CHILD RIGHTS REFLECTED IN HELEN HOOVEN SANTMYER’S THE FIERCE DISPUTE NOVEL (1929): A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study is about Child Rights. The problem of this study is how child rights expressed in The Fierce Dispute novel. The objectives of this study are to identify the characteristic of child rights in The Fierce Dispute novel, to describe child rights in The Fierce Dispute novel, and to reveal the essential for Helen Hooven Santmyer to address child rights. The object of the study is The Fierce Dispute novel by Helen Hooven Santmyer. The study used sociological perspective. This study belongs to qualitative research. In this method, there are two types of data sources, namely primary and secondary data sources. The primary data source is the novel and the secondary data is other material related to the study. Both data are collected through library research and analyzed by descriptive analysis. The result of the study shows the following conclusions. First, based on the structural analysis, it is clear that in The Fierce Dispute novel, Helen Hooven Santmyer delivers a message that every child has the rights for social and life. Second, based on the sociological analysis, it is apparent that there is a strong relation between this novel and the social reality of American society in early twentieth century.

Keywords: Child Rights, The Fierce Dispute, Sociological Perspective.
A. Introduction

*The Fierce Dispute* describes three women who live in different eras but in one house, written by American Author Helen Hooven Santmyer. *The Fierce Dispute* novel was firstly published in 1929 by Boston Publisher, but the novel was published again in 1988 by St. Martins Press. This novel has six chapters and 292 pages.

*The Fierce Dispute* novel delivered theme of child rights. According to Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989: Article 1) a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. In Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2010), child can be defined as a young human who is not yet an adult. According to Convention on the Rights of the Child is the child’s rights (Ammitzbol and Hall, 2011: 5) there are three pillars on the rights of the child: Provision, Protection and Participation.

According to the writer, there are four reasons why the writer is interested in studying this novel. Firstly, the characters in *The Fierce Dispute* novel tell about three character women in different eras. There are three characters, namely: Margaret, Hilary and Lucy Anne. Margaret Baird is a grandmother, the stern matriarch, she have power because she have all the authority of the wealth. Everything what Margaret wants, the other must do it. Hilary is Margaret’s daughter, who really wants to leave the Baird House and have journey to Italy with Lucy Anne. The other hand, she cannot leave Baird House because her mother never let Lucy Anne go with her. Lucy Anne, a young girl, who obedient with her grandmother because she never wants to make her grandmother hurt. Although, the deep of her heart, she want her grandmother die.
Secondly, this novel tells about the story where the set of the novel in Xenia, Ohio, in the early twentieth century. The setting of place of the novel is in a real life. So, the readers of the novel can understand the real imaginary of the setting of the novel.

Thirdly, the language of The Fierce Dispute novel can be understood easily for the readers. Although The Fierce Dispute novel firstly published in 1929, the language used by Santmyer is modern English. Helen Hooven Santmyer delivered the story in The Fierce Dispute novel perfectly, because she can build the interesting feeling of the readers to read and read again.

The last reason, the novel has crucial theme to be discussed. The theme of the story in the novel is Child Rights. This theme can we get from the characteristic of Lucy Anne, a young girl who lives with her parent and grandmother in Baird Place. The Fierce Dispute novel tells about a child who wants to get freedom from her grandmother, to have friends and to be a musician like her father.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is encouraged to entitle the research as follows, “CHILD RIGHTS REFLECTED IN HELEN HOOVEN SANTMYER’S THE FIERCE DISPUTE NOVEL (1929): A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE.”

Sociology is a study which deals with the society. This study has correlation between person and society. people as a human being as a member of society where each other can create all kinds of interaction. Swingewood and Laurenson (1972: 11) state that sociology is “essentially the scientific, objective study of man in society, the study of social institutions and social processes”. According to Burns (1967:10) Sociology has own critical activity. The purpose of sociology it to achieve an understanding of social behavior
and social institutions which is different from that current among the people through whose conduct the institution exist.

B. Research Method

In this study, the writer applies qualitative research. Qualitative research is a research which the result is in the form of descriptive data that observed people or behaviors. The data sources are library and literary data. The purpose is to analyze sociological perspective. The steps to conduct the research are: (1) determining the type of the study (2) determining the object of the study (3) determining data and data sources (4) determining technique of data collection (5) determining technique of data analysis. The object of the study is *The Fierce Dispute* novel by Helen Hooven Santmyer and was published in 1988 by St. Martins Press by using a sociological perspective. In this publication article, the writer uses two data sources in analyzes this study. There are two types of data source, namely primary and secondary data as follows: Primary data is the main data source in the novel of *The Fierce Dispute* published by St. Martins Press. Secondary data is the secondary data sources which can be obtained from internet, books or any information related to the practice of child rights that support the sociological perspective. The technique which is used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis, the step of descriptive analysis are: (1) reading the novel carefully and repeatedly, (2) finding out and taking notes of important parts both primary and secondary data, (3) arranging the data into several groups based on its theoretical category, (4) selecting particular parts considered important and relevant for analysis, (5) drawing conclusion, suggestion and formulate its pedagogical implication.
C. Research Findings and Discussion

The researcher found some research findings after analyzing *The Fierce Dispute* novel. The research findings of child rights in the fierce dispute novel will be discussed below.

