

THE STEREOTYPES OF WOMEN: PATRICK SÜSKIND'S PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGY AS REPRESENTED IN HIS PERFUME; THE STORY OF A MURDERER

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisa ideologi patriarki Partrick Süskind sebagai seorang penulis pria yang direpresentasikan melalui tokoh-tokoh perempuan maupun jalan cerita novel yang berjudul Perfume; the Story of a Murderer. Analisa novel ini menerapkan kritik sastra feminis dengan teori yang dikembangkan oleh Kate Millet yaitu *Sexual Politics*. Pendekatan yang digunakan dapat memperlihatkan bagaimana laki-laki mendeskripsikan inferioritas perempuan di dalam karya sastranya yang dapat mengimpilkasikan kentalnya pengaruh ideologi patriaki terhadap seorang penulis. Analisa ini merupakan analisa intrinsik dimana pembahasan karya Perfume; the Story of a Murderer hanya dibatasi pada karya itu sendiri tanpa mengkaitkannya dengan faktor eksternal. Dari hasil analisis terhadap karya ini dan didukung dengan data-data yang ada, penulis menemukan beberapa bentuk stereotip negatif tentang perempuan yang direpresentasikan dalam peranan tokoh-tokoh perempuan dari novel ini. Selanjutnya, pada analisa hubungan antara karakter pria dan wanita, penulis menemukan bahwa sudut pandang karakter pria dalam novel ini juga mewakili ideologi penulis tentang inferioritas perempuan yang kemudian diimplikasikan sebagai pembawaan alami perempuan. Hal ini menyebabkan dominasi pria terhadap wanita dalam novel ini terasa lebih nyata dan secara tidak langsung telah menjadi media bagi Patrick Süskind untuk mempertahankan keberadaan ideology patriaki.

Kata Kunci: Stereotip Wanita, Penulis Pria, Representasi Perempuan, Sexual Politics, Eksistensi Ideologi Patriarki.

ABSTRACT

This research analyzed Patrick Süskind's patriarchal Ideology as a male author that is presented through the women's character and the storyline of Perfume; the story of murderer. This analysis applies Feminist Criticism from Millet's theory: *Sexual Politics*, which could show a man biased-perspective about women's inferiority in their works as implies as their strong influence on Patriarchy by way of a writer. This research is an intrinsic analysis which the analysis is processed just limits on storyline and intrinsic element of the work without external factor to be included on. The result of the analysis that researcher find from the novel is a few kinds of negative stereotypes of the female characters' description. Then, in the analysis of women relation upon male characters in the story, the researcher also finds male characters' perspective in the plotline, as same as author's patriarchal ideology about inferiority of women's ability as innate. This chase strengthens male domination upon women is so blatantly and moreover this novel can be judged as per medium of male author to defend the existence of patriarchal ideology.

Keywords: Women's stereotypes, male author, women representation, sexual politics, patriarchal existence.

A. Introduction

Originally entitled as Das Parfume and first published in 1985, Perfume; the Story of a Murderer by Patrick Süskind has recorded as a German best-seller and nowadays this phenomenal novel has been sold over fifteen million copies worldwide. Perfume; the Story of a Murderer is a suspense novel that brings its reader to the horrible journey of Jean Baptiste Grenouille who gifted a supernatural sense of smell but in peculiar lacks of bodily odor. One day in his life, his gifted nose found the most delicious and lovely scent that he ever encountered which came from a virgin girl. Then, he concluded that the virgin girl's scent as the best scent of human; the scent that will make people adore him if it is attached to his scentless body. Grenouille, who lead by his obsession of creating the ultimate perfume with the virgin girl's scent as its base, eventually kills twenty-five virgin girls in the region of Grasse to refine their scents.

In spite of the horror atmosphere showed by the psychological problem of the main character, after reading repeatedly, the writer found it interesting to discuss more about the roles of its female's characters. Therefore the writer is interested to analyze this novel by using female point of view. Even though the main character is a male but female's role in this novel cannot just be denied and the author's way in describing the female characters that makes the writer is more attracted.

B. The Background Of The Research

Perfume; the Story of a Murderer points out the journey of Grenouille as the central of the story who is preying the virgin girl's scent to fulfill his obsession of creating the ultimate perfume. He believes it could be something that will make people adores him. Even though the main character is a man, the women characters have important roles that determine whether Grenouille will succeed or fails at the end of the story. In spite of the essential roles of women figures in the story, the writer suspects that the author of this novel puts female as the second gender after male.

