



THE SISTERHOOD TO THE WOMEN'S SURVIVAL IN ATIQ RAHIMI'S THE PATIENCE STONE

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Abstract

Chesler writes in *The Death of Feminism* that the sisterhood in the Muslim world does not always exist. Yet, Atiq Rahimi in *The Patience Stone* describes the solidarity naturally performed between the main woman character and her aunt. Indeed, the description argues Chesler's own opinion that love, family feelings between and among women do not exist. There are four sisterhoods proposed to reveal in the novel, they are (1) the bad experiences of patriarchy shared between the main women character and her aunt, (2) the form of sisterhood performed by her aunt toward the main woman character and each other, (3) the significance of the sisterhood toward the main woman character's life and her aunt's life, and (4) a magical tale bring misfortune for the main women character's actual live to underline the necessary of sisterhood. The article analyzes the character's utterances and author's narration in a qualitative research. The finding shows (1) the main woman character suffers from the bad treatment of her father and husband while her aunt suffers from the bad treatment of her husband and his family, (2) advise, attention, and love are the forms of sisterhood naturally performed between the main woman character and her aunt, (3) the main women character and her aunt are avoided by the next violence, and (4) the main woman character does not keep silence as warned by her grand mother through narrating the magical tale brings her to have tragic end life. As the conclusion, the sisterhood naturally performed between the main woman character and her aunt is significant to her aunt's survival.

Keyword: *oppression, sisterhood, survival*



Abstrak

Chesler menuliskan di *The Death of Feminism* bahwa ikatan sesama wanita di negara Muslim tidak pernah ada. Namun Atiq Rahimi di *The Patience Stone* menggambarkan kesetiakawanan secara alami terjadi diantara tokoh utama wanita dan bibinya. Jadi, gambaran tersebut menentang pernyataan Chesler bahwa cinta dan rasa kekeluargaan antara sesama wanita tidak pernah ada di negara Muslim. Ada empat ikatan sesama wanita diajukan untuk digambarkan di dalam novel. diantaranya adalah (1) pengalaman buruk patriarki yang dialami dan saling dibagi antara tokoh utama wanita dan bibinya, (2) bentuk ikatan sesama wanita dilakukan oleh bibinya terhadap tokoh utama wanita tersebut dan sebaliknya, (3) manfaat dari ikatan sesama wanita bagi kehidupan tokoh utama wanita dan bibinya, (4) kisah magis yang memberikan ketidakberuntungan bagi kehidupan nyata tokoh utama wanita untuk menggarisbawahi pentingnya ikatan sesama wanita. Artikel ini menganalisa ungkapan-ungkapan tokoh-tokoh dan kisah yang ditulis pengarang novel melalui penelitian kualitatif. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa (1) Tokoh utama wanita menderita sebab perlakuan buruk ayah dan suaminya, sementara bibinya menderita sebab perlakuan buruk dari suami dan keluarga suaminya, (2) Nasehat, perhatian, dan cinta adalah wujud ikatan sesama wanita yang dilakukan antara tokoh utama wanita dan bibinya, (3) Tokoh utama wanita dan bibinya terhindar dari terjadinya lagi hal buruk patriarki karena terjadinya ikatan sesama wanita antara keduanya, (4) Tokoh utama wanita tidak mengindahkan saran neneknya untuk tidak menceritakan kisah magis sehingga mencelakakan dirinya. Sebagai simpulan bahwa dengan adanya ikatan sesama wanita yang kuat antara tokoh utama wanita dan bibinya memberikan dampak hingga bertahan hidup.

Kata kunci: *penindasan, ikatan sesama wanita, kelangsungan hidup*

Introduction

In the recent years Arab, and the Muslim world seize people's attention around the world, in particular the western feminists due to the violence againsts women and humanity occurred in there (Darvishpour, 2003: 1). One of people who has a great attention to the Muslim world is Phyllis Chesler. In her book entitled *The Death of Feminism*, she criticizes the violence againsts women it is caused by men and women. Unfortunately, sisterhood, that is female-female kindness, cooperation, or solidarity does not always exist in the Arab and Muslim world (Chesler, 2005: 191).

