

REALISM AND OPTIMISM IN THE NOVEL “A GOLDEN WEB” BY BARBARA QUICK

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to describe the problems in the patriarchal society and prove the optimism realism contained in the novel “A Golden Web” by Barbara Quick and how female characters were portrayed in the 18th century. The method to analyze the novel is content analysis and literature review from books and theories related to the novel and historical records. Using a new criticism approach, this paper examines the intrinsic elements of the story. The writer studies the elements through characters and characterizations using descriptive-analytical structures. The paper ends with descriptions of character and characterization, optimism realism, and how female characters in the 18th-century novel’ contained can be revealed.*

Keywords: *realism; patriarchy; optimism; new criticism*

Introduction

According to Wiyatmi (2013), the approach of literary sociology place literary works in line with reality, an extent to which literary works reflect reality. The reality here has quite a broad meaning, everything out of literary and referred literary works. Therefore, in broad outline, this approach is an approach that tells various problems of human life, especially regarding social life. This approach prioritizes the reality of life. Realist literature is the opposite pole of apocryphal literature, which is expressed by realist authors are real things that have happened, not mere imaginative. Realist literature is also different from the news in print or incident reports because it is not merely realistic. As a literary work, the work of realism brought to life by imagination and binding use of language. The term realism has emerged in the last three decades has emerged as an exciting and problematic genre. Interesting means that this genre has an extraordinary appeal, thus affecting several continents. Meanwhile, some of the problems in the meaning of this genre still considered difficult to understand.

Realism flow is a movement that tries to portray an object; it is (realistic). This flow objectively presents reality where the author describes the world of reality and everything depicted as what appears, nothing less and nothing more. What realist authors reveal are real things that happened; works that are considered part of the flow realism could take the form of biography, autobiography, true-story, history, or true story, which are retold. In other words, the works with core reality or events that have occurred are forms of literary works that fall into the realism literary category. The reason is these works must be facts or reality, which are then rewritten using beautiful language different from news, newspapers or incident reports. While optimism is the frame of mind of someone who always believes and holds or hopes that he can be better than before, if people have an optimistic spirit, then they will always think positive and not easily discouraged. Life will improve, that failure and success are, in general, the state of our minds and the ability to stop thinking or saying negative things about ourselves and the world around us, particularly when we encounter personal failures, true optimism is a thorough, optimistic, yet at the same time practical approach to life.

This novel contains a description of the patriarchal system that developed in European society. Patriarchy is the concept that men hold power over all essential roles in society, government, military,

education, industry, business, health care, advertising, religion, and that women are deprived of access to that power (Sultana, 2012). The term patriarchy or patriarchy (paternal government) means a system of family which places great emphasis on the line of the father. Such system is said to be the cause of oppression of women. Patriarchy positions women below men or views them as lesser men. Such authority is practiced, directly or indirectly, in public and domestic life to control women. In spite of democracy, the fact is that women are still oppressed by the patriarchal system. In her novel, Quick (2010) tells with a time set around the 1800s. The decade 1800 and 1884 was a decline in the status of women in European society (Allen, 1999). Reforms carried out by church reformers did not significantly help the fate of women. Religious studies are carried out to renew the concept of women, namely women considered as the source of sin and are second-class creatures in this world. Although some personal opinions and public laws relating to the status of women in the west are quite varied, there is strong evidence to indicate a woman has been regarded as inferior beings.

Women in the middle ages were formally obliged to submit to the guardianship of men, whether their fathers, husbands or other male relatives. Widows, who often given more freedom to govern their own lives, are still legally restricted. The work of women, in general, is to take care of the household or do other tasks related to the household. Farmer women are usually responsible for caring for the house, caring for children, and gardening, and raising livestock around the house. They can also find additional income for their household by spinning yarn or brewing beer at home. During the harvest, they are expected to work in the fields. Urban women, like peasant women, are responsible for looking after the house and business world. The types of businesses open to women vary from country to country and from time to time. Noblewomen are responsible for managing the household, and sometimes they are expected to manage the land when there are no male relatives. However, they are usually not allowed to interfere in military and government affairs. The only role that is open to women in the church is to be a nun because they cannot be priests.