In this research, the writer tries to emphasize the description of female characteristic in a male literary work. The writer uses Sexual Politic theory by Kate Millet that is relevant to explain about how men describes about women. As explained in the book A Reader's Guide

to Contemporary Literary Theory by Selden and Widdowson, Kate Millet argues that "... male authors are compelled by their gender to reproduce the oppressive sexual politics of the real world in their fiction" (216). It can be said that the female attributes which is using in a male literary work can reflects the author's ideology about women in the real world. Since Patrick Süskind is a male author, the writer assumes that his description of female characters in his novel may reflects the male domination toward female as the basic idea of patriarchy.

Kate Millet's feminist literary theory that known as sexual politics is the best theory that used in this research since Millet discussed about how men described about women characteristic. Millet points out about the characteristic of women that believe as their nature is constructed by patriarchy politics. As she had explained in the chapter two of her book entitled Sexual Politics (1969) :

"The term politics shall refer to power structured relationship, arrangement whereby one group of person is controlled by another.... Sexual politics obtains consent through the socialization of both sexes to basic patriarchal polities with regard to temperament, role and status. As to status, a pervasive assent to the prejudice of male superiority guarantees superior in the male, inferior in the female". (Marxist.org)

Hans Bertens in his book entitled Literary Theory: the Basic explained that in Kate Millet's analysis toward several literary works from male authors such as D.H Lawrence and Henry Miller, she had shown how most of male characters in their novel were denigrating, exploitative, and repressive toward the female characters. From these male literary works, Millet found the relationship between sex and power which how male's power distribution over the female characters mirrored image of the relationship between men and women in society at large (95). In the other words, male authors may imply about the characteristic that considered as the nature of women in society's perspective through the female characters and male action in his literary work.

The aim of this research is to observe how Patrick Süskind indirectly perpetuates the patriarchal ideology existence in his literary work. As one of patriarchal ideology, the stereotypes of women are assumed using in this novel trough the role of females characters.

Furthermore, the analysis will focus in describing the images and the stereotypes of women in the novel then the real patriarchal ideology of Patrick Süskind could be appeared.

C. The Review Of The Previous Studies

Nessie Agustia (2011), an English Department student of Andalas University with her research which entitled “The Unconscious Mind of A psychopath in Patrick Süskind’s Perfume; the Story of a Murderer“, had found that the childhood experience of Grenouille is unconsciously give the bad impact to his adult behavior. She has analyzed character, mind and the action of Jean Baptiste Grenouille in order to show that the psychopath mind of Grenouille as the impact of his bad childhood experiences. Different with Agustia, in his research, Hilde Sitohang (2008), an English Department’s student of Diponegoro University, who also applied the psychological approach to Perfume; the Story of a Murderer novel, found that Grenouille’s personality disorder was the effect of disproportional of his id, ego and superego. His research entitled “Id, Ego and Superego Analysis of Jean Baptiste Grenouille Character in Perfume; the Story of a Murderer” was aimed to understand the personality of Grenouille as the main character by using Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis theory about id, ego and superego.

Besides both studies above, the writer also reviewed a journal from internet related to Perfume; the Story of a Murderer by Damon O. Rarick, 2009 entitled “Serial Killers, Literary Critics, and Süskind’s Das Parfum”. In this article, Rarick collected and compared several critical receptions of this novel. Most of negative reviews of Das Parfum heckle precisely to Patrick Süskind’s way of represent a “serial killer”, the pleasure of violent narration, pornography and the representation of murder as art in his novel. Despite of the critical of violence in narrative from the literary critics, this novel surprisingly also has received numerous positive reviews from the common readers because of Süskind’s narrative language and the varied knowledge in it. Rarick has concluded that those response could help illuminate about the ways in which murder and art are linked to the modern imagination.

D. The Stereotypes Of Women: Patrick Süskind's Patriarchal Ideology As Represented In His Perfume; The Story Of A Murderer

1. The Negative Stereotypes in Mother Figures

The novel brings its reader to life's journey of Grenouille, which begins with his earlier problem such as his unwanted birth, rejected by his wet nurse and his childhood experience under the care of a less affection woman. In the beginning of the story, Grenouille's mother appeared when she gave birth to him. "It was her fifth. She had effected all the others here at the fish booth, and all had been stillbirths or semi-stillbirths..."(2). She does not want to have Grenouille because he comes from her unmarried pregnancy, same as the four babies before. In this novel, Grenouille's mother implied as a bad figure of mother because in the society a mother is expected as the one that will protect her child and also should not leave her child die no matter happens.

A mother in society is looked as the figure who protecting, nurturing and raising her children until they grow adult. What is more, when her children become adult and have the bad attitudes, a mother will be blamed and considered as a fail mother. The conception of the fail mother happens if a mother breaks of the stereotypes of a perfect motherhood, which exist in the culture for a long time ago. As said in Chris Jones's article entitled "Culturally Stereotyped Motherhood Effects Society" that; "cultures around the world have different expectations of what motherhood should be in their culture. In many parts of the world, mothers that are different from the culture's stereotyped expectations are looked upon negatively." A mother will be considered as a good mother if she accomplishes what her culture expects for a mother and if she breaks the stereotypes, she will be discriminated as inappropriate mother. The stereotyped culture about motherhood indirectly, consciously or unconsciously has suppressed women, so they raised the children within the stereotype how good mother should be, not in their own way. Moreover, this stereotype also estranges men from the moral education responsibility of his children and then it will be considered as their natural if the fathers are not close enough with their own child.