Yet, through the present of the main woman character and her aunt in *The Patience Stone*, Atiq Rahimi seems to show that the solidarity exists. The solidarity between the main woman character and her aunt is the essential thing inside the novel since their solidarity develops the story. The novel is his first

novel written in France and it is awarded the Prix Goncourt in 2008. He is an Afghanistan writer. Not surprisingly the novel is set in somewhere in Afghanistan or elsewhere. The action is confined to a room where the main woman character tends her comatose husband who is shot in the war after freedom that is a fighting for power. While she is taking care her husband, she tells her life and her aunt's life in front of her husband who can not interrupt and blames her. She tells how suffer she and her aunt are due to the violence conducted by their own husband, their main woman character's father who is also as her aunt's brother, and mother's in law. Not only because of the family feeling they have that they are as aunt and niece but also the psychological suffer they share due to the operation of patriarchy let them bond naturally. Indeed, it argues the Chesler's opinion that solidarity does not always exist in the Muslim World and vocalizes Chesler's opinion that love, family feelings...exist in the Muslim World (2005: 191).

Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone* has been analyzed by Zabihzadeh and Hasyim (2015). They analyze the violence experienced by the women characters. They elaborate that the women characters face a domestic violence, namely physical, sexual, and emotional violence. Koss, Goodman, Browne, Fitzgerald, Keita, and Russo (1994) in Zabihzadeh, et.al (p.55) explain that women ... are the targets of physical violence ...being scalded, cut, ... bitten. Shayegan (2014) in Zabihzadeh, et.al (p.58) states that ... sexual abuse ...which is oriented to desire to dominate through sex. Brassard, Hart, and Hardy (1993) in Zabihzadeh, et.al (p.56) describe that emotional maltreatment is a repeated pattern of behaviour that conveys to women that they are worthless, unloved, unwanted. The novel is also analyzed previously by P. Adi and Mustofa (2013). They reveal that the main woman character does silence voice (she tells the secret to her comatose husband to show that she wants her husband appreciates her as a wife) that may be as the form of a feminist movement. The work is different to both previous works in term of describing the form of feminist movement againsts gender inequality. The first work focuses on describing the domestic violence experienced by the unnamed women characters because of patriarchy operation. The second work focuses on describing the silence voice done by the unnamed woman character due to the operation of patriarchy. While the work focuses on describing how the unnamed women characters treat each other as sister because they suffer from patriarchal value.

Related Literatures

To see further the practical of sisterhood in the novel, the work bases the analysis on the explanation about sisterhood. There are Tyson, Hooks, and Lindberg, Bagilhole and Godee whose explanation about sisterhood are quoted. Besides sisterhood, the work precedes traditional gender roles on which there is the explanation about patriarchy and past and recent time's sisterhood. Tyson's explanation about traditional gender roles on which patriarchy is the

focus is presented firstly to give an understanding about the responsible factor that causes the women bonding as sisters to release the suffering that burden them due to the operation of patriarchy. Hook's and Rorty's explanation about sisterhood past and recent years is presented before the explanation about sisterhood itself to have best description about the difference between the reason why sisterhood arises past and recent times.

Traditional Gender Roles

Patriarchy is thus, by definition, sexist, which means it promotes the belief that women are innately inferior to men. This belief in the inborn inferiority of women is a form of what is called biological essentialism because it is based on biological differences between the sexes that are considered part of our unchanging essence as men and women (Tyson, 2006: 85). Furthermore Tyson (2006: 86) writes that such differences as physical size, shape, and body chemistry make men naturally superior to women: for example, more intelligent, more logical, more courageous, or better leaders. Patriarchy privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles. It casts men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive. These gender roles have been used very successfully to justify inequities, which still occur today, such as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision-making positions (Tyson, 2006: 85).