1. Findings

a. Notion of child rights

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989: Article 1) a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. In Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2010), child can be defined as a young human who is not yet an adult. The Convention on the rights of the child state that children’s rights are human rights. They protect the child as a human being. As human rights, children’s rights are constituted by fundamental guarantees and essential human rights.

In this novel, the major character is Lucy Anne. She is a little girl under 18 years old. Lucy Anne was raised up by her grandmother and also, she lived with her mom, although she lived with her mom the rights of Lucy Anne was completely in her grandmother’s hand. Lucy Anne, a girl, who has not had the basic of child rights, this case is reflected clearly in this novel. A Child right as a right to live or human rights has not been completely fulfilled. Child rights covers three pillars on the rights of the child, they are: provision, protection and participation.
b. Three Pillars on the Rights of the Child

Three Pillars on the Rights of the Child

There are common abbreviations on the child rights; according to Convention on the Rights of the Child, there are three pillars on the rights of the child. (Ammitzbol and Hall, 2011: 5)

1) Provision

Hornby (2010: 1170) stated that provision is “the act of supplying somebody with something that they need or want; something that is supplied.” Wickenberg states that provision is “access to food, health care, education, social security.”

In The Fierce Dispute novel, the provision is not completely. Lucy Anne, as a major character in The Fierce Dispute novel has not education and social environment. Her grandmother just taught her in Baird House. She never let Lucy Anne to go to school. Lucy Anne also never has a social environment because the wide of Baird house and the wealth of Baird family bring her into seclusion. So, in the novel of The Fierce Dispute, the violation of the child right in provision covers: The violation of right to education. This case is depicted by the character of Lucy Anne who only got the lessons from her grandmother. She is never been to school to get a good education while her friends got good education from school or formal institution. Lucy Anne’s granny did not give permission for Lucy Anne to get a good education from school. The next child right’s violation is the violation of right to social interaction. Lucy Anne and her mom only underwent their daily lives in Baird house. Her granny regarded thought that the family wealth was completely enough to fulfill their daily lives. Therefore they did not have a social environment with others because their large lands and Baird family’s wealth always surrounded them. This case caused the
different distant of residence from the Baird’s family and the locals. So, there is no social interaction has not been fulfilled as a child. The principal or the nature of child is, she or he can play around with her or his peers or friends, but Lucy Anne does not have any friends.

2) Protection

According to Corsaro (in Ammitzbol and Hall, 2011: 5) a traditionally, children have been regarded as objects in need of as well as deserving protection not as individuals with rights equal to the rights of adults. Still, adults are commonly perceiving children in a forward-looking way, in what the child will become, without given childhood a value in itself.

Goran Hyden state that the right to protection is “freedom from all forms of exploitation, abuse, inhuman or degrading treatment and neglect, including the right to special protection in situations of emergency and armed conflict.”

In The Fierce Dispute novel, the fulfillment of protection is exist. Margaret, as grandmother of Lucy Anne, gives protection for Lucy Anne. She never let Lucy Anne alone. But protection of child right in this novel has not been perfect. It can be described by whom this right is taken. This right is on Lucy Anne’s granny not Lucy Anne’s mom. The violation of child right in this novel is about the violation of right to Nurture. Nurture right of Lucy Anne must be on her mom, but the fact, it is on her granny. It was caused by the guilt of marriage of her mom. So, the nurture right was on her granny. After her granny passed away, the nurture right of Lucy Anne was given to Tom, Lucy Anne’s uncle, therefore no protection’s fulfillment from her real mom.

3) Participation

Stern (in Ammitzboll and Hall, 2011: 5) In short terms, article 12 states that the child has the right to act and being involved in decision-making matters that concern them and emphasis children as social competent actors,
with both rights and abilities to participate. Goran Hayden state that the right to participation is “respect for the views of the child, freedom of expression, access to appropriate information and freedom of thought, conscience and religion”

Every child have their opportunity to participate, it will help them in decide something. Thelander (in Ammitzboll and Hall, 2011:6) identifies child participation:
The importance of children’s right to participate in decision-making cannot be underestimated. A general held idea concerning children’s participation, at least in international law, is that participation is beneficial both for children in their process towards becoming responsible and autonomous adults, as well as for the society as a whole. In this sentence, school as an institution plays a fundamental role in children’s rights to participate in decision-making. In fact, the school can be seen as a micro-society itself with it is own power-relations, culture, rules and relationship which enhance the importance of children’s participation. While the right to education represents a provisional right, different rights in and through education, including the students’ right to participation, concerns more fundamental democratic rights.