Grenouille's mother is described in the novel as a woman who is in her young age, "... still hoped to live a while yet, perhaps a good five or ten years and perhaps even to marry one day and as the honorable wife of a widower with a trade or some such to bear real children."(15). From what Grenouille's mother thought, we can see the author's idea

about what a woman should have if she wants to be a proper mother. In other words, Süsskind implies that an ideal mother should be a woman who has husband in a legal marriage and the value of her motherhood depends on her marriage status.

2. The Stereotypes in Wife's Role

In a cultural perspective, a woman was considered as a God's gift to a man who is fated to be his lifetime partner. This conception in patriarchal ideology has applied erroneously which a wife has been portrayed by patriarchy as a woman who has chosen by men to be his lifetime partner. Thus, a wife has to obey her husband's household rules, serves and keeps him satisfied or in other words, a wife must dedicate her life only for her husband. In her social life, a marriage gives the impact toward a woman's honor and social status. As stated by Arlene Skolnick in her article entitled "Marriage":

Historically the roles of men and women within marriages have reflected their roles within society. Laws and customs have traditionally restricted women's opportunities, limited their legal rights, and required them to be under the protection and control of a man. ..., the law viewed the husband and wife as one person—and that person was the husband.

Based on what Skolnick said, it can be comprehended that a wife within her social life has been considered as the second person after her husband. The social treatment to a person in society mostly depends on their social status. Thus, the social status of her husband will affect the social treatment toward a marriage woman. In the novel, Süsskind represents the negative stereotypes of a wife's role through Madame Arnulfi who is portrayed as an unfaithful wife who never being sorrowful of her husband's death. When her husband, Honoré Arnulfi died, she took over her husband's perfumery workshop and manages it together with her new lover, Druot. "Grenouille at once guessed that he regularly shared Madame's bed and that she apparently did not make certain decisions without first consulting him." (117). Here, Süsskind implies that Madame Arnulfi is not a good wife because of her unfaithfulness toward Honoré Arnulfi. She breaks the role of an ideal wife while a good wife always plays the role of faithfulness and devotes her lifetime only for serving her husband. Madame Arnulfi also represents the stereotype about a wife that treated depends on her husband's social status. Madame Arnulfi, who inherits Honoré

Arnulfi's good name and reputation in perfumery business, takes the advantage of her status as the widow of late Honoré Arnulfi to keep the consumer confidence of her business.

3. The Physical Attractiveness Stereotypes

In Perfume; the Story of a Murderer there are several female characters that physically pictured by Süskind. The stereotypes of women's beauty are pictured in the physical characters of The Red Headed Plum Girl, Laure Richis, and some of virgin girls that became Grenouille's victim. The Redheaded Plum Girl is the first girl who is killed by Grenouille. When the first time he caught her smell, he is deliriously following the smell which then he decided it as the most beautiful scent that he ever encountered. Even though Süskind described that Grenouille just attracted with her physical smell and did not attracted with her body shape or her face attractiveness, but in the story Süskind described precisely about her physical characteristics. She was described as "had red hair and wore a grey, sleeveless dress. Her arms were very white and her hands yellow with the juice of the halved plums". (28). She also has "her delicate, freckled face, her red lips, her large sparkling green eyes..." (29).

The same case is also happens to the character description of Laure Richis, the pre-adolescent girl who is in Grenouille's sense has the same beautiful scent with his Redheaded Plum girl. The similar scent between Laure and The Redheaded Plum girl also followed by the physical description like this: ", it also comes from a redheaded girl; there was no doubt of that. She had dazzlingly white skin. She had green eyes. She had freckles on her face, neck and breast "(115).

From the physical description of The Redheaded Plum Girl and Laure above, Süskind implies something that is considered as extraordinary for Grenouille, which in the novel stated as beautiful smell, comes from women who physically pictured as lack of defect. Here, Süskind perpetuates the stereotypes that good-looking woman is always considered more superior than the unattractive ones. As the women's beauty stereotypes, Süskind describes those characters to be almost physically perfect and implies that a physically attractive woman is always followed by an extraordinary thing in her life.