Past and Recent Years Sisterhood

It was primarily bourgeois white women, both liberal and radical in perspective, who professed belief in the notion of common oppression....Women are divided by sexist attitudes, racism, class privilege, ... Sustained women bonding can occur only when these divisions are confronted and the necessary steps are taken to eliminate them... In recent years,...Solidarity strengthens resistance struggle (to abandon the idea that Sisterhood as an expression of ...solidarity weakens ...feminist movement)...They bond with other women on the basis of shared strengths and resources... It is this type of bonding that is the essence of Sisterhood (Hooks, 1984: 43-45). The quotation shows that past sisterhood occurs because women experiences such as the common oppression of sexist attitudes; that makes them bonding; and their bonding has a goal to confront and eliminate the oppression. While recent sisterhood, the term used is solidarity since the term sisterhood weakens feminist movement. Solidarity sees another human being as us rather than as them so it avoids us to marginalize another people (Rorty, 1993: vxi). In the recent sisterhood, women are bond due to their shared strength and resources. Additionally, Hooks (2000: 15) writes that in the wake of civil rights revolution, feminist movement in the '70s and '80s changed the face of our nation. The feminist activists make the changes possible care for the well-being of all females. Feminist is rooted in shared commitment to struggle against patriarchal injustice, no matter the form that injustice takes.

Sisterhood

Hooks (1984: 43) stated that woman are the group most victimized by sexist oppression, sexism is perpetuated by social structures; by the individuals who dominate, exploit, or oppress. Hence we must learn to live and work in solidarity, learn the true meaning and value of sisterhood (so that it will help them survive). Next, Hooks (2003: 3) emphasizes the reality that women who are in some way victimized by male domination is the solely bases for sisterhood arises and sisterhood could be powerful if women become sisters in struggling the way women through sex, class, and race dominated and exploited (Hooks, 2000: 3). Tyson (2006: 106) underlines Hook's statement about the reason why sisterhood arises, that is because they recognize the common experience of having oppression. The oppression is caused by the operation of patriarchy and the women's experiences of patriarchy let them have psychological and political bonding in order to achieve their goal to survive. Furthermore, Tyson (2006: 118) states that the psychological bonding between or among women becomes especially acute when they are victims of the combined forces of sexism and racism. Lindberg (2004: 343) adds that sisterhood arises is not only because of shared and compared experience but also knowledge between or among women as well. Lindberg (2004: 347) also states the value of sisterhood that is we are able to survive if we are able to trust each other and treat each other as sisters. Bagilhole and Godee (2001: 175) strengthen the value of sisterhood that women must promote each other and themselves strategically, such as giving advice each other. All the explanations reveal sisterhood arises is because women share their experiences and knowledge of patriarchy. The reason makes them bonding psychologically. As they bond, they trust each other, treat each other as sister, and promote each other in order to extend their lives.

Research Method

Content analysis is one of the classical procedures for analyzing textual material no matter where this material comes from—ranging from media products to interview data (Bauer 2000 in Flick, 2009: 332). The work analyzes the textual material, that is the novel entitled *The Patience Stone* by Atiq rahimi, particularly, the textual material that describes the sisterhood to the women's survival. The work is limited on the characters' utterances and author's narration based on the research question proposed. Thus, the work applies qualitative content analysis.

Discussion

The Shared of the Women Characters' Experiences of Patriarchy

Patriarchy that sees men are superior than women causes suffering to women. Due to the point of view, men may treat women as they like including doing violence against women. Consequently, women experiences suffering. They suffer from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

