

Cultural Belief of Arranged Marriage as Patriarchy System Towards Freedom of Choice in *I am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced* by Minoui Delphine

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Abstract:

This research is focused on cultural belief of arranged marriage as patriarchy system toward freedom of choice in I am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced by Delphine Minoui. This research aims to Identify the obstacles of cultural belief in arranged marriage the novel and to reveal the effect of obstacles of arranged marriage towards woman's freedom. The purpose of this research is to reveal the cultural belief within arranged marriage in Yemen society and to determine the effect arranged marriage. The methodology employed is descriptive qualitative. As for the data, the primary data is from the novel. Secondary data in this study contains the text that supports the theories such as: cultural studies, supporting theory radical feminism and feminism existentialism from books, e-book, thesis and journal. The result from this research is the main character's reveal the cultural belief of arranged marriage happened in Yemen is the obstacle that make the main character decide to get her freedom of choice.

Keywords: *cultural belief, arranged marriage, patriarchy, freedom of choice*

INTRODUCTION

Literary work is the real world created by the author. Imagination comes from oneself and the environment around the author. The imagination that is created from oneself is related to psychological conditions which are made by the author. Wardhani said Literary work is unique because everything that the writer wrote on the paper is related to society, literary work is the only way to make the reader understand there are so many values could readers get as moral value (Wardhani, 2016). This is very influential for the story to be written. The imagination created from the environment around the author can be interpreted that environmental conditions, places, author's situation and also based on the author's experiences. Literary works are inseparable from the measurements of new writers, literary works from time to time never disappear since the era of literary works is divided into several types, namely drama, poetry, prose, short story, and novel (Dewi, 2017).

The researcher uses the novel as the object of this researcher, the novel is of literary work which is very famous, popular, and interesting to discuss, the novel is born and develop by itself (Prah, 2019). As a genre, literary stories tell social phenomena. The social phenomena are related to what happened in the novel entitled *I am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced*. It is based on a true story about a 10-year-old main character from a Yemeni city trying to get out of her nightmare, in which women live in a patriarchal system that does not allow them to make their own decisions. It is always men who decide. In Yemen, women who are 10-15 years old are required to be married to maintain their honor, and they are not required to go to school. Women in this novel have to deal with the patriarchy system and cultural belief that have long lived and developed in there.

The main character is called Nujood, a little girl who always obeys her father and brothers. She is not given the right to get an education and the right to choose her life. In the novel, women are lacking in education, women are taught to work in the kitchen like their mothers. That is the reason women in Yemen are illiterate. This is a cultural belief happens in the country as what people believe and it becomes their guidelines in the neighborhood where she lived.

About cultural belief, Greif mentions:

“Cultural belief are the ideas and thoughts common to several and individuals that govern interactions, these people, and between them, their Gods and other group. And differ from knowledge in that they are not empirically discovered or analytically proved” (Greif, 1994, p. 915)

In line with Greif's statement, cultural belief becomes a doctrine that changes the paradigm for some people which has an impact on the daily life of the society. On the other hand, that doctrine that has become a habit of social life cannot be proven theoretically and in scientific research. thus, encouraging the society to think that things that have been determined based on conscience and judgment are true. Therefore, denying the doctrine will break the traditions and habits that have been made before. One example of cultural belief is arranged marriage.

In this era, we know that arranged marriage for some places is no longer common, but arranged marriage still happens in some places. Some believe that marriage is nature, and if women resist the marriage, it is the same thing as women resist the nature of woman as a complete human being. There is also a cultural belief in which women are not allowed to get an education. Not only that, but the law in Yemen also supported marriage underage this is related to the main's character because she forced into marriage, it is related to what Beauvoir as cited by Heraty (2018, p.94) “a daughter will be freed by their parents by being entrusted to a man their parents dream of, a daughter is required to take care of themselves to look attractive in men’s eyes and maintain their behavior”. In other words, marriage for women is the key to women's freedom. Marriage is considered a way for women to actualize themselves by obeying their husbands as a form of gratitude.

