

ANN VERONICA'S STRUGGLE TO GET HIGHER EDUCATION AS REFLECTED IN H.G WELLS' ANN VERONICA: A FEMINIST STUDY

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the kinds of inequality that constrain Ann Veronica to get higher education and to analyze her struggles to reach her desire to get higher education in dealing with the gender inequality that she faces. This study was a qualitative research employing content analysis method. The first result of the research shows that there are four kinds of inequality that constrain Ann veronica to get higher education. They are (1) stereotypes towards women (2) marginalization towards women (3) subordinations towards women; and 4) violence towards women. The second result shows Ann Veronica's struggle to get higher education. They are (1) Proving her courage: leaving her family for freedom and living without protection; and (2) proving her ability to reach her goal: trying hard to be financially independent and studying for knowledge.

Keywords: Gender inequalities, higher education, women's struggle, feminist literary criticism, Ann Veronica

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the most essential part of human life. It becomes the most important key for women and men to develop themselves because education develops rational thinking and moral capacities. Education can bring women and men into better lives. The better education they have, the better their lives can be. Education is the first step for men and women to get better

access and knowledge in every aspect of life.

Education for women in the 19th century was different from that for men's. Women and men were educated for different purposes. Education for men, aimed to prepare men for their roles in the society. Education for women was aimed to prepare them for domestic duties (Burstyn, 2016:

20). During the 19th century, women had less chance than men to take a part in the society. Women were expected to be feminine, innocent, virtuous, dutiful and ignorant with intellectual opinion. There were some certain rules that brought disadvantages towards women, such as the fact that women could not own property, women could not vote and women could not get higher education. Such condition shows how strong patriarchal system in that era, a system that put women's position under men.

Such an issue mentioned above is depicted in a novel entitled *Ann Veronica* which was written by H.G Wells in 1909. Ann Veronica, the main character in the novel, does not have right to get access to higher education. She wants to get higher education in biology. However, as a woman, she is not allowed to study in the university by her father. Her father wants her to study in a women college which is focused on the education that prepares her for being a housewife.

She needs to struggle to be able to get higher education. To achieve her dream, Ann Veronica struggles not only to study at higher education, but also to deal with the

society's value that women are not supposed to reach that kind of education.

In this study, the researcher is interested in revealing some points about the inequality faced by Ann Veronica and her struggle to get higher education in the novel *Ann Veronica* by H.G Wells. The researcher is interested in revealing kinds of inequality that she gets from her own family as well as from the society that bring difficulties for her to get higher education. Besides, the researcher is also interested in revealing her struggles in dealing with the inequality she faces.

This research is expected to give some benefits both academically and practically. Academically, this research reveals some points about a woman's struggles in getting higher education and the way she solves the problem during her journey to achieve her goals. Thus, the researcher hopes that it can enlarge the knowledge of the students that woman can also reach her goal to get higher education even though it needs a long process and hard effort. Practically, by reading this research, it can be a part of information for students in understanding that women have the same privileges with men in education. Also, the researcher hopes that this study can encourage women to

struggle and achieve their dreams, especially in education because nothing is impossible.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative research employing content analysis method. The Time and Place of the Research conducted since July 2015 to July 2017 in Yogyakarta. The main source of this research is a novel entitled *Ann Veronica*. The data are in the form of phrases, clauses, sentences, and expressions related to the kinds of inequality that constrains Ann Veronica to get higher education. The instrument of the research is the researcher herself.

The data collection technique is by reading the novel comprehensively and by observing the data related to women's inequality and struggle to get higher education. The data analysis technique of this research is conducted through six steps: organizing and preparing the data, reading through all the data, coding the data, giving a description, interrelating description, and interpreting the meaning of description.

FINDING AND DISSCUSION

A. The kinds of Inequalities Ann Veronica faces for Getting Higher Education

There are four kinds of inequality that constraint Ann Veronica to pursue higher education. They are stereotype towards women, marginalization towards women, subordination towards women and violence towards women.

1. Stereotypes

Stereotype is a preconceived notion to certain groups or people which only brings disadvantages or injustice treatment (Fakih, 1996: 16). There are two kinds of stereotype that constraints Ann Veronica of getting higher education, being domestic and being irrational.

