ANALYSIS OF TEENAGER’S LIFESTYLE IN LAUREN OLIVER’S NOVEL BEFORE I FALL (2010): SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Getting Bachelor Degree of Education in English Education

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Abstrak


Kata Kunci: gaya hidup remaja, pendekatan sosiologi

Abstract

This research aims to analyze the teenager’s lifestyle in Before I Fall by Lauren Oliver (2010). In analyzing Before I Fall, the researcher describes the teenager’s lifestyle and also the reason of Lauren Oliver as the author created this novel which contains teenager’s lifestyle. In this research, the researcher uses sociological approach with three approaches presented by Swingewood and Laurensen (1972) and three sociology of literature principles are presented by Wellek and Warren (1948). Teenager’s lifestyle which is in the novel is Friendship, romantic relationship, and bullying. By investigating the author’s sociology including her background of creating this novel. The result indicates that Before I Fall gives clear description of teenager’s lifestyle especially for senior high school. Thus, the result also indicates that Before I Fall written by the author’s experience and also the real social situation.

Keyword: teenager’s lifestyle, sociological approach

1. INTRODUCTION

Lifestyle is the common thing in people perspective. Lifestyle is an attitude or habit of people. Everyone has their own lifestyle and it can change as time goes by. Lifestyle is also an identity of someone in order to be known in society. By
having their own lifestyle people will know and find who has same lifestyle for each other. Furthermore, lifestyle can affect to others because lifestyle describes about someone behavior and they will live and have interaction to other people. Someone’s lifestyle can change based on the changing times because of lifestyle always change every time and has the characteristic which can someone follows and apply it to be their new lifestyle. All of people have their own lifestyle especially for teenager.

Teenager also has their own lifestyle to describe about themselves to others. Teenager do not have exact thing or they just want to follow what they think it is interesting to them. Besides, teenager is seeking of prestige for their life so that it is easier to them to be affected of the changing of lifestyle as time goes by. Teenager’s behavior is unpredictable, so it is the difficult thing to know themselves by their lifestyle. However, they can show their real behavior by what they do in daily life.

Lauren Oliver tells about teenager lifestyle especially at school. In the novel tells there are four teenagers (Sam Kingston, Lindsay Edgecombe, Ally, and Elody) who are best friends and they are popular in their school. Lindsay Edgecombe is the leader of their group. Sam also dates with Rob Cokran who is the most handsome guy at school. It shows that be popular girls can get anything likely date with the most handsome guy at school. As popular girls at school they will be spotlight among other students. Popular girls will get many roses on Cupid day as Sam and her best friends get. Because of they are popular they use their power to take control of other students, for example they use their friends to help them in the test. In addition, they also can do bad thing to others and other students will follow what they do because they are popular and have power to get attention from other students. Sam and her best friends bully one of their friends at school name is Juliet Sykes. Juliet Sykes is always being their victim of bullying, and people follow to bully Juliet because of there is a rumor about her. Sam also has childhood friend who is in the same
school and class with her. In the end, Sam is getting changed after all the things happened to her.

*Before I Fall* is the first novel of Lauren Oliver. She interested to write about young adult novel based on her experience. Before becoming an author she worked at Penguin books in young adult division, so she inspired from that and start to make up the story of her novel that is *Before I Fall*. In writing her first novel, she writes about her experience when she was young as a teenager that she likes to go to parties and stay out too late night, have many friends and so on. She also described about teenager lifestyle in school such as friendship, popularity, romance, and also the bad thing which frequently happens at school that is bullying. So that is why the writer chose this novel to be the object of the research. The writer conducts the research about the teenager’s lifestyle which is in this novel and using sociological approach to analyze the novel.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The writer used qualitative research in analyzing *Before I Fall* novel by Lauren Oliver (2010). According to Srivastava and Thomson (2009) that qualitative research is the research which processing of the understanding based on distinct and methodological tradition of the research that explore a social or human problem. The writer used qualitative in order to get more data in analyzing the novel. Types of data in this research divide into two: primary data and secondary data. Primary data is *Before I Fall* novel and secondary data is getting from other sources, journal, article which related to the research and support the analysis research which related to the theory the writer used. The technique which the writer used is descriptive analysis to find the data which is related to the teenager’s lifestyle in *Before I Fall* novel by Lauren Oliver. The method of collecting data is the first which the writer did is reading the novel and understanding about the problem which can be used in this research; second, taking notes which can be reference or important parts from the novel. Afterwards, the writer used sociological approach in this research to answer the
question of the study as follows: first question, to what extend of lifestyle among the characters in the novel? Second question, why the author created the novel contains the teenager’s lifestyle in her novel?

