AN ANALYSIS OF JAPANESE RITUALS OF A NEW GEISHA IN ARTHUR GOLDEN'S NOVEL *MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA*

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Abstract: Literature is human expression and the reflection about life, thought, feeling, behavior, and attitude of human being. By watching or reading literature, people can obtain enjoyment and valuable information related to their life. Novel is human expression that reflects human thought, act, behavior, lifestyle, and anything related to humankind. Therefore, the researcher is interested in analyzing Japanese rituals of a new Geisha in Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

The objective of this study were: (1) to find the kinds of Japanese rituals of a new Geisha, (2) to knows the conflicts faced by Sayuri, as the main character, during the rituals of a new Geisha and the solutions in Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

This study used descriptive qualitative design because it did not use any hypothesis and statistical methods. This study tries to analyze the novel descriptively with emphasise on the Japanese ritual of a new geisha of the main character to be a geisha. In analyzing this novel as an object of the study, the writer used objective approach. The data were collected by reading Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Then the data were analyzed based on the classification that refers to Japanese rituals to be a geisha.

The result of this study showed that the main character (Sayuri) applied some rituals of a new geisha, such as *sansankudo*, *mizuage*, and *erikae*. The researcher also found the conflicts faced by Sayuri during the rituals of a new geisha in Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*; they are external and internal conflict. In this study, the solution of the conflicts can be described as follows: 1) improving nonverbal communication skills, 2) using humor and playing to deal with challenges, 3) some other solutions such as Sayuri tried to find out her sister Satsu and Sayuri tried to be honest with Chairman about her true feeling.

Key Words: Japanese rituals of a new geisha, novel, conflict, solution

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Introduction

Literature is the reflection about life, thought, feeling, behavior, and attitude of human being. According to Bennet and Royle (2004: 35), "Literature is the kind of writing which most persistently and most provocatively engages with the uncanny aspects of experience, thought and feeling". Also, according to Abrams (2009:226), "Novel is applied to a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of fiction written in prose". In this research the writer prefers choosing Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* to be analyzed because it is an interesting novel which shows about the life of woman who tries to survive in her life while taking a setting in Japan, as Geisha is the people that undergoing *mizuage* and *erikae* rituals as a part of culture comes from the ancestor habitual actions and beliefs.

The problems that lie behind the concern of the study are focused on two main questions: (1) What kinds of Japanese rituals of a new Geisha in Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*? and (2) What are the conflicts faced by Sayuri during the rituals of a new Geisha in Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* and what are the solutions? While the study itself is focused on Japanese rituals of a new Geisha undergoed by Sayuri and limitedto the Japanese rituals that is portayed by Arthur Golden in the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

The findings revealed in this study could be a significant contribution to students and lecturers of English Department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang, also for further researcher. Theoretically, this study is expressed to develop and give description about Japanese rituals of a new Geisha found in the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The findings of the literature study should also be a referential data for the next researcher in the close area of research, and for readers who want to study and share their knowledge to others about Japanese rituals.

Literature

According to Klarer (2004), "Literary work is divided into some types of genres literature; fiction, poetry, drama, and movie". Novel is included into fiction as novel is a kind of literature. According to Abrams (2009: 226), "Novel is applied to a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of fiction written in prose".

There are some elements of novel namely character, characterization, plot, setting, point of view, theme and conflict. According to Kennedy (in Koesnosoebroto 1988: 65), "The character is usually but not always a person but it can be an animal or something". Characterization is the art of creating characters for a narrative. Abrams (2009:43) states that:

> A broad distinction is frequently made between alternative methods for characterizing (that is, establishing the distinctive

character of) the persons in a narrative: showing and telling. In showing (also called "the dramatic method"), the author simply presents the characters talking and acting, and leaves it entirely up to the reader to infer the movies and dispositions that lie behind what they say and do.

From the explanation above, it can be conclude that characterization is the author's way to deliver about the characteristic of a character to the reader.