The first is being stereotyped as domestic. Since women are stereotyped as being domestic, Ann Veronica finds it difficult to study in higher education. Education for men and women in the Ann Veronica's society has different functions. Women pursue education to prepare themselves for domesticity, while men pursue education to prepare themselves for something beyond domestic life. It is unfair for women because what women can learn is limited. Education for women is regarded as less important than education for men. Women can only learn something that is useful for domestic life, such as sewing, gardening and cooking. Most women in Ann

Veronica's society only go to the women's colleges where most of the subjects taught there are about marriage and mothering. This kind of inequality becomes a constraint for Ann Veronica because the subject that she wants to study does not have anything to do with domesticity.

The second is being stereotyped as irrational. Ann Veronica lives in the society where its people have strong belief that women are irrational while men are rational. Women are irrational because they are guided by their emotions rather than their logical thinking. They are perceived as delicate, emotional and sensitive. On other hand, men are rational because they are guided by their logical thinking rather than their emotion. They are perceived as logic, sensible and insensitive. The society presumes that women's emotion influences the way women make a decision. Because of it, women need to be led by men so they can make a reasonable decision. Ann Veronica's father, as the oldest man in her family, decides what she should do or not do. This is unfair for her because she thinks that she is already mature enough to make a decision by herself without the need of her father's approval. She is already 22 years old, but everything she should do must be under permission of her father. When Ann

Veronica wants to study biology, she also needs her father's approval. However, it turns out that her father does not grant her request.

2. Marginalization towards Women

Marginalization is the powerlessness and exclusion experienced by a group, resulting from an inequality of control of 'resources and power structures' within society (Fakih, 1996: 17). In pursuing her dream to study biology at the university, Ann Veronica experiences two kinds of marginalization: being discouraged and being discriminated.

Discouraging women to pursue their dreams are a kind of marginalization. Ann Veronica is discouraged by all the members of her family to continue her study in the Imperial College in London. Yet, Ann Veronica shows her seriousness to pursue biology by leaving her house. On the contrary, her father and her brother do not support her and ask her to come back home. They do not want to support her financially and spiritually anymore if she still insists to study biology in London. Even though her family tries to discourage her, Ann Veronica does not want to give up because she has a strong will to realize her dreams. She can prove to her family that she can study

biology in the Imperial College in London.

The next marginalization that Ann Veronica faces is being discriminated by the society. Ann Veronica faces financial problems After she decides to leave her home because her father does not give her allowance anymore. She needs to find a job to pay her tuition fee in Imperial College and pay the rent. However, she faces difficulties to find a job because she is a woman. In finding workers, the first thing the employers consider is whether the job seekers are women or men, not the quality they have. The society regards that women do not have enough talent to take a part in the working world. Women do not have a chance to find a better job because their talents are underestimated.

3. Subordination towards women

Subordination of women means women have an inferior position than men. In the patriarchal society, there is an assumption that women's role is lower than men. It makes women regarded as not important as men (Sultana, 2010:7). Ann Veronica experiences two kinds of subordination. The first is she cannot become a decision maker in the family. In the patriarchal society, it is common that a man becomes the leader of the family. As the leader of the family, he has right to decide what other family

members should do or should not do. In Ann Veronica family, the father becomes the decision maker. Ann Veronica faces the obstacles to get higher education because her life is guided and controlled by her father. As the decision maker, her father makes her unable to have freedom to choose what she should do with her life because everything must be under the permission of her father. Her father assumes that as long as she lives in his house, she should follow her father's ideas. The way Ann Veronica's father treats her daughter is based on his ideal of a daughter. He sees a daughter as his own property, whom he can do everything he wants to do to her.

The next subordination is women have less privileges than men. In Ann Veronica's society, it is common if sons are given more priorities than women. It is because later men will be the leaders in the family or in the society. Being treated differently with men in the family shows condition that women are subordinated by men's supremacy. This subordination also happens in Ann Veronica's family. Ann Veronica's father treats his son and daughters differently. He lets his sons go to reach his dreams while he keeps Ann Veronica at home, waiting someone to marry her. The

Sons have more dominant roles than the daughter in the family. Ann's Veronica's father gives a full freedom to his sons while on the other hand, he does not give her daughter the same opportunity. Her brothers have more privileges than her such as getting higher education and getting more financial support. It is based on the opinion in the society that men will be the breadwinners while women will be the housekeepers. Ann Veronica is treated as less important than her brothers.

