

Patriarchal System in Aborigine Women in James Tucker's *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh*

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Abstract: In many society in the world, women in society always put in the second class. Patriarchy is a system in society that put women as inferior than men. The aim of this study is to find out the patriarchy system in women Aborigine as illustrated in *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh* by James Tucker. This study is descriptive qualitative, the researcher conducted the library research, The researcher uses the sociology of literature approach by Laurensen and Swingewood in order to find out the patriarchy system in women Aborigine. This study resulted the factor of women oppression in patriarchy system in Aboriginal community.

Keywords: Aborigine, Australia, Patriarchy, Women oppression

1. Introduction

Gender inequality has always been around. Men have been portrayed as the superior gender since the beginning of time and women always inferior than men. Patriarchy is the prime obstacle to women's advancement and development. Women always become an interesting topic in literary works. Women role in the society are usually recorded in literary works. There are a lot of writers who have already taken the women as the major theme of their literary works. Literature itself is also called as the mirror or reflection of the society, so to know about the women roles in one of society, we can read their literary works.

Australia is one of the big countries in the world and has literary works which is different with other country. Some of the early Australian literature took Aborigine as their major theme. The Aborigine is the indigenous people of Australia. Many Australian authors wrote literary works that took Aborigine as the object of their works. *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh* by James Tucker is one of the novels that feature the aborigine in the story. This novel focuses on the interaction between convicts name Ralph Rashleigh with the Aborigine. The aborigine's life styles were describes very clearly through the narrator point of view in this novel. One of the interesting points is the women aborigine. The Aboriginal women have a special role in their society. The role of women was different with the role of man. In *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh* novel by James Tucker, the women daily activities clearly explained. The Aborigine tribe embraces the patriarchal system.

Laurensen & Swingewood (1972) state that there are three perspectives related to sociology of literature. First is the research which is considered the literary work as mirror of age, second is the research which is considered the literary works as the sociology of the author, and the third is the research which is considered the literary work as manifestation of history events and the social culture condition.

In this paper, the researcher focused on the patriarchal system in women Aborigine as reflected in *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh* by James Tucker. The researcher used the sociology of literature approach by Laurensen and

Swingewood that focused on the literature as manifestation of history event and social culture condition.

2. Review of Literature

a) Aborigine

When Europeans first settled in Australia in 1788, Indigenous people had been living there for at least 40 000 years. The Indigenous people did not use the land as most Australians do today, but this did not mean that they did not regard it as theirs. However, this did not stop the European settlers from taking possession of it. The origins of Australia's Indigenous people are strongly debated, and many theories have been proposed. Some say they have been here as long as the Australian landmass has existed. Others believe that they came here from somewhere else, most probably from lands to Australia's north. Despite these varying opinions, there is, however, unanimous agreement that Australia's Indigenous people were its first human inhabitants.

Australia's Indigenous people generally lived a stable lifestyle, guided by elders who knew the local Dreaming stories and customs. The people worked together, sharing their food and knowledge, and living in harmony with their environment. Aboriginal people thought the first Europeans they saw might have been ghosts, or evil spirits. Bedson (2010) stated that their Dreaming provided them with no clues as to who these pale-skinned, strangely dressed people might be. Some wondered if they might be women, as they had no beards. Some tried to find a place for them in their kinship system by treating them as spirits of their dead, and offering them food and women. It soon became clear that the 'visitors' planned to stay. They were clearing land near sacred sites, fencing off properties, which cut access to waterholes and hunting grounds, and fishing without permission of the elders. Besides, more and more of them were arriving. Indigenous people became increasingly worried. These 'spirits of their former dead' did not speak their language. Nor did they obey their rules and respect their rituals and sacred places.

b) Patriarchy System

Walby (1990) defines patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress

and exploit women. In addition, Bhasin (2006) states that the term patriarchy used more generally “to refer to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterise a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways”.

Mc Kay (2005) states patriarchy is deeply embedded in our society, and because Aboriginal people have been affected by this, historically and in the present, they in turn absorb these practices as normal thought and behavior.