Following what stated above, forced marriage or what people known as arranged marriage unfortunately has become the reason of domestic violence. This is still happening in some places, such as in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and in some other Middle Eastern countries. Those places still turn a blind eye and consider this a normal thing. In line with that explanation, the appearance of arranged marriage which become a belief for some people in some places increasing the level of domestic violence and rape.

Patriarchy is the prime obstacle to women’s advancement and development, and men are in control of this system. According to Greif,

“Patriarchy means rule by the male head of a social unit (a family or tribe, for example). The patriarch, typically a societal elder, has legitimate power over others in the social unit, including other (especially, younger) men, all women, and children” (Greif, 1994, p.93).

Patriarchy is a system that places men as the holders of power and the roots of violence are firstly addressed by men against women, the patriarchy system is obviously detrimental to women in every way. The existence of a patriarchal system makes it difficult for women to take parts in society.

The researcher uses the concept of violence by Raymond Williams to discuss about the sexual violence, inequality of education, and women as investment. Raymond William’s concept of violence is a term of movements and ideologies which exist to get equal in various fields such as economic, political. This includes seeking to establish equal opportunities for women in education and society. In his previous chapter’s book Raymond Williams explains that the field of education which is very influential in the cultural aspect. It explains what Williams stated in his book that “...business of personal liberation from the system...this liberation was not merely a matter of escaping a routine industrial job, or of getting an education, or of moving into the middle class.” (William, 1960, P. 218).

To support the research, the researcher also considers Pilcher’s opinion, specifically because of the connection of the topic to women. Pilcher mentioned that men are more superior than women because of patriarchy. This is supported by Pilcher’s statement that patriarchy system is the root of the problem among women all over the world and violence

of patriarchy system especially in a domestic household (2004, p. 31). To escape from the torment, women should the patriarchy system within the society to achieve their freedom.

Women always have limitations to freedom, as cited by Tong, Beauvoir explains that women's freedom can be seen on how women can actualize themselves as desired (Tong, 2004, p. 282). Women's freedom will be absolutely real when women dare to actualize themselves, women must pass through immanence as a barrier for them to reach transcendence, or what people known as freedom.

The reason researcher uses the aforementioned novel as the object of this research this novel is very interesting to analyze because this novel was about a true story about what is happened in Yemen. The main character, Nujood courageously fight against the law and the cultural belief in her family and society to get her freedom as a woman. The researcher here will only analyze cultural beliefs of arranged marriage which affects women's freedom of choice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CULTURAL BELIEF OF ARRANGED MARRIAGE

Culture is an umbrella for human life, culture is something that humans are always live with. Mostly, human traditions and culture are based on the country where they live. Followed what Raymond William stated that "The idea of culture is that the art of a period is closely and necessarily related to the generally prevalent 'way of life, and further that, in consequence, aesthetic, moral and social judgments are closely interrelated" (Williams, 1960 p. 140). Culture and belief are explained separately by William. One example of cultural belief that happened in Yemen is arranged marriage. Arranged marriage is one of the real practices of a patriarchal culture that has developed in society to date, marriage is trusted to be a solution to protect women from a stranger. Beauvoir explains, "the institution of marriage destroys the relationship of a couple" (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 269). Women are the most disadvantaged victims in this case. Because of arranged marriage women may act as slaves to men because women have to follow men. Arranged marriage also occurs because women are considered not to have the same power as men and are not given the freedom to decide their choices and way of life. Arranged marriage still happens in society. Especially for some women, arranged marriage can be very detrimental. Some people consider that arranged marriage is a way out to help daughters be safe from rumors and strangers to prevent from rape or anything that can harass women.

Women as Investment

Some ancient parents still considered having daughters as an asset or investment in their future as a form of return. Women are offered to other parents to be married off and the father of the woman was given some money in exchange. In a household, daughters usually do not get higher education compared to sons. This is in line with Williams' explanation of the concept of economics in relationships. Williams states that "the emphasis on love and relationship was necessary not only within the immediate suffering but against the

aggressive individualism and the primarily economic relationships which the new society embodied” (1960, P. 46). This explanation is also closely related to the context of women as material objects for their parents. Marrying off daughters is considered to have helped the household’s economy. Women are required to always obey and accept their “destiny”.