The Experiences of the Main Woman Character

Before getting married, her father is the one who does violence against her. She, her another six sisters, and mother are the victims of emotional abuse from her father. He kisses his all quails but never her mother nor us. Hence, she, her another six sisters, and her mother starves of affection (Rahimi, 57). How suffer she is psychologically knowing that her father tends to love his quails rather than his daughters and wife. It shows that his quails are much more priceless than his family. She is not only the victim of emotional but also physical abuses of her father as well. It is happened when father loses the bet he places at the quail fighting in the Qaf gardens. It makes him coming home in a rage and he finds any pretext and beats her, her another six sisters, and her mother (p.58). When her father beats her, it shows that he treats her physic rudely. While when her father pretexts her, it shows that he hurts her emotionally. The next part of the novel narrates how suffer she is physically. Her father shuts her in the cellar leaves a hungry cat with her for two days since after returning home from the mosque he finds the cage empty that makes him mad (p,60). She experiences physical force when her father shuts her in the cellar as his punishment. Shutting her in the cellar for two days without any meal and drink must destry her physical healthy. After getting married, her husband is the one who does violence against her. Her husband beats her in the middle of the night because she does not warn him that she is bleeding when her husband penetrates her. It is happened when she and her husband are first living together and he who is dead drunk comes back home late. Then he penetrates her when she pretends to be deep asleep. When he washes himself, he notices blood on his genital that makes him furious. Blood of the first night of just married couple makes a groom proud and it increases his honour. It underlines that the main woman character experiences a sexual abuse. It is because her husband dominates her through sex. Her husband demands her to bleed at that time to increase his proud and honor (p.29). Unfortunately, her husband does not realize that she comes out the blood when they are making love at the first night since he is dead drunk. Thus, he is angry and beats her since she does not realize him (p.30). She is the victim of physical abuse since she gets the strong and rude physical contact done by her husband.

The Experiences of the Main Women Character's Aunt

The main woman character's aunt also experiences the samilar thing to her. Due to the operation of patriarchy, her aunt faces emotional and sexual abuse altogether. It is happened when they marry her with a terrible rich man. It shows that her parents are the responsible people to decide to whom she marries, but not her aunt herself. Here, she suffers from an emotional abuse due to her sexuality as a woman so that she is considered as worthless. Consequently, she does not have chance to show her voice. The emotional abuse still continues when her husband sends her to her husband's family to be their servant because of her infertility. Without a medical proof, her aunt is judged as the infertile wife not her aunt's husband is judged by the same case. Male supremacy through sex thereby disadvantaging women is speaking here. In other world, her aunt

experiences a sex abuse. The wrong accusation given to her aunt that she is infertile as the form of a sexual abuse she experiences is aggravated by her father in law who used to fuck her day and night because she is both beautiful and infertile. The abuse still goes to her aunt's life. Her husband's family, her husband, and her own family including the main woman character's father as her aunt's brother abandon her (p.68). The bad treatment she has makes her It shows that she suffers from an emotional abuse.

The Form of Sisterhood

The experiences of patriarchy shared by both the main woman character and her aunt let them bonding. When they bond, they trust each other, treat each other as sisters, and promote each other in order to avoid themselves from the next violence and to extend their lives. They have their own ways to show how natural their bonding is due to the similar experiences of patriarchy they share so that they will survive.

The Form of sisterhood Performed by the Main Woman Character toward Her Aunt

The main woman character loves her aunt much more than her own mother since she grows up enveloped in her aunt's warmth, her aunt teaches her how to live with men and how to read. They bond psychologically due to that reason. One more reason that becomes the essential reason regarding with the topic of the work is that the main character knows well how big hearted her aunt is. The main character who was fourteen years old at the time when her aunt was abandon by her aunt's husband, her aunt's husband's family, and her aunt's own family was the only one who cried toward her aunt's suffering. Her aunt really suffers from the bad treatment done by her husband, husband's family, and own family. Somehow, her aunt who writes on the paper that she will end her life due to the heavy burden of patriarchy, she still alive. She does not commit suicide. She is found by the main woman character when she goes to the market with her mother in law. At that time her aunt lives in brothel. Since the first time they meet in the market after separating for years, the main woman character asks for her aunt to live with her and help her to rise up her two daughters while she takes care her comatose husband (p.85-87).

The Form of Sisterhood Performed by Her Aunt toward Her

The main women's character's aunt advices her to keep her secret. She realizes that she is virgin but she is really scared if by any chance she does not bleed at the night. The blood is men's honour and pride. Her aunt who knows her fearful well and who has experienced how suffer she is due to operation of patriarchy leads her aunt to advice her to be quiet to keep her secret that the blood is actually her earlier period. The suggestion makes her fine (p.29). Beside the advice, her aunt has taken her. Her aunt likes her children and the children like her. That's why she is slightly more relaxed (p.88).