Patriarchal societies favor men over women in matters of decision making, positions of authority, and ownership of property. Johnson (1997) describes patriarchy as a society is patriarchal to the degree that it is male-dominated, male identified, and male-centered. It also involves as one of its key aspects the oppression of women. In addition, women and girls are seen as property that can be exploited by male members of the community and they are seen as items to be bought and sold especially to the highest bidder. Scott (2006) says that women were viewed as property within traditional societies which inhibited their freedom and self-determination. Gender roles in a patriarchal society are determined by men for their benefit. Ideas of gender superiority and inferiority are necessary to maintain because that is where men locate their entitlement to dominate.

In patriarchal conditioning men believe they have the right to control women. This control has been evident throughout history. Women’s sexuality and domestic labor has been owned by husbands and/or fathers. Women have been treated as objects and have been seen as sexual badges for men. Hooks (2004) states the control men have had over women is also extended to men of color because of patriarchal conditioning in society.

c) Sociology of Literature

There are many kinds of approach in literature, which will help the researcher to do a research in literature field. In this research, the researcher uses sociology of literature approach in analyzing a novel and through a sociological viewpoint. The term of sociology consist of two words. *Socio* is from Greek which means society, and *logos* which means science of study. Therefore, sociology means a science of study which is learn about society.

Klarer (1999) states that literature comes from the word *littera* which means the smallest element of alphabetical writing. Literary work is a social institution that represents life and social reality by using language as its medium. This statement is also supported by Levin (1973) who states that literature is regarded as the expression of society. It usually presents events that exist in the life of human being which is experienced by the member of particular society or community in a certain period of time. This definition clearly shows that literary works usually present the events that exist in the life of human being which experienced by the member of particular society or community in a certain period of time.

As the representation of life, literature cannot be separated from society. It does not only provide picture of human experience but also issue of particular society. Warton in

Wellek and Warren stated that “literature has the peculiar merit of faithfully recording the features of the times, and of preserving the most picturesque and expressive representation of manners and literature was primarily a treasury of costume and customs, a source book for the history of civilization especially of chivalry and its decline” (1956). Literature may be called as the source of social events and history or the documents of social phenomenon. It has a social function in giving information and understanding of social issues such as norm, tradition, convention, myth, and morality of particular society.

In relation to the function of literature, Rahman, stated that a good literary work should always contain values implicitly or explicitly. This is the foundation of literary strength. The values was packaged within the structure of a literary work exists implicitly in the plot, setting, characters, and theme [...]. The values contained within a literary work relate to at least six points: (1) the humanitarian value, this can raise awareness of the importance of the nature of this life; (2) the hedonic value, a value which can give pleasure directly to reader or listener; (3) the artistic value, a value that can manifest an art or skill in performing a job; (4) the cultural value, a value that can provide or describe a deep relationship with a society, a civilization, or culture; (5) the ethical, moral or religious value is a value that can provide or transmit advice or teachings related to ethics, morals, or religion; and (6) the practical value, a value which is practical and pragmatic and that can be applied in daily life (2017).

However, as the work of art, literature is different from other social documents for it is the combination of reality and imagination which is useful for both adding artistic aspect and giving meaning to reality. Wellek and Warren (1956), presented three perspectives of sociology literature relationship including the sociology of the writer, the social content of the literary works, and the literature’s influence on society.

First, the sociology of the writer or biographical perspective deals with the life story of the author which includes social status, social ideology, and another factors related to the author who creates literary work. Second, the social content of the works themselves or literature text perspective discusses about literature as the reflection of society life. Last, the influence of literature on society becomes the concern of sociology of literature as receptive perspective sees the society acceptance of literature. Literature arise problems of its readers as well as the actual social problems influence literature. Receptive theory deals with reader’s ability in understanding literary works since literature not only provides aesthetic aspects but also another important aspects such as ethical, cultural, philosophical, logical, historical, even scientifically aspects. It strengthens the function of literature for both entertaining and educating its reader who is a member of society.

Sociology of literature is a branch of study of literary works which is looking at literary work as its relation to the social reality, author and literary creating process and also the reader of its work. It can be said that sociology of literature is the relationship between literary works and their social

context. Sociology of literature focuses on the relationship between literary work and social structure in which it is created. In addition, it does not only concern with literature as a social document but also with the social, political, economic and several social factors on the literary works. There are several approaches to sociology of literature. The most common approach to the relation of literature and society is the study of literary works as social document.

