

THE CHALLENGES OF IDEALS WOMANHOOD IN *THE LODGER* NOVEL BY MARIE BELLOC LOWNDES

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ABSTRACT

This study is focused on the challenges of the ideals womanhood in Victorian era in Ellen's character. Ellen is one of the main characters in the *The Lodger* novel. The novel was inspired by Jack the Ripper killings that was set in Victorian period. This novel tells the story of a serial killer terrorizing the capital. This novel is focused on one of the lives of the London family who are trying to survive in economic difficulties. This research used *The Lodger* novel as the data source and for the data the researcher used the narration and dialogue that contained the challenges of the ideals womanhood in Victorian era. By using mimetic approach, the research aimed to answer the following question. The research question is how the main character challenges the ideals womanhood through her roles in the *The Lodger* Novel. The result of the analysis using the ideals of womanhood in Victorian Britain by Lynn Abrams theory, the researcher found seven ideals challenged by Ellen Bunting, they are; 1) the icon, 2) the ideal woman, 3) at home, 4) household management, 5) the ideology, 6) wife and mother, and 7) social responsibility.

Key words: Ideals of Womanhood, woman, character, Victorian, Britain

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini difokuskan pada pertentangan terhadap idealitas kaum wanita di era Victoria dalam karakter Ellen. Ellen adalah salah satu karakter utama dalam novel Lodger. Novel ini terinspirasi oleh pembunuhan Jack the Ripper yang dibuat pada periode Victoria. Novel ini menceritakan tentang seorang pembunuh berantai yang meneror ibukota. Novel ini ifokuskan pada salah satu kehidupan keluarga di London yang berusaha bertahan dalam kesulitan ekonomi. Penelitian ini menggunakan novel The Lodger sebagai sumber data dan untuk data peneliti menggunakan narasi dan dialog yang berisi pertentangan terhadap idealitas kaum wanita di era Victoria. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan mimesis, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab pertanyaan berikut. Pertanyaan penelitian adalah bagaimana karakter utama menantang idealitas kaum wanita melalui perannya dalam Novel The Lodger. Hasil analisis menggunakan teori Idealitas kaum wanita di era Victoria Inggris oleh Lynn Abrams, peneliti menemukan tujuh cita-cita yang ditantang oleh Ellen Bunting,

mereka adalah; 1) Ikon, 2) Wanita Ideal, 3) Di Rumah, 4) Manajemen Rumah Tangga, 5) Ideologi, 6) Istri Dan Ibu, and 7) Tanggung Jawab Sosial.

Kata Kunci: Idealitas kaum wanita, Wanita, Karakter, era Victoria, Inggris

A. INTRODUCTION

Women in Victorian England were believed to be inferior to men, Fletcher said that “they were subjected to their (men) authority in many ways” (108) and their legal status was similar to that of children. Their fathers, husbands or other male relatives were their legal representatives and it was men who were in charge of women’s property for almost all the nineteenth century. Women were not allowed to vote and were not legal guardians of their children. Thus, society at that time really upheld the patriarchal system. Hazel Reeves and Sally Baden state that patriarchy may be perceived as “systemic societal structures that institutionalize male physical, social, and economic power over women.” (28) This placed women to the subordinate. They were no longer considered equal to men in their social status and power, and this cultural model prevailed for many centuries until these days. The concept of patriarchal society influences the view of people and raises gender oriented stereotypes such as typical roles of men and women in the society.

In 19th century, stereotypes about the gender roles were still very strong, also supported by Charles Darwin’s work *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871). Darwin’s description of man as stronger, more powerful and superior over woman might have affected the Victorian society. According to Paxman a Victorian woman would be stoical, motherly, submissive and chaste (228). Victorian society viewed them as an ideal woman. Being the ideal woman is a necessity in the Victorian era. Women in that era should also be able to express themselves not only in the domestic sphere but also in the public sphere. They did not have identity nor fair rights because of the Victorian laws which were discriminatory ones. This law discouraged women and did not allow them to improve themselves. As a result, they were an oppressed and abused member in their society. This Femininity’s ideal encapsulated in mode daughter, wife, and mother. In *The Lodger* novel by Marie Belloc Lowndes there is the main female character that play an important role in supporting the family.

The purposes of this research were to explain how the main character challenge the ideals womanhood through her roles in *The Lodger* novel. It was expected that this study gives significance for the readers to understand and provides more knowledge about the ideals of womanhood in Victorian Britain. Hopefully, this study could give contribution for the readers and for the future researchers who have the same interest and issue as in this study to analyze the ideals of womanhood in Victorian Britain.

B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Novel

Novel is one of literary work. Novel attracts the attention and the interest of many people regardless of their age, profession or position. Everyone almost likes to read a novel. Language in the novel facilitates the readers in understanding story in novel. According to Rees novel is a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length in which characters and actions representative a real life which is life is portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity (106).