The Significance of the Sisterhood

The advice given by the main woman character's aunt to her makes her changing her feeling from scared to fine (p.88). Furthermore, the advice plays an important role for her life that she is save from the violence conducted by her husband. Her husband will kill her if she does not bleed at the first night. Fortunately, she is saved by her earlier period that is the blood sticks on her husband's genital.

The Significance of the Sisterhod toward Her Aunt

The main character's love to her aunt makes her aunt faces the life happier than before. Her aunt gives her love to the main woman character's two daughter and her two daughters give their love to the main woman character's aunt (p.88).

The Magical Tale Brings Misfortune

The magical tale narrated by the main woman character's grand ma is a good parable for her actual life. The tale narates the king who kills his three new born daughters due to the astrologer's statement that a girl will bring disgrace and only his fourth new born daughter is safe due to be escaped by the queen and the executioner because of the sound emanated by the newborn that the queen will have her own kingdom if she will keep her fourth new born baby alive. The king come to see his queen again who is now as the quen of her own small kingdom and decree that he will burn the kingdom to the ground. The queen's daughter negotiates with the king. They spend the night together to save the queen's kingdom and it causes the queen's distress. The queen's daughter finds the answer what makes the queen's distress. She gets the answer from the executioner that the king is her own father. The executioner's enigmatic conclusion ends the tale by mentioning three optional choices and whatever the choice the queen's daughter chooses becomes their fate (the queen, the queen's daughter, and the executioner). If she tells the king all the truth the king will hung them; if they oppose the king's intention, the queen's kingdom will be burned down; if she marries the king, she shall be committing the unpardonable sin of incest (Rahimi, 2010: 89-93).

Actually the choices offered to the queen's daughter are the choices that should be chosen by the listeners including the main woman character to know the end of the tale. Nevertheless, whatever the choice she chooses should not be told to anyone since it may pass to realize. That is her grand ma's advice to end the tale. In the actual live, not to be told to anyone as her grand ma's advice means she should keep silence in particular about her secret. Otherwise, her life will be threatening. Thus, the magical tale told by the main woman character's grand ma is also a form of solidarity. Through the narration of the magical tale, her grand ma reminds her to keep silence about her secret since it will avoid her from the next violence due to the operation of patriarchy. Her grand ma knows well how hate her father is toward her and her six sisters. Her father prefers to love his quail rather than his seven daughters (Rahimi, 2010: 58-60). Similarly to the tale, woman is considered despicabile that brings disgrace to the king. It also

happens to her actual life. Henceforth the tale is a good parable about woman's experience of patriarchy.

Unfortunately, what has already advised by her grand ma through the magical tale her grand ma's narration is not applied in her actual life. She tells all her secrets in front of her comatose husband. Her adultery with the young soldier and another man till she bears two daughters and her blood for the first night when she is making love with her father are the secrets she tells honestly in front of her husband that make her get misfortune. She gets tragic life at the end of her life. Her husband stands up suddenly, still and dry, like a rock lifted in a single movement. He grabs her by her hair, drags her along the floor to the middle of the room. Again he bangs her head against the floor, and then, brusquely, wrings her neck till she is scarlet with her own blood and closes her eyes (Rahimi, 2010: 135-136).

Conclusion

The main woman character suffers from the violence conducted by her father, husband, and her husband's mother. Her aunt also suffers from the violence done by her husband, husband's family, and her own brother. The similar oppression they share due to the operation of patriarchy leads them bonding strongly. Advice and love they give one another make their bonding grow greater. Her love returns her aunt's life after her life is broken by the operation of patriarchy and her aunt's advice avoids her from the next oppression due to the patriarchy. The secret she tells in front of her comatose husband brings her to have a tragic end life as having narrated by a magical tale. The conclusion shows that similar oppression the victims' experiences lead them naturally bonding and it is significant to the women's survival. It strengthens Tyson's analysis that sisterhood to women's survival will be created naturally and will grow greater when the women are the victims of sexism force (2006: 118). It argues Chesler's opinion that sisterhood does not always exist (2005: 191).

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