adapted to local cultural rules. That is, the reader will accept the dominant ideology and refuse to apply it to certain cases. Readers will accept ideology in general, but will refuse to apply it if there is a difference with their culture or if it is not in accordance with the beliefs of the audience.

Opposition readers are readers who reject or oppose the encoded message. In this position, readers reject the meaning given by the producer and replace it with the meaning of their own thoughts on the content of the message conveyed by the producer. In this case, the reader does not accept, even completely rejects the message sent by the producers. Recreational readers are readers who respond to a work just for fun. In responding, recreational readers tend not to comment on the content of the work, but instead provide something unrelated to the work. Recreational readers sometimes only provide emoticons as a form of response to the work being received.

The variety of reader models in perceiving DI essays cannot be separated from the use of social media as a medium for disseminating a work. As stated by Fornas et al. (2002), recent digital technologies have radically increased interactivity by explicitly emphasizing the user's active response as well as producing their own text based on the received text (Fornas, et al., 2002). Thus, the new media environment crucially expands the scope and importance of arguments about the “active audience” theory. Active audiences on social media are increasingly active and selective in directing themselves as both producers and readers of texts.

The results of the analysis show that the dominant reader model can be divided into two types, namely ideational-dominant-hegemonic readers and personal-dominant-hegemonic readers. Ideational-dominant-hegemonic readers refer to readers who accept the perceived content of the text based on the content or ideas contained in the text. The dominant-

personal reader refers to the reader who accepts the content of the text which is received based on the character who is the source of the idea for writing the text or based on the DI itself. Fanaticism or dislike of characters who are the source of ideas for writing texts or of DI is the cause of the emergence of these two reader submodels.

This finding contradicts the findings of Wahyono, et. al. (2020). Wahyono called the dominant reader an idealistic reader. Ideological readers are readers who accept messages conveyed by producers because of ideological factors and alignments with message producers (Wahyono, et al., 2020). In this position, readers place more emphasis on acceptance of the ideological similarities they have with the message sent by the text producer so that if they feel that the message conveyed is in accordance with their ideology or belief, they will accept the meaning or message contained in the text. In other words, this ideological reader is characterized by critically approving, supporting, justifying, putting himself on the same side, and trusting the message the producer sends. The ideational reader places the producer of the message as a measure of their acceptance of the received text.

Unlike the case with the dominant reader, which can be divided into two types, namely based on the ideas conveyed in the essay and based on the person who expresses the views written in the essay or based on the essay writer, the results of this study indicate that readers who are in opposition are only based on the ideas that are promoted. Based on the results of the analysis, the reader's rejection of DI essays is only based on the ideas written by DI in the essay. There is not a single rejection based on personal. For example, of the five essays analyzed, the essay entitled Doctor d'Lois is the essay with the highest percentage of readers in opposition. The number of readers who are in opposition to the essay is based on the views of Doctor Lois which are considered against the flow and not in accordance with the facts. Even if there are comments that contain cynicism towards Doctor Lois, it is because of Doctor Lois' views that are against the flow and do not match that fact.

Opposition readers place themselves out of line with the perceived text. Opposition readers appear when the audience is critical in perceiving the text and then replacing or changing the message or code conveyed in the text with an alternative message or code whose position is opposite to the message or code in the text. Opposition readers reject the received text's content and replace it with their own way of thinking about the written essay. The results of this study indicate that the dominant reader appears on essays that discuss issues that are contrary to the psychological condition of the reader. This finding

is in line with Effendy (2003) which states that one of the factors that influence a person's reception of a work is the psychological condition of the reader.

In terms of numbers, negotiating readers are readers who are not found so much in receiving DI essays. The negotiating reader puts himself "in the middle". Negotiating readers are readers who negotiate or find a middle ground between the encoded messages and their conditions. In this case, the readers are willing to accept the dominant ideology that is generally presented in the message, but they will make some exceptions that are adapted to local cultural rules.

In his essays, although not explicitly showing his side, DI actually sided with one side. This can be seen from the tone of his writing. However, not all readers accept or reject the contents of DI essays. There are certain parts or ideas that are accepted, but there are also certain parts or ideas that are rejected. Readers of this model try to negotiate the work that is received (Hall, 2003). Recreational readers are readers who only respond for fun. In this reader model, the reader is not aware of, does not want to be aware of, or does not care about the critical issues contained in the essays written by DI. They respond to DI essays on social media just for fun. That is why, they do not position themselves in a particular position on the issues discussed in the essay. In other words, they also rarely take part in digital democracy (Wahyono, et al., 2020).