2. Character and Characterization

While Tomlinson and Brown define Characterization refers to the way an author helps the reader to know a character. The most obvious way an author can do this is to describe the character's physical appearance and personality. Portraying the character's emotional and moral traits or revealing her relationship with other characters are more suitable and effective technique (25). A character can be reflected from character dialogue, action, the dialogue of other and an explanation by narrator. Through the characterization, the reader can imagine what kind of person the character is.

3. Setting

According to Kennedy and Gioia (107-108) the setting has four elements. There are place, time, weather and atmosphere to show how the character act, how the characters socialize with others and how the characters show their human nature to the audience when they see it. The idea of setting is to provide better comprehension of the novel since the novel was set in the Victorian era. It is also help the researcher to know whether the challenges of the ideals womanhood.

4. Women's Role in 19th in Britain

During the Victorian period men and women's roles became more sharply defined than at any time in history. According Kathryn Hughes not only did the Victorian period bring great differences and large gaps between classes, the difference between the position of men and women became also very important (2014). Gender roles and tasks in the family life come up to be strictly given. Women were considered physically weaker yet morally superior to men, who meant that they were best suited to the domestic sphere. Kathryn Hughes said that not only was it their job to counterbalance the moral taint of the public sphere in which their husbands labored all day, they were also preparing the next generation to carry on this way of life (2014).

5. The Ideals of Womanhood in Victorian Britain by Abrams

Abrams mentions nine ideals womanhood in Victorian Britain they are the icon, the ideal woman, at home, household management, the ideology, wife and mother, social responsibility, woman's mission, toward political mission.

a. The Icon

Queen Victoria became the icon of middle-class femininity and domesticity. She always appeared to be the Mother and the Wife. The idea that woman's responsibility was love and respects her husband surpasses anything. Queen Victoria Usually accompanied her husband Albert and several children, she represented the model of marital stability and motherhood.

b. The Ideal Woman

Mrs. Goodby exemplifies the ideal woman means accepting her place in the domestic. The ideal woman was also pious, respectable, and so busy. With that figure women are able to do their domestic duties to serve the family, especially their husband. These constructions of the ideal woman kept women away from the public sphere, which was viewed as unsuitable, both mentally and physically

c. At Home

According to Abrams "The middle-class household contained concrete expressions of domesticity in the form of servants, homely decor, comfortable furnishings, home entertainment, and clothing." (3). The ideal woman can make the home the most comfortable and attractive place to live. With a house filled with luxurious and classy interiors that are also a comfort. Likewise with clothes that adjust to the luxury of their interior furniture, which is a symbol of their social status as wives, mothers, and households management.

d. Household Management

A good woman in managing a household is a woman who is able to manage and do her work in the domestic sphere which makes her family comfortable to stay. The role of 19th-century women in the domestic realm is not an easy job, it also involves heavy physical work. All main tasks include taking water and water bushing, washing and ironing clothes, washing the floor and scrubbing with sand, then cleaning the toilet, to preparing food at home, all of which are heavy work for most women. The women of that century did not have enough free time to do their hobbies or do other activities in addition to home activities.

e. The Ideology

This ideology of men and women occupying separate spheres was supported by the idea that there were natural characteristics of men and women that suited each for different roles. Women considered physically weaker yet morally superior, are best suing them for the domestic sphere.. Victoria Men were expecting their wife to take care of the home. Men also want to be able to focus on their jobs to keep their salaries high because they feel they have dependents for the family. While women do two jobs at once for a fee which is considered not comparable to their work, because the work is considered tantamount to the work of caring for children and taking care of the house.

f. Wife and Mother

Mature women and the honor of honor as women are marked by marriage. Meanwhile being a mother is a sign that she is a complete woman. For a woman who is married and does not have children, it will be considered a failure. But for women who are single and do not have children it is worth to be pitied.

g. Social Responsibility

In the Victorian era the motherhood was idealized to be the highest level of emotional and spiritual fulfillment of women. But at the same time being a mother is also a social responsibility, a state duty, and a full time job. Being a mother is no longer something natural, but must be learned.

h. Woman Mission

Women at that time in the middle class provided assistance to mothers and babies to reduce infant mortality. Then they also gave knowledge to other women about house hygiene that was in accordance with the standards. In the middle class women mission women at that time to help other women, poor women and workers to keep the house clean and keep their babies properly by providing knowledge of the expertise they have. Women want other women to do a better role for women in service and self-sacrifice.

i. Towards a Political Mission

In the late Victorian era, generous women began to realize that as women they had little power to change things. Many feminists were first active in the philanthropic movement, and from the public sphere an improvement in the position of women began to be made. The aim of the first wave of feminists in politics is to gain opportunities so that women may have an influence on their own types.