Laurenson and Swingewood (1972) also stated that there are three perspectives related to sociology of literature. First is the research which is considered the literary work as mirror of age, second is the research which is considered the literary works as the sociology of the author, and the third is the research which is considered the literary work as manifestation of history events and the social culture condition.

Another perspective in sociology of literature is literature as the manifestation of history events and social culture condition. Literature and history cannot be separated, because literature is the media of the author to express his view and feeling about the past time. Goldmann in Anwar (2012) describes that theoretical concept about the relation between literature and the author. He states that the literature is the expression of author world view. The world view could be found through the characters, objects, and the relation between them in the literary works. That is why, the author need to have a rich experience to build the imaginary relation in their literary works.

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that some definitions of sociology of literature emphasize that sociology of literature is one of approaches in the study of literature which consider the whole shape of social aspect of human being related to the literary work. In other words, it is considered that sociology of literature concerns on the relationship between individual authors and the circumstances of social and cultural era in which they live and write.

Having the explanation about the divisions of the sociology of literature above, the researcher considers that the subject matter of the research discusses much about the social content of the work. In this case, the researcher explores the Patriarchal system in Aboriginal Women as reflected in the novel by James Tucker entitled *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh*. The analysis deals with the social and cultural study particularly Australian society. It shows the function of literature as a device to represent social life and issues.

3. Method

This research is a descriptive qualitative method, and to complete in analyzing this study, the researcher uses the sociology of literature approach by Laurenson and Swingewood. The focus of this study is to analyze the patriarchal system in women Aborigine as reflected in James Tucker's *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh*.

The data used by the researcher in this research were taken from James Tucker's novel *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh*. The researcher uses the e-book novel which was

posted on December 2003 via Project Gutenberg of Australia as the primary data and the secondary data were taken from various books, articles, journals and website on internet. Through this secondary data, the researcher collects and used them as they are relevant to the topic.

There are some ways that the researcher does to collect the data. First, the researcher reads James Tucker's novel *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh*. The researcher will collect the data through the novel itself, the literary history, and another scientific writings which related to the research. Second, the researcher uses the library research method which allows the researcher to collect various sources related to the research such as text books, articles, journals, both in printed and electronics which could become as supporting data to find out the further information related to the subject matter of this research.

In this research, the researcher uses method of data analysis to support the analysis. In analyzing this novel, the researcher uses descriptive method and the sociology of literature which focus on patriarchal system in women Aborigine in Australia through the characters depicted in the novel. The researcher does close reading of the novel, determines the main focus on the research and highlights some important quotations from the novel to support the analysis.

In this research, the researcher does some procedures, such as read the novel carefully, intensively and writes the important note on the left side of the important quotation. Next, identifying some cases containing the patriarchal system in women Aborigine. Then, Classify and clarify the convicts life through the dialogue among characters that will be analyzed by reading the novel and correlated with the supporting data from other sources and use sociology of literature approach. Finally, conclude the result of the research.

4. Result and Discussion

In this finding and discussion, the researcher classifies the main point of the research based on novel into categories:

a) Male Domination of Women

In patriarchy society, male acted as superior and dominated the women. In *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh*, the male dominations of women described very clearly. The man was the leader of the society where the women social status were always lower than man. In this novel, there are examples of the male domination to women.

"However many wives an aborigine may possess, each of them has to maintain her fire and provide a portion of the food for her lord, it being the custom for the men to send their wives at dawn each day upon a foraging expedition, themselves sleeping or lounging until the return of their djins, whom they reward with caresses or blows according to the quantity of food brought in. At that time the aboriginal women were treated as slaves by the men, who confined their energies to hunting kangaroo and opossum, when they were not fighting" (Tucker, 2003:143).

The term 'djin' based on the description above means wife. The aborigine men could have more than one wife. These wives were served all the husband needs. As the Author, Tucker also stated in his novel that the aboriginal women were treated as slave by men.