Plot has a beginning, middle, and an end and it is related from the first until the end. Setting is where the story is set. According to Abrams (2009: 330), "Setting is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs. According to Klarer (2004: 20), "The term point of view, or narrative perspective, characterizes the way in which a text presents persons, events, and settings. According to DiYanni (2002: 85), "Theme is its idea or point (formulated a generalization)". It means theme is the central idea or meaning of a story. According to Koesnosoebroto (1988), there are three kinds of conflicts. They are: psychological conflict or well-known as internal conflict, is a conflict between people and themselves. Physical conflict is a conflict which is related with the nature around the characters. It usually occurs between the characters and the weather, the object, and the activities. Social conflict is a conflict happens between the characters. Most of social conflict happens because misunderstanding between characters and causes different perceptions. From three kinds of conflicts above, it can be categorized into two types of conflict, external and internal conflict.

The Solution of Conflicts

The ability to successfully manage and resolve conflict depends on skills to resolve it. According to Segal (2009) there are four skills to resolve conflict. They are:

a. **Quickly relieve stress**

The capacity to remain relaxed and focused in tense situation is a vital aspect of conflict resolution. If people did not know how to stay centered and in control, people may become emotionally overwhelmed in challenging situations.

b. **Recognizing and managing emotion**

Emotional awareness is the key to understanding himself or herself and others. If people did not know how he or she feels or why he or she feels that way, he or she would not be able to communicate effectively or smooth over disagreements.

c. **Improving nonverbal communication skills**

The most important information exchanged during conflicts and

arguments is often communicated nonverbally. "Simply nonverbal signals such as a calm tone of voice, a reassuring touch, or a concerned facial expression can go a long way toward defusing a heated exchange (Segal, 2009)."

d. **Using Humor and playing to deal with challenges**

"Humor can help people say things that might otherwise be difficult to express without creating a flap (Segal, 2009)." However, it's important that people laugh *with* the other person, not *at* them.

Japanese Culture

According to Rice (2004: 19), "Japanese culture is well-known with its unique features, which to a certain degree is influenced by its geographical conditions. As an archipelago country separated from the Asian continent, their geographical isolation create their culture has unique characteristics". One of the characteristics disscussed in this study is the Geisha. According to Johnston (2005: 38) geisha was raised from the earliest kabuki performers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As one of traditional emblems of Japanese culture, they must be able to master some traditional Japanese arts such as classical dance, traditional song and musical instruments and tea ceremony. By defining ritual as a part of culture, Sims and Stephens (2005: 95) state that ritual is a mark to initiate someone to become a

member of certain group. They state the following:

> Rituals are repeated, habitual actions, but are more purposeful than custom; rituals are frequently highly organized and controlled, often mean to indicate or announce membership in a group. Most rituals bring together many types of folklore: verbal, such as chants, recitations, poems or songs; customary, such as gestures, dances or movements; and material, such as food, book, awards, clothing and costumes.

Bell (2009: 94) mentions that there are six categories of ritual. They are:*rites of passage, calendrical rites, rites of exchange, rites of affliction, rites of feasting, fasting, and festival, and political rituals.*According to Bell (2009: 94), "Rites of passage are ceremonies that accompany and dramatize such major events as birth, coming-of-age initiations for boys and girls, marriage, and death. Sometimes called "life-crisis" or "life-cycle" rites, they culturally mark a person's transition from one stage of social life to another.

Research Methodology

The research design of this study is qualitative research design because this study does not present the data in numeric analysis, but in the form of words. The technique that used to collect the data in this research was library research. The finding of

this study was described in narrative form as the writer used the objective approach because it describes the literary works itself. It is not necessary for the writer to study the author's life. The object of this study is "*Memoirs of a Geisha*" written by the novelist Arthur Golden and focused on the Japanese rituals that Sayuri undergoed as a new Geisha.

Findings

The writer found three Japanese rituals of a new Geisha in Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The rituals are described into rites of passage as follows:

➢ *Sansankudo*

Sansankudo is a ritual drinking three cups of *sake*. It is a formal and ritualized drinking of a small amount of *sake* for ceremony of binding.

➢ *Mizuage* is a Japanese term for disengaging virginity of an apprentice geisha. When Sayuri did her *mizuage* in the first time, she did it with Dr. Crab. It was because Dr. Crab is a person who wants to pay more expensive of Sayuri's *mizuage*. Sayuri did her *mizuage* for the first time with Mr. Crab although she did not feel comfortable with him

➢ *Erikae*

Erikae is ritual changing the collar, the closing stage of all the stages of a new geisha. This ritual is important to do for new geisha because red collar marks for training geisha and white collar marks that she is a geisha.