C. RESEARCH METHODS

1. Research Design

This research used mimetic approach as pole of criticism of literary criticism. According to Abrams mimetic approach views the literary work as an imitation or reflection or representation of the world and human being, and the primary criterion applied to a work is the truth, the researcher needs the related data to the literary work that is going to be represented (8). The imitation of universe aspect is contained with everything that happened in the world. Life also can describe and show to some literary works especially in novel.

2. Data and Data Sources

The data for this research are dialogues between characters in this novel, and narration from the speaker of this novel that are relevant to answer researcher's problems of this reaserch about the challenges the ideals womanhood through the Ellen Bunting roles in the *The Lodger* Novel. The data source is *The Lodger* novel by Marie Belloc Lowndes which is published in 2014.

3. Research Instrument

The key instrument of this research is the researcher. The researcher uses her idea to interpret and express the meaning of the context in literary work. Its idea produce conclusion of the data that analyzed.

4. The Data Collection Technique

In collecting the data, the researcher does some steps. The first step is the researcher read *The Lodger* novel for several times and focuses on finding the challenged the ideal womanhood in the novel. The second, the researcher arrange and classify the data of the challenged of ideals womanhood through Ellen bunting role which are related with the research question that have been found from the novel.

5. Data Analysis

The data will be analyzed by using qualitative, according Miles and Huberman model the researcher did data reduction, data display, and conclusion (1994: 10-

12). The researcher found the challenged the ideals womanhood through the main character contained with that novel through mimetic approach. Display data in this research was begun and analyze the challenged the ideals womanhood through the main character contained with that novel through mimetic approach. The sources which relate with novel based on the situation of women in Britain in the Victorian Era. The Researcher takes a conclusion about the challenges of ideals womanhood through the main character that portrayed in the *The Lodger* novel.

D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Ellen Bunting Challenge the Ideals Womanhood

In this research, the researcher found that there are only seven ideals challenged by Ellen Bunting, they are; 1) the icon, 2) the ideal woman, 3) at home, 4) household management, 5) the ideology, 6) wife and mother, and 7) social responsibility.

a. Ellen Bunting Challenge the Icon

Queen Victoria described as an icon of femininity. She always loved and respected her husband before anything. Her marriage made the ideal model of discovery. In her harmonious household, Queen Victoria loved her husband and also cared for him more than anything else.

Data 1

Narration by the author:

He dreaded with a nervous dread the glance of Ellen's cold, reproving light-blue eye. **That glance would tell him that he had had no business to waste a penny on a paper,** and that well he knew it! ... But her hands trembled--they trembled with excitement, with self-pity, with anger. **A penny? It was dreadful--dreadful to have to worry about a penny! But they had come to the point when one has to worry about pennies. Strange that her husband didn't realize that.** (Lowndes 8-9)

In this narration Ellen was more concerned with their finances than her husband's pleasure. Ellen continued to think about it because they had gone too far into poverty and she assumed that her husband did not care about their situation and only concerned with his own interests. Based on the explanation above, it can be said that Ellen challenged the ideals womanhood because she did not make her husband's pleasure as a priority.

b. Ellen Bunting challenge of The Ideal Woman

The ideals woman was a woman who could accept hierarchy as a woman's life in that era by always being at home and stayed away from the public sphere, took on the obligation to serve the family, and served her husband.

Data 3

Narration by the author:

She raised the thick veil she had pulled down over her face while they were going through that sinister, wolfish-looking crowd outside and looked about her.

Many of the gentlemen--they mostly wore tall hats and good overcoats--standing round and about her looked vaguely familiar... **She followed him out into a passage, up a row of steep stone steps, and so into the Coroner's Court.** (Lowndes 154-155)

In the Victorian era the ideal woman was the one who accepted her sexual hierarchy to be at home and stayed away from the domestic sphere. However, Ellen was not only at home for her domestic work, she also left the house to the crowd. Based on that action, Ellen challenged the ideal woman in the ideals womanhood.

c. Ellen Bunting challenge the ideals womanhood At Home

Home is a place that must be a comfortable place. It is the woman who has a domestic sphere that has the duty to make the house as a comfortable place. They also maintain their clothes with the same luxury as furniture as a barrier to their status between domestic and public space.

Data 4

Narration by the author:

But appearances were not only deceitful, they were more than usually deceitful with regard to these unfortunate people. **In spite of their good furniture--that substantial outward sign of respectability which is the last thing which wise folk who fall into trouble try to dispose of--they were almost at the end of their tether. Already they had learnt to go hungry, and they were beginning to learn to go cold.**(Lowndes 2)

From the data above, the house that was occupied by good furniture illustrated respectability, but it was different from their real life. Not all beautiful furniture depicted that a person's household was a harmonious and comfortable family. In fact, there was Ellen family with furniture which is regarded as honoring the Ellen's family's honor. Even though Ellen filled the house with the furniture, they were in poverty, which made them uncomfortable because they felt careless and humiliated. This narration showed that Ellen challenged the ideals womanhood at home.

d. Ellen Bunting Challenges of Household Management

The women of Victorian era did not have enough free time to do other activities outside of domestic activities that had become the image of women. Women who did other activity often than their domestic works was assumed that they were not describe the image of women in that era.