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Types of Friendship

3.1.1 Friend of Utility

Friend of utility people are being friends only for what will they get in the end; this things are for their goodness in the future or only for their needs and people who are being friend based of utility, it will be broken easily and they will get the benefits from each other.

3.1.1.1 Opportunity Friendship

Opportunity friendship is being friendship just for getting the advantage from others. In opportunity friendship there is people who used by others for their importance, as follows:

Actually my grades have been pretty good in chem. This year, but it isn’t because I’ve had a sudden epiphany about proton-electron interaction. My straight A-average can be summarized in two words: Jeremy Ball. He’s skinner than I am and his breath always smells like cornflakes, but he lets me copy his homework and inches hid desk closer to mine on test days so I can peek over at his answers without being obvious. Unfortunately, since I stop before Tierney’s class to pee and check o with Ally- we always meet in the bathroom before fourth period, since she has biology at the same time I have chem- I arrive too late to get my usual seat next to Jeremy.

(Oliver, 2010, p. 22)

The paragraph above tells that Sam is using her friend for helping her in the quiz. Sam did not talk or being friend with Jeremy, but she just want to be friend or she just regards him to be her friend because she wants something from him, which is profitable to her.
According to McFall (2012) that in friendship they will provide pleasure and utility for each other, one that happens in providing is opportunity. Because of opportunity can help others to reach about what they want.

3.2 Romance Relationship

3.2.1 Romance Commitment

Romance commitment will happen if both of them have same interaction or connection and they know and realize about that the fact they are in relationship.

3.2.1.1 Interrelated Relationship

This case will happen when couple in special relationship. As couple they have the same feeling and they share anything for each other. This is happened between Sam and Rob Cokran, as stated below:

I make a big deal of unfolding the tiny card that’s looped around the rose stem and acting moved when I read the note, even though all he’s written is Happy Cupid Day. Luv ya and then in smaller letters near the bottom: Happy now?

“Luv ya “ isn’t exactly “I Love you”—whoch we’ve never said—but it’s getting close. I’m pretty sure he’s saving it for tonight, actually. Last week it was late and we were sitting on his couch and he was staring at me and I was sure—sure—he was going to say it—but instead he just said from a certain angle I looked like Scarlett Johansson.

(Oliver, 2010, p. 24)

It shows that Sam and Rob have special relationship based on what Rob writes in the letter on his rose for Sam. On the letter Rob writes “Luv ya” which can express his feeling to Sam but it sounds weird because both of them never say it for each other.

According to Shulman and Kipnis (2001) teenager who is in romance relationship that is dating or an ongoing committed relationship. Both of them
who are in special relationship will show the real feeling in order to show that they are committed in their relationship.

3.3 Bullying

3.3.1 Verbal Bully

Smith and Sharp (1993) stated that bullying describe as power abuse systematic. There will power in social group to abuse the victim of the bully. Besides, this power will take control of the act to bully.

3.3.1.1 Being Isolation

Bullying happened because of the victim is lonely or being isolation. That feeling starts to bully the victim and hurt the victim by words. This happens for Juliet Sykes who is being isolation at school because she always bully by her friends at school. Especially for Lindsay and bestfriends who always bully Juliet. It showed on the paragraph below:

All of sudden, Ally looks at something over my shoulder and starts giggling.“Psycho killer, qu’est-ceque’est.” We all turn around. Juliet Sykes, or Psycho, has just drifted into the senior section. That’s how she walks: like she’s drifting, being blown around by forces outside of her control. She’s carrying a brown paper bag in her long pale fingers. Her face is shielded behind a curtain of pale blond hair, shoulders hunched up around her ears.

(Oliver, 2010, p. 37)

Bullying frequently happens in the school. Students will have one of friend will bully and be their victim. Juliet Sykes is Lindsay friend when they were young but not anymore, Lindsay and her bestfriends make name for calling Juliet Sykes that is Psycho killer, qu’est-ceque’est or psycho. Because of Lindsay’s odiousness, it hurts Juliet.