Recreational reader models rarely or almost never use social media to express their aspirations in viewing a problem. They also have almost no arguments or even never/want to be involved in debates about the issues raised in DI's writings. They do not care about government policies on health or education, the way the government manages the country, the views of public figures on an issue that is being discussed by society, or about the latest developments in the world. Whatever the issues raised in the essay, they just responded with casual pleasure without wanting to get involved in discussing the contents of the essay.

The results showed that recreational readers were more varied in their responses. The responses given by recreational readers are in the form of commentary text, emoticons, and stickers. This is in line with Mathieu's (2015) view which states that the texts presented in the current social media landscape are texts that are increasingly complex, multi-form, and integrated with the audience (Mathieu, 2015). Therefore, readers' responses to DI essays also vary, not only in the form of commentary text. It can be explained that in communicating on social media, the audience is sometimes not enough to display only one mode. There is a tendency that the audience uses more than one mode

when responding to a text that is received. Usually users take advantage of the features provided on social media to express themselves. The results of a Pew Research study (Anderson & Caumont, 2014) show that communication on social media can lead to many new experiences around news whose acceptance is based more on pragmatic aspects than semantic aspects.

In responding, the recreational reader model sometimes gives a text response that is not at all with the content of the essay. Recreational readers' responses are sometimes only in the form of greetings or greetings to DI, emoticons, or other responses that are not related to the content of the essay, such as the use of clitics and -nyi in DI essays. This kind of response is in line with the view (Rösner & Krämer, 2016) which suggests that comments on social media are sometimes only used to release tension.

Although there is more than one mode of responding to the DI essay, in the response of the recreational reader there is no linking in responding to the essay. This is because the provision of links is usually used to strengthen, reject, or compare the content of the essay with information available in other sources. Giving a link to strengthen, reject, or compare the essay with information available in other sources is a form of the reader's seriousness in receptive to the DI essay. In fact, recreational readers are readers who read essays just for fun. That is why linking is not found in the recreational reader model.

In addition to the four reader models as described, the results of the data analysis also show that there are other reader models that are not included in the four reader models that have been proposed. The reader model in question is an ideological-political reader model. This ideological-political reader gives a response to DI's essay not based on the content of the essay, the character or originator of the ideas written by DI, or DI itself. This reader gives his response based on his political ideology. So, whatever the contents of DI essays, these readers always comment on the contents of DI essays by relating the contents of the essays to the political conditions in Indonesia. In providing comments, readers of this model always put themselves against the government. In fact, it can be said that the comments given seem "blind".

The emergence of ideological-political readers cannot be separated from the buzzer phenomenon in the world of Indonesian politics. At first, buzzers began to be known as individuals or accounts that have the ability to convey messages to attract attention or build conversations with social media users for certain motives (Sugiono, 2020). Furthermore, Sugiono said that this buzzer was seen as an implication of the growth of social media and had an important role in shaping a topic of conversation on social media.

In its development, the buzzer was used as a political tool to build propaganda in support of the government (Bradshaw & Howard, 2019). In fact, in the context of Indonesian politics, buzzers have become the government's "right hand" and are considered immune to legal entanglements (Arigi, 2019).

The existence of a buzzer phenomenon that supports the government blindly has led to the emergence of a "counter buzzer" which in this study is referred to as ideological-political readers. If the buzzer always supports the government, this ideological-political reader is always against the government. This ideological-political readership is evident in his comments on the DI essay. In reception studies, audiences are individuals who are active in producing meaning for messages or ideas from a media (Oktayusita, et al., 2019). Furthermore, Oktayusita et. al. (2019) states that the messages contained in a text are always open and can be interpreted according to the surrounding context and culture. The views of Oktayusita, et al. This is in line with Hall's (1973) opinion which states that the meaning of a text does not only depend on the text itself, but also on the context in which the text was born. That is why, the reader's meaning of a text can be different because it also depends on the reader's understanding of the context surrounding the birth of the text being received.

The reader's model of perceiving DI essays is based on reader comments on DI essays. DI essays are published openly on social media Facebook and readers can actively participate in retrieving the essays. Social media allows users to broadcast their thoughts publicly in the comments section (Ziegele, et al., 2018:1). In addition, social media also plays an important role in connecting post owners with an increasingly participatory audience (García-Perdomo, et al., 2018).