Data 5

Narration by the author:

She went into her bedroom and came back with a bit of plain sewing. **Mrs. Bunting was fond of sewing, and Bunting liked to see her so engaged.**

Since Mr. Sleuth had come to be their lodger she had not had much time for that sort of work. (Lowndes 113)

In the Victorian era, women who worked at home are very busy, starting from light work to heavy work, so there was no time to do work or other activities outside the domestic works. However, in narration above Ellen showed that she could do other activities that had become her hobbies since a long time ago which was a sewing. She did her other activities among her busy schedules. It shows that Ellen challenged the ideals of womanhood.

e. Ellen Bunting Challenge of the Ideology

The ideology at that time was men were responsible for the family by working. Whereas, the women remained domestic and those who worked at home continue to take care of the family and also worked with a low pay. However, in Ellen's character, it showed that woman could not only do the housework but also came to bear the life of her family.

Data 9

Narration by the author:

Lodgers? How foolish she had been to think of taking lodgers! **For it had been her doing. Bunting had been like butter in her hands.**

Yet they had begun well, with a lodging-house in a seaside place. There they had prospered, not as they had hoped to do, but still pretty well; and then had come an epidemic of scarlet fever, and that had meant ruin for them, and for dozens, nay, hundreds, of other luckless people. (Lowndes 10)

In the description during the Victorian era that man worked to support his family. Men claimed their rights because they thought that they had a wife at home as a dependent. Man worked outside the house, woman did her domestic works and took care of their children in the house. While, in this narration, Robert only followed Ellen's thoughts and idea. So, it can be said that Ellen challenged the ideals womanhood in the ideology.

f. Ellen Bunting Challenge the Ideals Womanhood as Mother

Mature women are characterized by marriage and wives. After someone becomes a wife, the woman is ready to become a mother. Women are not just giving birth, but motherhood is considered to be your map for carrying, raising and playing with their children. After they get married and have children, it can be said that women are perfect. While married women who do not have children are considered imperfect and fail.

Data 13

Conversation between Ellen and Robert:

Mrs. Bunting put down the tray. **"I can't have the girl here just now," she said shortly. "I've just as much to do as I can manage. The lodger gives me more trouble than you seem to think for."** "Rubbish!" he said sharply. "I'll help you with the lodger. It's your own fault you haven't had help with him before. Of course,

Daisy must come here. Whatever other place could the girl go to?" (Lowndes 48)

Women as mother had maternal, gentleness, and patient qualities so they were believed to be able to raise their children. They spend more time taking care of their children, ranging from breastfeeding, playing and educating their children. Ellen did not go through it all because she did not have a biological child although she had stepdaughter. Ellen indirectly did not want anyone else in their family, even though it was the daughter of her husband but she did not agree her presence in their home. Ellen could not stand for the presence of the child because gaining the child was not beneficial for her and she must also care for the child. It meant that Ellen challenged the ideals womanhood as a mother.

g. Ellen Bunting Challenge the Social Responsibility

In the Victorian era, being a mother was a social responsibility. In that era the death of babies always increased, so mothers were required to always in the domestic environment to look after their babies. Women were also required to learn how to take care their babies, thereby reducing infant mortality.

Data 15

Narration by the author:

With this woman, the widow of a man who had been well-to-do, **lived Daisy, Bunting's only child by his first wife**, and during the last long two days he had been trying to make up his mind to write to the old lady, and that though he suspected that she would almost certainly retort with a cruel, sharp rebuff. (Lowndes 3)

Ellen was married to a widower who had an adult daughter from Robert's first wife namely daisy. After Ellen's marriage and Robert, they had no children. In *the Lodger* novel, Ellen Bunting did not have a baby. She only had a stepdaughter, so that Ellen did not fulfill the social responsibility for caring a baby. Hence, Ellen challenged the ideals of womanhood in the social responsibility.

E. CONCLUSION

There are challenges of ideals of womanhood through Ellen's role. In the novel entitled *The Lodger* by Marie Belloc Lowndes, the challenges of ideals womanhood was expressed by Ellen as women in the Victorian era from the beginning until the end of the story. She performed seven challenges of the ideals of womanhood in Victorian era. The challenges of the ideals womanhood through Ellen's role in the novel were challenges the icon, challenges the ideals woman, challenges at home, challenges household management, challenges the ideology, challenges as a mother, and challenges social responsibility.

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