

TASHA'S AGAINST PATRIARCHY
IN JANE GREEN'S "*STRAIGHT TALKING*"

by Bonang Subagiyo

TASHA'S AGAINST PATRIARCHY IN JANE GREEN'S

“*STRAIGHT TALKING*”

Bonang Subagiyo

Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya

bonangsubagiyo@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Patriarchal culture has been rooting in the society, for decades woman's lives have been put under man's control. Patriarchy gives man privilege to grow with ultimate and authority. On the other hand, woman are forced to accept the gender division as the second class who live under inequality and oppression. Thus, as the victim of the patriarchal culture, woman get affected both physically and mentally. Due to those reasons, conducting this study is important because it gives an awareness of patriarchy system that are practiced in society. The study aim describing; (1) The reflection of patriarchy is in Tasha's life (2) Tasha's struggle against patriarchy and (3) The effect of Tasha's struggle against patriarchy. This study is descriptive qualitative research. The subject of the study is a novel *Straight Talking* by Jane Green. The data source about the study is novel. The data are the quotations from the novel which are related to the topic of the study. This study discusses about the patriarchy of the novel. The novel contains a life journey story of the main character named Anastasia, or called Tasha, who struggle against patriarchy of her life. The technique of collecting data is reading, understanding, and classifying the novel. The result of the study shows that the novel *straight talking* by Jane Green describes all the structures. There are patriarchal relations in household, patriarchal relations in work office and patriarchal relations in loves. The novel emphasizes on value of patriarchy. To conclude the study of patriarchy, this study attempts to identify both the reason and the process of her struggle in terms of character using patriarchy as the main concept.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Infidelity, Oppression, Struggle, Society

INTRODUCTION

Patriarchy is described as a general structure in which man have power over woman. Moreover, the patriarchal system that dominates culture encourages the formation of gender injustice, which influences various fields and aspects of human activity, so that the position and role of man are bigger and more dominant than the position of woman. In *The Second Sex* (De Beauvoir, 1989: 16) criticizes the cultural identification of woman as simply the negative object, or “Other”, to man who is regarded as the dominating Subject and is presumed to represent humanity in general.

Patriarchal culture is well preserved in both traditional and modern societies as the smallest unit of patriarchy, the family contributes greatly in strengthening this ideology. Opportunities for woman to play a role in the economy are also needed. The story of patriarchy system can be found in many literary works. These stories are usually taken from true stories that occur in society. Many authors use patriarchal power as the topic of their literary work, especially woman authors. They also created a new fictional story with this topic. In order to unravel ourselves from the patriarchal society, we need to be aware of the patriarchy system and unravel ourselves from it.

The main character in the novel has to face with affair and patriarchy. Since the feminist movement was initiated, many activists have gathered to oppose patriarchy. To reveal the patriarchy system of the main character in the *Straight Talking*, the author refers to the theories of M. H. Abrams on *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Describes characters as person presented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral and emotional qualities that are expressed in what they say and what they do (Abrams, 1985: 23).

In *Straight talking* novel these ideals are intersected with other images of promised satisfaction that is represented by main character. The female characters are proven to contribute in generating and maintaining the patriarchy system in their society. By proving the participation of the oppressed female characters in generating the patriarchy system does not necessarily intend to show them as unworthy victim or worth to be blamed. The intention of showing the female participation is to prove that by unraveling the condition, we can show that each contribution and participation from the victim might bring change to their life. We can find the struggle of modern woman against patriarchy.

The story about main character named Anastasia, or called Tasha is a thirty year old English woman working as a television producer in London. She is perpetually single and has had few long-term relationships. Tasha's insecurities in regards to man and dating stem from her longest relationship, with a man named Simon, that ended abruptly when Simon revealed that he had been unfaithful. In addition, it is revealed that Tasha's father had multiple affairs during

RESEARCH METHOD

The qualitative method is suitable for this study because the data in this study requires verification, description and understanding to analyze the power of patriarchy system in the novel. In this study is a woman struggle for discovering her existence that is sometimes regarded as a form of resistance by some people who are still covered by patriarchal thinking. Whereas woman just want to find their own identity, establish and develop the awareness that there is a non-physical potential to be developed in their existence as human beings. Therefore, feminist literary criticism is a suitable approach for this study.