In interacting on social media, the audience can participate actively, either by commenting, re-sharing uploads, giving emoticons, or other multimodal. In fact, these social interactions—commenting, sharing, and liking—have become a source of “gatekeeper” that influences the attitude of the next audience who reads comments or emoticons given by previous audiences (Herring, 2012), (Mathieu, 2015). The interactions performed by the audience in receiving DI's writings show their position or alignment with DI's essays. It is this position or alignment that then becomes a model for the reader.

In this study, the reader's acceptance of the text is not solely based on the producer of the text, but also based on the content or ideas expressed in the text. On social media, DI refers to its loyal readers as big fans and this designation is embedded in every comment of these loyal readers. This shows that these loyal readers like and follow the essays

published by DI. However, this die-hard fan has not always been the dominant reader of DI's essays. There are also die-hard fans who are readers of the opposition. Apparently, the category of dominant or opposing readers is not always based on the producer of the text, namely DI, but rather on the content or ideas written by the producer of the text. This finding simultaneously confirms the view of Hall and Livingstone & Das that reception seeks to view a text from the perspective of the audience and avoids the view that the media is a source of hegemony and ideology that must be taken for granted by the audience (Hall, 1973; Livingstone & Das, 2013).

The reader's comments in interpreting this essay are more in the form of satire about Indonesia and only a few have responded about the herd of elephants. This is very likely to occur in response to writing given that the production of meaning by the reader may not retain the meaning as intended by the coder. This is because the messages in a work are constructed as a symbol system with a multi-accentuation component, which is polysemy (Hall, 1973). Thus, the reader can illustrate more than a series of visible potential meanings or can also interpret the text according to the logic of the coder (Wahyono, et al., 2020).

The diverse responses of readers to this DI essay are also related to the concept of open space. Open space is a space that requires readers to fill it using their interpretations. This open space is related to the nature of the work itself which is very likely to contain many interpretations. The possibility of many interpretations is a space void that requires the reader to fill it, which can be done by providing interpretations based on the horizon of expectations they have. With this open space, said Iser (in Pradopo, 2002:277) that a work is more valuable if it contains a lot of open space or empty space to be filled by the reader. This finding reinforces Iser's view which states that open space can be filled by readers according to their expectations horizon.

In receiving writing on social media, the context in which the text is born is very influential. As stated by Mathieu (2015), text and context are two aspects that cannot be separated in perceiving works that are disseminated on social media because the information in the work that is shared on social media is information that is connected to a lot of other information in different "spaces". on the internet network. Therefore, in perceiving a work, the reader will connect the work with other information spread on the internet.

The connection of the work with other information that is spread on the internet can be seen in the reader's reception about the DI essay. Readers naturally associate the contents

of the text produced by DI with the context in which the text was born. This finding is in line with Mathieu's (2015) view on text and context in receptive work on social media.

Conclusion

There are four models of readers in perceiving DI essays on social media. The four reader models include (a) dominant-hegemonic readers, (b) negotiating readers, (c) oppositional readers, and (d) recreational readers. The categorization of this reader model is based on the position of the reader towards the text being received: whether to accept, reject, compromise, or just have fun. Among these four reader models, the dominant reader model is the most common reader model found in this study.

The dominant reader model consists of two kinds of readers, namely the ideational dominant reader and the personal dominant reader. The dominant ideational reader is the reader who accepts the work because of the substance of the work. Meanwhile, the dominant personal reader is the reader who accepts the work because of the character who wrote it or the character written in the essay.

The recreational reader model emerges as a logical implication of the accepted essay dissemination media—namely social media—which allows readers to respond actively even though the response from readers is sometimes just for fun. The recreational reader model does not exist in Hall's reader model scheme because the reader model formulated by Hall is based on the reader's reception of traditional texts. As for this research, the reception is taken from data on social media with a dynamic and open nature so that anyone can give any response, from anywhere, and at any time. This recreational reader responds to the work just for fun, so that the content of the response sometimes does not match the content of the text being received or sometimes the response is just a response for fun.

In addition to the four types of reader models, there is one specific type of reader, namely the ideological-political reader. This type of reader does not position himself with certainty to the text. This type of reader is more based on his political views. This ideological-political reader places himself as a reader who is against the government so that whatever works are received, the response of this type of reader is to relate the content of the work to Indonesian political conditions and this reader always comments negatively on Indonesian political conditions. The reader's position on DI's essay is not based on the reader's personal preference for DI, but on the substance of the essay written by DI. This can be seen from the position of DI's big fans—that is, people who always

read and comment on DI's essays—who don't always support DI. Avid fans sometimes become dominant-hegemonic readers, but sometimes also become opposition readers.

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