According to Stern (in Ammitzboll and Hall, 2011:11) state that From a societal perspective, child participation serves a way of deepening democracy for the future and contributes to the establishment of peace and security in the world. At a micro level, it can benefit the child in his or her development on the journey towards autonomy and responsibility.

In *The Fierce Dispute* novel, there is no the fulfillment of participation in child right because there are several violations according to this case as follows: first, child right to freedom of expression, it is described by Lucy Anne who was never allowed to sing. Luce Anne’s granny always prohibited Lucy Anne to sing and to play piano. In fact, Lucy’s desire is to sing and
play piano. Therefore Lucy Anne could not express her artistic skill. Secondly, there is no violation of child right’s access to appropriate information. Lucy Anne was never told who her father was as we know; information is a kind of the important means to know his father like identity. Thirdly, there is no violation child right to freedom of thought. In *The Fierce Dispute* novel, Lucy Anne felt be ignored when the choice of her granny decision. Her granny gave decision that after she passed away care right of Lucy Anne, was given to Uncle Tom. Although Lucy Anne had different opinion but she was ignored.

c. Discussion

Story is the reflection of what occurred in that time. Wellek and Warren (1962: 94) state that literature is “social institution using as its medium language, a social creation”. According to Swingewood and Laurenson (1972: 120) literature is “a work of art, which expresses the human life and the problem of society, particularly concerns with law, religion and norms, and value of society, economics and politics with qualities of the relationship among them”. The researcher criticizes some aspects in the story such as social aspect, economic aspect, political aspect, science and technology aspect, cultural aspect and religious aspect. The social aspects contain the class social in American society. Helen Hooven Santmyer shows it by some characters on *The Fierce Dispute* novel. The economic aspect in *The Fierce Dispute* shows the economic condition in American society in the early twentieth century. It is described from economic condition of the characters. Some of the characters in *The Fierce Dispute* novel belong to the rich and some of them belong to the poor. The job, property and activity also represent the economic aspect of the characters. The political aspects show by the grand-grand parents of Lucy Anne. Her grand-grand parents of Lucy Anne as a warrior. Science and technology aspect contributes to the novel. It is shown by square piano, laundry, iron, and telegram. The science and
technology contributes the life of American society in the early twentieth century. Religious aspect in this novel shows by the character of Margaret, when she was young, she went to church. Lucy Anne also got the material from Bible by Margaret. It means that religious is a part of American society on early twentieth century.

The sociological analysis above based on The Fierce Dispute novel, the researcher concludes that Helen as the writer of this novel emphasizes the social condition in America at the time. She shows the social reality in early twentieth century. There are still discrimination for child and need child rights in America. Helen Hooven Santmyer criticizes the social reality in America through the theme, story and characterization in The Fierce Dispute novel. The theme of the story is “every child has the right for social and life”. It is reflected in the major characters of the novel. Lucy Anne as the grand daughter of Margaret. She always against loneliness. Her grandmother never let her to play around, to have social environment and to school. Lucy Anne never got what she should get on her age. Helen Hooven tells to readers through this novel that she disagrees about social view in American society. Some grand-parents, parents have the authority of their child or grand-children. Santmyer thinks that everyone has their freedom to choose for the life and has the right life for it. Finally, based on all aspects that are reflected in The Fierce Dispute, there is a firm relation between this novel and the American life in early twentieth century. Helen Hooven Santmyer shows that some grand-parents or a parent has their authority for their grand-daughter and their children. Based on analysis above, it is clear to the researcher to state the social conditions which are suitable with the main idea of Helen Hooven Santmyer viewed by sociological perspective.
D. Conclusion

After analyzing *The Fierce Dispute*, the researcher draws the conclusion. Firstly, based on structure analysis it can be concluded that in this novel the author delivered a message that “every child has the right for social and life”. In the case of delivering a message, the author creates the characters that experience restriction of child rights. The author also puts the characters and settings in which she has to struggle child rights for social life. Secondly, the author also brings the plot which illustrates process struggle for child rights. The author also uses the development of social style for support characterization. Every single component among other component can form a wholly unit. Thirdly, based on sociological analysis it can be concluded that in this novel the author reflects the social reality of American society.
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