Other studies on literature using sociology approach have shown that readers can reflex themselves and the current societies to the societies and people on the literature they are reading. Nazriani (2018) had a close look on social functions underlie in the poem "Kandai." The "Kendai" is a poem about a city of the same title with the poem itself. The poem reflexes the social, economy, and development aspects in Kendari – the capital city of Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. The author of the poem meticulously details the city characteristics into similar reflections in the literature. Besides poems, authors also pour down the social reflections on a much longer writing such as novels and plays. Novels have rich descriptions on societies and values compare to plays. The longer written works enable their readers to come back and forth studying the rich descriptions of the characters, understanding or rejecting the values through reading the literary works. One of the most well-known Indonesian classic novels is "Bumi Manusia." "Bumi Manusia" is a novel that reveals the mental turmoil of characters between two cultures, two beliefs and two understandings. Toer, the author, describes the social ties between the Java and the European society, or the capitalist and the proletarian (Hastuti, 2018). The study makes use a female character to portray the struggles of the society under a colonialization. In plays, the study of social reflections of a society is available from movies. A movie on racism history of the United States is portrayed in a character in the movie "The Butler." The analysis made use mimetic approach as a way seeing the events depicted in the movie reflected particular events in the US history through social, intellectual, and political aspects of the history (Harang et al., 2019).

These previous studies focus on the societal aspects, such as economy and development, eastern and western cultures. Hasituti's study talks about the struggle of Toer's female character, yet it has not deliberated the women's struggle during that time. While the later discusses more into general aspects in history of a nation rather than seeing the character – the butler himself – as the centerpiece of the African American real struggles during that moment. Hence, this paper focuses to elaborate the struggles from the main character's viewpoint about a situation when the patriarchal system was developing during 1880s from Quick's novel by posing these questions: what are the problems in the patriarchal society and prove the optimism realism contained in the novel "A Golden Web" by Barbara Quick (2010)? and how the Italian female characters were portrayed in the 18th century?

Method

The writer uses descriptive analytic methods and approaches to new criticism. The descriptive-analytic method is done by describing the facts, followed by analysis. Meanwhile, new criticism is a research method with a focus on the text itself, regardless of the relationship of the text with other elements that surround it. Therefore, the authors will analyze it by combining descriptive analytic methods and formal methods because they are not compatible. The approach used in this study is qualitative because of the results of the study described by not prioritizing the depth of appreciation of the interactions between the concepts being studied empirically (Endraswara, 2008; Minderop, 2011; Nurgiyantoro, 2014).

Result and Discussion

Based on the results of the study, realism shows that women in Perciseto must strictly obey the rules. Based on the reading from the novel, it is clear that culture is one of the very shackles of women in Perciseto. The most substantial element to come up with is regarding patriarchal culture, where women not allowed to study, must be at home so as not to be seen, especially men, married at a young age with predetermined candidates. It is very taboo to be a female doctor, especially in the area of anatomy. Where these conditions were very natural in European cultural life in the 18th century, it was also found that the patriarchal system of society, that men hold power over all crucial roles in society, government, and religion so that women are deprived of access to that power. Humans are born precisely the same. They are born with the same rights. It would be unfair if there were social classifications in society.

Some women leaders dare to fight for their rights and oppose the cultural system of patriarchal societies. Alessandra Giliani is a portrait of the Perciseto women's rebellion against oppressive cultural practices in her way, living her life between the threshold of acceptance and disobedience, surrender and freedom. Through her novel, Barbara Quick describes the struggle of women by looking at the other side of women, namely in terms of women's freedom in choosing a life partner and education. The author analyzes the values of optimism in the novel "A Golden Web". Optimism is a belief in everything in terms of excellence and profitability. An optimistic attitude in daily life needed. In order to have a good spirit, and there is nothing useless to do. The writer also has high hope like Alessandra, who wants to study in the field of medicine following her wishes. Besides, Alessandra also never despaired in reaching his dreams. She had to go through life in a nun who finally made it to the dream university of Alessandra in Bologna.

Conclusions

Through her novel, Barbara Quick describes the struggle of women by looking at the other side of women, namely in terms of women's freedom to choose a life partner. Alessandra also described Barbara as a woman who opposed the culture prevailing in Perciseto. Based on an analysis of the struggles of Italian women in realizing their dreams, expected to have implications for readers and other researchers, which must respect each other's rights and obligations without racial, religious, and gender discrimination. If human rights violations still occur, there is no need to be afraid or hesitant to fight them, because already regulated by law. Intense competition in the era of globalization requires a progressive mindset. With the results of this research and this implication, the writer suggests that students should be able to analyse the novel "A Golden Web" by Barbara Quick. Being able to know the purpose of theme, plot, setting, and characterization and understand the figures of women and the struggle in getting the happiness of life and equal rights with men. Therefore, the patriarchal content and cultural values implied in it can be revealed and answered thoroughly. Then, the reader expected to be able to take moral values contained in the novel and can be used in everyday life.

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