Süskind's stereotype about beautiful women was strengthened with his description about Madame Gaillard physical character. She is an antagonist and her character has

opposed the stereotype of a good woman while Süskind described her as a less affection woman, independent, hard worker, stingy and all the good things that she gives for the kids are only for money purpose. She is physically pictured as “old as her years and the same time two, three, a hundred times older, like the mummy of a young girl.”(13). Therefore, the character of Madame Gaillard is also represented Süskind idea that a beautiful woman is always having “something good” and the unattractive women look as the inferior than beautiful women.

The next Süskind idea about women physical attractiveness that shown in this novel is women’s good looking considers as their only excess that could make them become an admirable person in the society. Woman’s physical attraction is the thing that makes a man will look at them, lose their mind. This is what will make women superior than men. In her social life, Laure Richis’s physical attractiveness was something that made her more adorable than Antoine Richis. Süskind described the situation when their carriages passed people on the street is like this,

He was followed by his daughter, dressed less showily, but so radiantly beautiful that the people along the street and at the windows had eyes only for her, their fervent “ah’s“ and “oh’s” passing through the crowd while the men doffed their hats- apparently for the second consul, but in reality for her, the regal woman. (138)

The situation above suggests that Laure’s physical attractiveness can win people’s attention and makes her more admirable than Antoine Richis, the noble man. Süskind has implied that women’s physical attractiveness is the only excess that the women must have if they want to be an admirable person. Thus, the good-looking Laure represents a patriarchal perspective that always considers women as the goods and makes them inferior in their function as the subject of pleasure.

4. Male Domination as the Implication of the Stereotypes of Women in Perfume; The Story of a Murderer

At the point of view woman as the reader, the writer found that Süskind has made male characters take over almost of the active roles contrasted with the female characters in this novel. His way of describing the male character has reinforced Millet’s idea about male author, as explained in Selden’s book: “the male writer addresses his reader as if they

are always men... it's also possible for the female reader to collude (unconsciously) in this patriarchal position and read 'as man'. ” (215). In their relation within the story line of Perfume; The Story of A Murderer, Süskind presented male characters as superior than female characters. They always restrict women's option and make their power and existence as the decisive factor of women's destiny. Female characters with their passivity attributes are always positioned on the defeated side when they face a direct or indirect conflict that involved male characters. This situation implies Süskind's way of perpetuating the stereotypes of women's inferiority. As Millet wrote in her *Sexual Politics* (1969), “The Image of women as we know it is an image created by men and fashioned to suit their needs.” (Marxist.org)

Grenouille as the main character is clearly presented as the agent of man's superiority in this novel. His role is to determine the destiny of several female characters in the story such as his mother, the Redheaded Plum girl and twenty five women includes Laure Richis that must dead in order to fulfill his wicked ambition. Through the relations of Grenouille with the red-headed Plum girl and Laure in this novel, it is very clear that Süskind has represented the idea that it is the women's nature if they just regarded as object. Süskind puts their existence just as the goods and then at the same time he strengthens male superiority through Grenouille's role that used female attributes to reaches his aim. Thus, it is simply proved how patriarchal thought strictly dominated Grenouille's role in the way he put women in inferior as his object of desire.

E. Conclusion

After analyzing Perfume; the Story of a Murderer novel, the writer concludes that as a male literary work this novel actually shows how Patrick Süskind indirectly brought patriarchal interest in his novel by using the stereotypes of women in a patriarchal culture and point out male character's domination. The writer found several forms of women stereotypes and male character's domination that indirectly confirms as the way of delivering the patriarchal ideology in this novel.

The writer discovers that all the mother figures in this novel are represented in the negative stereotypes. Süskind presented them as the antagonist role who appeared as the lack

of pure affection characters while Grenouille's mother let her own child died and Jeanne Bussie and Madame Gaillard only want to keep after the children as long as they brings the advantages. Madame Arnulfi is implied the bad wife figure because of her unfaithfulness toward Honoré Arnulfi. She had broke the role of an ideal wife while a good wife always playing the role of faithfulness and devoting her life only for the husband. Through her strategies to retain her noble status that inherited from Honoré Arnulfi, Süskind represented the stereotype that women in marriage always put as the second person after her husband, take place behind her husband's shadow and hence social treatments toward her depends on who is her husband.

Then, in the physical description of female characters in the novel, Süskind describes those characters to be almost physically perfect and implies that a physically attractive woman always comes with an extraordinary thing. Thus, Süskind perpetuate the stereotypes that good-looking woman is always considered more superior than the unattractive ones and women's good looking is their only excess that could make them become the admirable women in the society. In the case they have it, it is not necessary for her to do anything else in order to make other people praise, admire and crazy about her.

Süskind has made male characters take over almost of the active roles in this novel. In their relation to the female character, Süskind shows that men always can control women's life and women have no power to take any action because of the social restriction. Then the writer also finds that the representation of male domination in this novel also based on the stereotypes of women in patriarchal culture. Süskind implies that in their relation, man's subjection toward women is considered as women's nature.

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