Based on the analysis, it was found that there were some conflicts and solution faced by Sayuri during the rituals of a new Geisha in Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The conflicts can be described as follows:

a. External Conflict

➢ Chiyois separated with Satsu

However, Chiyo, being so young, only wants to go back home and be reunited with her sister, Satsu, who was also taken from home. When Mr. Bekku brought Chiyo and Satsu to the *okiya,* it was the first time for Chiyo separated with her sister Satsu.

➢ Hatsumomo feels jealous with Sayuri Hatsumomo knew that Sayuri would be her competitor when Sayuri arrived at *okiya*. She also called Sayuri as "Little Miss Stupid". When Hatsumomo came back from her job as a geisha with her friends, Hatsumomo showed and introduced Sayuri as a Little Miss Stupid to her friend.

➢ Pumpkin betrays Sayuri

Sayuri has a friend called Pumpkin at the *okiya*. They become close friends, but Hatsumomo keeps them apart and leads Sayuri's life miserable at the *okiya*. Pumpkin tried to revenge to Sayuri because Sayuri was adopted by Mrs. Nitta to be her daughter more than Pumpkin.

b. Internal Conflict

> ➢ Sayuri feels sad because Hatsumomo hates her.
>
> At the *okiya* in Gion, Chiyo met and was immediately hated by Hatsumomo. Hatsumomo-san tried to tell Sayuri if she could not to be a geisha as like Hatsumomo.
>
> ➢ Chiyo feels sad because she can not meet with Chairman again.
>
> Chiyo met the Chairman when he helped her when she was upset and in need.Sayuriremembered with her first love.
>
> ➢ Sayuri allowing whatever Hatsumomo' done.
>
> After Chiyo became an apprentice geisha and took on the new name of Sayuri, her older sister Mameha, brought her to several parties around Gion so that she could meet people and increase her popularity. Hatsumomo tried to block Sayuri to be a geisha and also blocked to be Mrs. Nitta's daughter.
>
> ➢ Sayuri meets again with Chairman
>
> In her early years, she met a man who refers to as the Chairman. After meeting him again, she wanted to be with him. Sayuri talked with Chairman, she could not forget Chairman in her life because he made Sayuri to be someone with purpose.

SOLUTION

Solution for External Conflict

1. **Improving nonverbal communication skills**

   In this novel shows that Sayuri tried to handle her emotion and was reasonable to face Hatsumomo attitude in the first her debut. Sayuri tried to balance Hatsumomo said to drop her in front of the people in the Teahouse.

2. **Using humor and playing to deal with challenges**

   When humor and play are used to reduce tension and anger, reframe problems, and put the situation into perspective, the conflict can actually become an opportunity for greater connection and intimacy. When the first Sayuri debut Hatsumomo tried to fall down her. Sayuri faced the Hatsumomo attitude with smiling and respond of Hatsumomo said on her.

3. **Sayuri tried to find out her sister Satsu**

   Sayuri tried to find out her sister Satsu and tried to go together with her from *okiya* so far away. When Sayuri found Satsu place, Satsu mother did not want Sayuri to meet her sister because Satsu had a job that why Satsu Mother did not want Sayuri to be a trouble maker of her.

Solution for Internal Conflict

1. **Sayuri tried to be honest with Chairman about her true feeling**

Sayuri tried to be honest with Chairman about her true feeling to him. Sayuri said the truth about her feeling to Chairman.

Conclusion

The researcher's finding showed that there were three Japanese rituals of a new geisha in Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*. They are: *sansankudo, mizuage,* and *erikae*. It was also found that the conflicts faced by Sayuri during the rituals of a new geisha in Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* are external and internal conflict.

There are also found the solution of conflicts in Japanese rituals of a new geisha in Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The solutions of conflicts were improving nonverbal communication skills, using humor and playing to deal with challenges, and some other solutions such as Sayuri tried to find out her sister SatsuandSayuri tried to be honest with Chairman about her true feeling.

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