Inequality in Education

William also mentions education as one of the very influential aspects in culture. Williams states that, “all had their own education, their own culture; a culture which, whatever might be its tendency upon the whole, had been successful in some respect or other. Every form of polity, every condition of society, whatever else it had done, had formed its type of national character” (1960, p. 65). William mostly talks about men; men should get property rights, organizations of the industry, public health and education (1960, p. 237). This further strengthened in the novel which shows how about women are not allowed to get an education.

Sexual Violence

The focus of radical feminist is on the problem of rape and violence against women that often occurs in households. The difference between superior and inferior classes made by society makes men free to commit violence against women. Men think they are stronger, tougher and have privileges in society so that men consider themselves to be more than women. With this label, women are even more afraid and it is hard to fight against the people around them. Violence is defined to be narrow; violence is defined as behavior that harms other parties. Women has become the victims for not only physical abuse but also emotional abuse.

BEAUVOIR’S EXISTENTIALIST FEMINISM

Beauvoir's concept of freedom is woman’s effort to go out from an 'institution' that makes women free. This freedom becomes the top of women's achievement against a patriarchal culture dominated by men. Every woman who wants to be free need to find their existence as the embodiment of their freedom. In other words, the existence of the woman is one form of the way women show their freedom.

Furthermore, women’s freedom is the beginning of success for her to get out from the patriarchy system. The fate of women is determined by how they can fight the patriarchal system. Every woman has the right to their freedom, a woman has a limited right of freedom they cannot express because of their fathers or husbands as controllers. When making decisions about their freedom, women must be responsible and dare to release themselves from various things that become obstacles to progress. Women must have the courage to negate their choices and realize that there is always room to make choices from actions no matter how limited the situation or obstacles they face to be able to get the freedom. Freedom can be said to be free when the human or individual person can save themselves from a binding problem or threat. Women can exist and be free on their own feet to prove their ability to be equal to men.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of research is a qualitative method in a descriptive way as the researcher method to identify and observe the problem that is the same as it was previously mentioned in the introduction section. The main character of this method is based on the researcher's vision is about the method that descriptively provides deep comprehension due to the process of finding the goals and related to the way to discuss the interpretation. This is proven by Oliver's Yard statement, "methods of interpretation start from these texts...the qualitative research process can be represented as a path from theory to text and as another path from text back to the theory." (Yard, 2010).

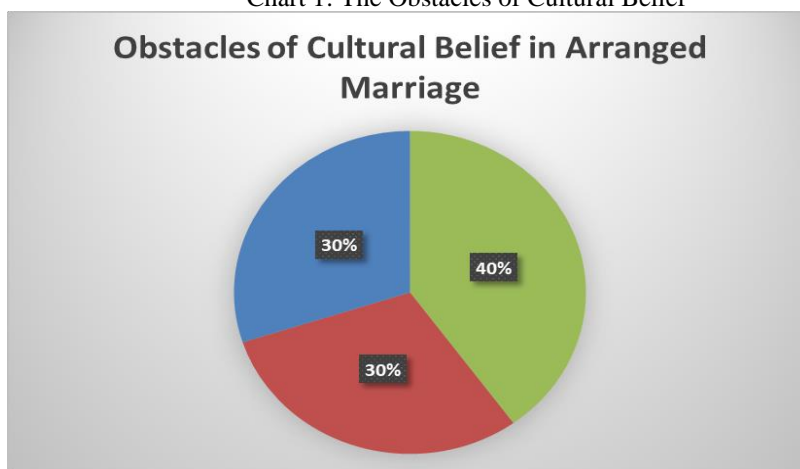
The data of this research is analyzed through three procedures. First, the researcher identifies the obstacles of cultural belief of arranged marriage there are inequality in education, women as investment, sexual violence. Second, the researcher reveals the obstacles of cultural beliefs of arranged marriage affect woman's freedom. Third, the researcher compiles the excerpts from the novel that reflected and relevant to the topic research. The analysis and interpretation of the data are done by basing it of the theoretical review. To provide the trustworthiness of qualitative data, this study applied the theoretical triangulation by Deborah (2010, p.21-24).