The source of the data in this study is the novel entitled *Straight Talking* by Jane Green. The novel contain 310 pages,

Tasha's youth, one of which she discovered herself. Learn from her experience, finally she build strength financially against power patriarchy with her ability to be independent woman. *Straight Talking* is a romance novel by Jane Green. The author choose this novel because of the patriarchy system that appears in the novel *Straight Talking*. Another reason, this novel is about a woman who struggles to live with the power of woman.

published by Broadway in United States of America in 2003. The data of this study are dialogs and sentences in the novel that support the analysis. Based on the background above, this study has three problems to answer:

1. How is reflection of patriarchy is in Tasha's life?
2. How does Tasha's struggle against patriarchy?
3. What is the effect of Tasha's struggle against patriarchy?

The author also focuses to find out how patriarchal power affect the main character's decision making related to relationship and how the main character has to deal with patriarchal power.

DATA ANALYSIS

1. How is reflection of patriarchy is in Tasha's life

The infidelity in a relationship in *Straight Talking* was committed by Tasha's father named Robert. Robert work as lawyer and he really loving Tasha more as his daughter. Tasha's childhood is normal and happy. She has both parents and they seem to be happy together. But everything ends instantly when Tasha finds out that her father affair with another woman.

We were having what we thought was a deep and meaningful conversation, when I happened to glance up and out the window. There, walking along the pavement opposite me was my father. My face lit up as I got ready to run out of the restaurant and greet him, what a lovely surprise. But then I noticed that the woman at his side was holding his hand, and of course she wasn't my mother, she was a friend of my parents, a woman who had never been married, a woman who, I suppose, used to have affairs with married men (*Green, 2003: 99*).

Affair in relationship is also experienced by Tasha herself. Tasha has boyfriend named Simon and they live together in Simon's apartment. One day when Tasha want to laundry Simon's jacket, she found a photo of the woman in one of pocket. She can't

believe the fact that Simon has another love and having an affair. Tasha thinks to accept Simon as her boyfriend is good decision. They live together for quite a long time and spend a lot of time together.

I thought Simon loved me, and I thought, oh how stupid I was, I thought love was enough. But do you know the worst thing about looking at the photographs and feeling these feelings? The worst thing was that if I was a bloke I'd feel the same way. If I was a bloke and had to choose between me and her, I'd choose her. No contest (*Green, 2003:49*)

The pain that Tasha got from her father's affair and endured not to divorce from her mother but have a relationship with another woman, traumatized and deeply disappointed. This makes her always have great doubts about the opposite sex and it also determines her attitude when she finds out her boyfriend's having an affair with another woman. It was her father's affair that became one of the causes of Tasha against patriarchy. She finally realized that she was wrong if she only blamed one side in the case of her father's affair, then she finally tried to fight the patriarchy through her attitude when she found out that her boyfriend had an affair.

2. Tasha's Struggle Against Patriarchy

In patriarchy, women are always forced to be stupid, wrong, defeated and inferior. In the *Straight Talking*, Tasha grew up to become a smart, active and responsive woman like an ordinary woman at that time. On the other side, she also grows into an independent woman that redirects her energies into her careers. All of this is done by Tasha so that men don't look down on the woman. The woman can also work well and get what she wants. Some of the narrative that explains the experience behind the feminist mindset of Tasha.

I'm successful, in a fashion. I earn enough money to go on shopping binges at Joseph every three months or so, and I own my own flat. OK, it's not in the smartest part of London, but if you closed your eyes between the car and the front door, you might-only might, mind-just think you were in Belgravia (*Green*, 2003:3).

The quotation means that Tasha used to shopping to show her identity as a modern woman that always brings up a fashion as her glamour life style, to show her capability in financial and show her class. It's also a self-actualization for Tasha to be experienced in love and struck up an acquaintance with everyone her like. Both of those things represent a basic pleasure as a concrete tangible of a sexual revolution in woman's life, that also means those freedoms guide them to be better educated and earn money on

average, expresses the level of sexual confidence and taking control of their own self-consciousness about their bodies or of their own to be loved. Through a moment hang out day and shopping, give a deep image for the woman movement in society, it's not only about spending a lot of money, but it's more concerned with spouse control and choice for women. All those things Tasha did to divert her thoughts to make relationships anymore with all of men. It can be proven with the narrative below.

you're wondering how I earn my money, I'm a television producer. A bit of a joke, isn't it? I who leads such an exciting glamorous life, producing a daytime television show, I who rubs shoulders with the stars every day of her life, I who can't find a bloody man (*Green*, 2003:5).