"The carandjie's next move for the comfort of the adopted stranger was to present him with a djin, as well as a quantity of native weapons'" (Tucker, 2003:146).

Ralph Rashleigh is the main character of *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh* novel by James Tucker. The description above shows when Rashleigh adopted by the Carandjie or the leader of the Aborigine, Carandji also give him a present. The presents are djin or wife and weapons. Its horrible, how the women, human being treated as a thing. Women were not a present. The women in aboriginal tribes have no right to reject or refused the decision of the carandji or men in the society. Making a woman as a present for a man is one of the example of patriarchal system in Aborigines tribe.

Aborigine women main activities in the tribes were hunting fish and prepare the foods for the men. The Aborigines were primitive. They didn't plants the food, instead they were hunting the fishes and food-gathering.

The Aborigines people also expert in how to harvest the oceans, coastline, lakes, rivers, and plains for the abundant Marine life and animals they supported (McKay, 2001:15). Aborigines could exist even in the arid regions, because they could read the land and always knew where to find sources of water and food. Aborigines had a deep respect for the land and the creatures on it, and they took from it only what they needed to sustain their life.

"At the camp the djins were all assembled roasting fish, roots and grubs and excitedly making preparations for a great feast. Two of them were busily pounding some condiment between stones, transferring the mash to a calabash. The men squatted in a wide circle, Rashleigh being placed next to the carandjie, and immediately the women served out broiled roots and fish, and by way of a delicacy some of those great grubs found in rotten timber, well roasted" (Tucker, 2003:145).

"By the time he returned Lorra would have ready the cleaned roots, boiled or roasted, and the carandjie's other djins would have prepared fish, and to these would be added whatever Rashleigh had brought back from the morning's hunt. The rest of the day, until the evening, was spent in lazing in the shade, until hunger brought him and his protector to the second and last meal of the day, punctually prepared by the women." (Tucker, 2003:146)

All the description above shows the women role for preparing foods and served the food for the men. Lorra was Rashleigh's djin, and she has responsibility with other djin to prepare the meals for the carandjie and other men punctually. The aborigine's favorite food is fish. The aborigine's wives will always served fish as their main meal.

b) Male oppression of Women

The male oppression for women aborigine shown clearly in Tucker's *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh*. Male Oppression is the situation when the male always dominated the women.

"Such government as the natives had was a kind of patriarchal despotism, all the power being vested in the old carandjie. He had won his position, so far as Rashleigh was able to discover, by the great feats of war which he had performed in his younger days, and he maintained it in his decrepitude by imposing upon his ignorant subjects by dexterity as a conjurer. One of the instances which Rashleigh witnessed of the old man's use of his power concerned his own djin". (Tucker, 2003:147)

The description above also shows the men oppression to women. The male even will use their power to dominate women. Rashleigh witnessed all the male domination in aborigine tribe. The domination of male also shown in the marriage procession.

"The Aborigines, he found, mated without any kind of marriage ceremony. As soon as a youth had undergone his initiation by gashes and was declared a grown man, his first use of his weapons was to hunt for a wife. He would steal unseen towards some swamp near which another tribe was located, and lie there all night, waiting until at dawn the young djins came to search for food. His attention would be riveted upon the girls whose head-dress showed them to be unmarried, and, selecting one whose capture opportunity made easy, he would pounce upon her and bear her struggling and screaming away. If he succeeded in carrying her to the camp before any of her male relatives could rescue her, she became his bride by capture, and was never more owned by her tribe nor allowed to enter its camp again". (Tucker, 2003:149)

The description above clearly shows if the Aborigine male could choose their own wife with very brutal way. They will hunt the girl from the tribes of other tribes for being their Djinn or wife. The aborigine women have no choice. If they can escape from the hunting, they will be free, but if they cannot, they will become the wife by capture of the aborigine's male. This phenomenon of marriage procession was very harmful and violent.

5. Conclusion

James Tucker is a great writer in the Australian literature. *The Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh* was his masterpiece in Australian literature. James Tucker described the Aborigines' lifestyles and belief which is very different with the European. Aborigine has no religion and they embraced the patriarchal system that put the women in the second class.

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