FINDINGS

THE OBSTACLES OF CULTURAL BELIEF

The findings presented in this section are based on the data collected about the obstacles of cultural belief in arranged marriage which include Sexual violence, inequality in education, women as investment. The data in this section are collected to provide answer to the first research question.

Chart 1: The Obstacles of Cultural Belief



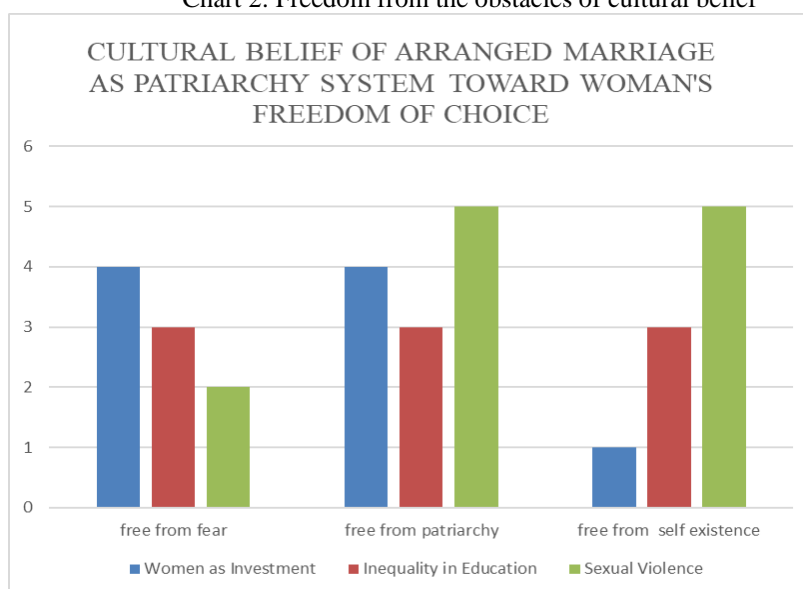
As can be seen from the pie chart above, the obstacles of cultural belief in arranged marriage through the color presentation, blue shows women as investment 30% with the data found by the researcher as many as 9 excerpts, the red indicates inequality in education

by 30% with the data found by the researcher as many as 9 excerpts, and the green shows sexual violence 40% with the data found as many as 12 excerpts, and the total data 30 excerpts.

FREEDOM FROM OBSTACLES OF CULTURAL BELIEF

From the diagram above, the total number of excerpts that the researcher found 30 excerpts for this section. The blue pieces show women as investment, free from fear with the data found 4 excerpts, free from patriarchy with the data found 5 excerpts, and free from self-existence with the data found 5 excerpts. The red pieces show inequality in education with the data that found free from fear 3 excerpts, free from patriarchy 3 excerpts, and free from self-existence 3 excerpts. The last is the green one show sexual violence with the data found free from fear 2 excerpts, free from patriarchy 5 excerpts, and free from self-existence 5 excerpts.

Chart 2: Freedom from the obstacles of cultural belief



Based on these data above, we can see that obstacles of cultural belief is still rooted in Yemen society depicted in the novel *I am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced*. All of the obstacles are really impactful to the main character in achieving her freedom from the cultural belief.

DISCUSSION

THE OBSTACLES OF CULTURAL BELIEF IN ARRANGED MARRIAGE

In this part, the researcher would like to reveal details about the obstacles of cultural beliefs related to the data. This cultural belief makes women in Yemen difficult to get their rights as a human. The cultural belief of arranged marriage occurs because of the belief that is

born in Yemen people and the beliefs people hold such as inequality in education, women as investment and sexual violence.