The narrative clearly tells about the current condition of Tasha's life. With all the success, both in career and work, or appearance and fashion. Some of the perfection that only existed in the fairyland that Tasha already had. There is not much difference between Tasha's life and other women in general. In fact, Tasha has a job that many people probably want. Often meeting and talking with famous artists is his daily job. Trying to look great and charming is another effort made by Tasha in order to struggle against patriarchy. At the workplace, Tasha has a good achievement in careers.

3. The effect of Tasha's struggle against patriarchy?

Similarly to the situation in *Straight Talking* novel, all the concepts of Tasha's mindset start from a happy family under one roof. A happy family under one roof, with a loyal father who wholeheartedly loves his mother and child. A simple logic that is very difficult and complicated to be realized by most humans. Generally, the complexity comes from themselves to sometimes have an impact on psychological and mental changes. It is not an easy thing to be loyal to one person after marriage for the remaining half of our lives, but that does not mean involving other people will make life easier, because the presence of one unwanted person in a family can destroy anything we have worked hard to build before. The concept of a normal family that indirectly supports the patriarchal system sometimes undermines the confidence of an adult woman, as if women are born and educated to be a good wife and mother for their family and her life only ends there, the same as what Tasha thought at her age over more she is not young anymore.

I was never supposed to be single at thirty years old. I was supposed to be like my mother, wasn't I? Married, a couple of kids, a nice home with Colefax and Fowler wallpaper and a husband with a sports car and a mistress or two (*Green*, 2003:1).

The simple but special expectations that most women have from the impact of the concept of patriarchy on some social activities. Even though these expectations are not all in line with their ideals who only want a happy family without disturbance, in the narrative Tasha dares to confront the bad truth which has indeed been mixed in scope relations. Today's society increasingly emphasizes the concept of patriarchy that occurs in society, namely having other women besides their legal wife.

Women have rights and obligations that are almost the same as men even though here the man who holds the greatest responsibility is still the head of the family that called Patriarchy. The effect of the implementation of the dominant patriarchy in the setting of the novel also makes Tasha lose confidence in herself just because she is old and unmarried. It is proven by her narration below:

Sometimes I think it's me. I think I must be doing something wrong, giving out subliminal messages so they can smell the desperation, read the neon lights on my forehead...KEEP AWAY FROM THIS WOMAN, SHE IS LOOKING FOR COMMITMENT, but most of the time I think it's them. Bastards. All of them (*Green*, 2003:2).

From the narration above, it can be concluded that every incident that she has experienced due to the concept of patriarchy in a social

environment, makes Tasha think that all men are anti-committal to one woman. Despite having a very extraordinary mental crisis due to the impact of the application of Patriarchy that occurred in her environment, but Tasha tried to continue living, to make peace with the situation, to rise up and forgive infidelity, even though all of it was not as easy. From the narration it can be seen that Tasha has a bit of trauma to the patriarchal system in a relationship, she said **KEEP AWAY FROM THIS WOMAN, SHE IS LOOKING FOR COMMITMENT**, which indicates that demanding a status in a relationship to men is a taboo and obvious thing that most men will stay away from a woman with commitment, despite the fact that not all men are afraid or do not want clear status or commitment. As a woman, Tasha has the courage to break the patriarchy.

After going through many events in her life related to the behavior of men towards Tasha

as a woman, she turns into a tough, hard, cold and hard person to trust the opposite sex (especially about love) but deep down she is actually a soft woman. It proved with the narrative of Tasha's.

You think I'm bitter? If you'd been dumped from a great height by what feels like practically every single man in London, you'd be slightly bitter. But bear with me and you'll discover I'm not quite as bitter as I sound (*Green*, 2003:4).

When you fall in love, increased levels of dopamine in the brain can cause feelings of euphoria. That feeling can affect a person, as well as the main character in this novel, Tasha, who feels that her life has been completed and destroyed because of Simon's infidelity. However, the relationship does not run smoothly. To maintain a relationship, it takes a great struggle from both parties. When you are in love, you can feel very happy. However, the feelings that arise will certainly be different when we break up.

REFERENCES

Abrams, M. H. (1985). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. New York: CBS Publishing.

De Beauvoir, Simone (1989). *The Second Sex*, trans. H.M. Parshley. New York: Vintage Books.
(Orig. pub. 1949.)

Green, Jane. (2003). *Straight Talking*: New York: Broadway Books.