4. Violence towards Women

Violence is an attack or invasion against the physical and mental integrity of a person's psychology (Fakih, 1996: 17). Ann Veronica experiences violence in the form of sexual harassment from her colleague. Ramage tries to do sexual harassment towards her after she borrows his money. From his marital status, it implies that he wants Ann Veronica to become his mistress as the return of the financial support he gives to her. She borrows Ramage's money because at the beginning Ramage supports women's independence. However, later it turns out that he just wants to take advantage of her. It reveals that men who treat women nicely actually also have their hidden motives towards women.

B. Ann Veronica's Struggles to Get Higher Education

1. Proving her Courage

Ann Veronica's courage proves her struggle to fight for higher education. She is brave enough to make a decision for herself by leaving her family for freedom. Ann Veronica comes from a respectable middle-class family. She has a comfortable life, everything she needs is already being taken care by her father. Actually, she has an equate standard of living without worrying about her education. However, for Ann Veronica, the most important thing in her life is to have freedom, including freedom for education. Because her father restricts her desire to study in London, Ann Veronica decides to leave her home and fight for her goal. She is so fearless to leave her comfort zone and face the hardship, reaching her dream to study biology without any support from her family and her society. The society still thinks that it is inappropriate for a single girl to live alone without her family. However, Ann Veronica does not care with the society views towards her or her family because the most important thing for her is to study biology.

Ann Veronica also has a courage to live alone without protection. Women in Ann

Veronica's society are portrayed as weak and dependent. While in the other hand, men are portrayed as strong and independent. The society does not give chance to women to be able to guard themselves. As a single woman, actually Ann Veronica has her father to protect her from any threat. However, her father does not want to help her after she leaves her home. Financial problem becomes the biggest threat for Ann Veronica. She also faces security threats in the form of sexual harassment from her colleague, namely Ramage. She has courage to defend herself eventough she borrows Ramage's money. Proving her courage to realize her dream becomes the most important step for Ann Veronica. Without having courage first, it is impossible she will able to reach her goal.

2. Proving Her Ability to Reach Her Goal

There are two ways that Ann veronica does to prove her ability to reach her goal. The first is trying to be financially independent. In trying to get some money, Ann Veronica sells some of her belongings including her precious watch from her mother. Ann Veronica also tries to get a job but it turns out that there is no job available for her. As a woman, it is hard for Ann Veronica to get a proper job. Moreover, she

wants to work and also study. Even though at the end Ann Veronica cannot find a job, it still shows that Ann Veronica has a strong will to be financially independent because she tries hard to find a job. Ann Veronica has put some efforts instead of just giving up.

Ann Veronica tries another way to finance herself and her study after so many failed attempts in finding a job. She makes an effort to get a loan from Ramage because it is impossible for her to get a loan from a bank. As a single woman who lives alone, it is even hard for her to put her own money in the bank so it is impossible for her to take a loan from the bank. It means that taking a loan from Ramage is the only choice she has at that time. She uses some of the money to enroll biology course at the Imperial College.

She finally makes a decision to reconcile with her father. Her father realizes that he treats her wrongly and asks her to come back home and discuss everything with her father again. Her father finally allows her to study biology in London. It shows that her family also plays a significant role to her success of studying biology in the unversity. It is not only to prove that she is able to study biology but also to make her

family realize that her choice to study biology is not something to be ashamed. Ann Veronica shows to her family that as a woman, she also has right to get higher education.

The second way Ann Veronica takes to reach her goal is by studying hard for knowledge. The society thinks that higher education is not important for women because it will not be used in the domesticity. As a woman in her family, Ann Veronica does not have freedom to educate herself. Her family restricts her right of getting access to higher education. She can only learn something that's useful for domesticity. Ann Veronica's family examines what book she should read. Because of it, she needs to smuggle books that might be forbidden by her family instead of bringing them openly. She has to read privately without her aunt's concern. She also studies hard during her study in the university that makes her can graduate with a good mark.

CONCLUSION

Ann Veronica lives in the patriarchal society which constraints her to get higher education. However, with her strong will and hard effort, she can achieve her goal to

get higher education. Ann Veronica's ambition and struggles show that women should fight for their dreams no matter what the obstacles are.

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