Inequality in Education

“School was reserved for them, since my father, a very protective man, considered girls too fragile and vulnerable to venture out alone on those almost deserted paths where danger lurked behind every cactus. Besides, neither her nor my mother knew how to read or write, learn, either. Out in the countryside, most of women are illiterate. So I grew up in the school of great outdoors” (Minoui, 2010, p. 28).

Women in Yemen are unable to get an education like their brothers. Fathers in Yemen do not allow women to go to schools. They believe that school is only needed by men, and women do not need an education. Women belongs to the kitchen. This is the reason why many girls and women in Yemen are illiterate since they were a kid. The excerpt shows how Nujood’s experience of difficulty in getting.

Women as Investment

“When the marriage contract had been signed, the event had also been men only, and occurred behind closed doors. Everything happened without me. Neither my mother, my sisters, nor I had any right to know things had gone” (Minoui, 2010, p. 60).

The excerpt above shows that Nujood must follow the wishes of her parents. In order to get money Nujood's father is willing to 'sell' Nujood to support his family's needs. Nujood is forced to marry a man whose age is 3 times older than her. When Nujood signed the contract, Nujood's mother and sister are not allowed to participate in the meeting, only men can participate in the family meeting. Nujood is used for trade by her own father.

Sexual Violence

“When he took off his white tunic, I rolled into a ball to protect myself, but he began pulling at my nightshirt, wanting me to undress. Then he ran his rough hands over my body and pressed his lips against mine” (Minoui, 2010, p. 77).

The excerpt shows the situation happens to Nujood. She faces the relentless cruelty committed by her husband, namely sexual violence. Nujood fights back and prevents physical contact by rolling over on her back to distance herself from her husband, but her thirsty husband wins. With her small body, Nujood is unable to physically fight against her husband.

FREEDOM FROM OBSTACLES OF CULTURAL BELIEF

Free from Fear

“I will be divorced! Free again. Without a husband, without that dread of finding myself alone at night, fall, in the same bedroom with him. Without that fear of suffering, over and over, the same torment” (Minoui, 2010, p. 43).

Based on the excerpt above, enthusiasm is shown when Nujood's freedom is earned. It is a life without a husband who torments her, without the fear of sleeping at night. It is the freedom and the result of her courage to dare to fight and come forward on her behalf.

Free from Patriarchy

“Then he managed to sneak into the prison to take pictures of Aba to monster with his cell phone” (Minoui, 2010, p. 111).

One of the real proofs of Nujood's freedom is, when her father and ex-husband are imprisoned for what they have done to Nujood. No one will torture her anymore, and no coercion will happen again. Nujood's freedom is the culmination of this novel, in which she dares to rebel and fights against her fate. This excerpt explains that she can free herself from the patriarchy system as she looks at her ex-husband and her father being captured and thrown into the prison.

Free from Self-existence

“The royalties from Nujood's book, which is being translated into sixteen languages, have already begun helping finance the girls' schooling and contributing to the support of the family, paying for food, rent, school supplies, and clothing for the children. Later, the money will help Nujood pursue her desire to become a lawyer and establish a foundation to assist young girls in difficulties” (Minoui, 2010, p. 175).

Nujood's struggle pays off for her and her family. Her life story makes many people interested in reading a novel based on Nujood's story. Nujood's desire to get her freedom and made her to not forget about her family, she can support her family financially and go back to school. School is something she wants the most. Being able to study and meeting her classmates show Nujood's absolute freedom. Her courage has caused the Yemeni government to ban minors from marrying people in the age of consent.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research is based on the findings and discussions. Firstly, the researcher has found that there are obstacles of cultural belief. They are: inequality in education, women as investment and the last is sexual violence. Secondly, Nujood's freedom as the outcome of the obstacles are portrayed as free from fear, free from patriarchy and the last is free from self-existence. Based on the data, the obstacles that happened in Nujood has affected her freedom greatly. All the obstacles impact her to gain her freedom.

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