Macklem (2003) examined that the isolation is one effect of bullying, because the victim is rejected by people around her. So it makes the victim always be alone and have social problem. It shows that bullying can give effect
for the victim which is giving pressure feeling because of being isolation from the people around her.

3.3.2 Social Exclusion

This is the way of bullying that spreading rumors of victims. The rumor is not true or fact but people believe it. This is the way to attract others also bully victim by spreading rumors which they believe (Wang, Iannotti and Nansel, 2009).

3.3.2.1 Negative Thinking

By social exclusion about the bullying victim which has not true or it just hoax can make other people who heard that hoax having negative thinking about the victim without find out the truth of the hoax. There is a rumor of Juliet Sykes which spread by Lindsay when they were in same Elementary school, as follows:

It was Lindsay who found out Juliet peed her sleeping bag during a Girl Scout camping trip in fifth grade, and Lindsay who gave her the nickname Mellow Yellow. People called Juliet that forever until the end of the freshman year, if you can believe it and stayed away from her because they said she smelled like pee.

(Oliver, 2010, p. 39)

By spreading rumor which is not true made other students do not be friend with Juliet Sykes and made her more isolated, intimidated by others. Because of Lindsay is one of poplar girls in the school it made other students believe what she said and followed her to call Juliet by Mellow Yellow.

Sondergaard (2018) examined about the social exclusion that individuals who are being bully may feel pressure and insecure about their group or people around them. Individuals who are being bully, they have their emotion to manage the tension between inclusion and exclusion from others.
3.4 The reason of the author created novel contains teenager’s lifestyle

*Before I Fall* (2010) novel written by Lauren Oliver. She tells about teenager’s life in her novel. The author started writing when she was younger and she also likes reading a book. She had inspiration for writing this novel because she ever worked at penguin Books, in young adult division. So that is why she started to write her novel and make up the story. Because of the novel’s theme is young adult, so the novel includes of young adult life such as romance, friendship, or even sexual behavior, and bullying which frequently happen in teenager’s life.

Through the novel, the author likely wants the reader to know about the cause and effect of doing the bad things and it really makes the victim of that because it is really execrable for teenager or adolescence’ life. According to Swingewood and Laurensen (1972) about the literary work deals with the social situation of the author and showed social background of the author and also response of the author. The social situation can inspire the author for making up the story, as Lauren Oliver, she had experienced in her teenager’s life and she knew about the lifestyle among teenagers and it always happens. As Lauren Oliver interviews on Youtube channel of RT Book Reviews (2010) she said that she wrote her first novel *Before I Fall* (2010) based on her friends when she was in high school and they are her Mean Girls typical.

According to Wellek and Warren (1948) the author made up the story because there is connection between literature and the readers. It can make the readers will progress about what is in literary work, because the literary work is connected to mutual relationship of authors, societies, and also the readers. Literature happened because of the society, and the author made up the story from that and the author gave the literature back to the readers in order to they will read and make the story of literature can be inspiration for them because it also can happen to them and their people who they love. As stated on Lauren Oliver’s another interview on Youtube channel of harperteen (2010) that while
writing a novel she talk to teens and also the readers because she thought that the most people in some very rare cases which people are either good or bad but people are in the combination of those.

4. CONCLUSION

The researcher used Sociological Approach to analyze the problems in the novel. There are sociology approaches by Swingewood and Laurenson (1972), they are literary work of literature as the mirror age, literary work deals with the social situation of the author, literary work as the scientific historical moment. The researcher also included the literature principle sociology by Wellek and Warren (1948): sociology of author, sociology of literature works, sociology of the readers.

The novel tells about the teenager life at school. The writer used the issue of the research about the teenager’s lifestyle which is common in teenager circle which showed by the characters of the novel *Before I Fall*. The lifestyle of teenager is: friendship, romantic relationship, and there is bad thing which is frequently happens in the school that is bullying. There are some parts of teenager lifestyle as follows: friendship divided into three types: first, friend of utility; second, friend of pleasure; three, friend of good. Romantic relationship divided into three parts: romance as commitment, romance as a personal choice, romance interests. There are three types of bullying according to Wang, Iannotti, and Nansel (2009) that is physical bully, verbal bully, and social exclusion.

The researcher combined the theory presented by Swingewood, Laurenson and Wellek, Warren for the references of the reason of the author of novel (Lauren Oliver) created her novel which contains about teenager’s lifestyle.
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