

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CONTRAST AS REFLECTED IN HENRY JAMES'S DAISY MILLER

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Abstrak

Pendekatan mimetic dan objective dalam penelitian ini dipakai untuk mengungkap bentuk-bentuk kontras bahasa dan budaya yang ada dalam novel Daisy Miller karya Henry James. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa kontras budaya dan bahasa tercermin melalui apa-apa yang dikatakan dan dijalani oleh pelaku utama yang bernama Daisy Miller (seorang gadis Amerika yang sedang berlibur di Eropa). Selama di Eropa, ia digambarkan sebagai seorang yang gagal dan tidak mau memahami sekaligus menghargai kebudayaan negara lain yaitu Eropa. Semua itu diakibatkan oleh kebodohnya. Henry James, melalui Daisy Miller menggambarkan bahwa orang-orang Amerika tidak tahu tata kebiasaan orang Eropa sehingga mereka dianggap sebagai orang yang kurang sopan. Bagi Daisy (sebagai seorang Amerika), apa yang ia ucapkan dan lakukan adalah hal yang wajar, sedangkan bagi masyarakat Eropa hal itu dianggap sebagai tindakan yang kasar, vulgar, dan tidak sopan. Perbedaan pandangan ini akhirnya menimbulkan benturan atau konflik budaya dan bahasa, jika kedua negara tersebut tidak saling memahami.

Key words: kontras budaya dan bahasa.

A. Introduction

Literary work reflects the social phenomena of the society. What happened in a certain society and in a certain period of time can be seen through literary works. According to Grace, literature does not merely reproduce a shadow of nature, but it causes nature to be reflected in its containing form (Grace, 1965: 11). Sartre states almost the same idea that it is capable of a purposeful reflection of the world (Sartre, 1978: vii). Daisy Miller is one of Henry James's works discussing on cultural

and language contrast of America and Europe. James was regarded as a very talented writer whose fame is known in both, America and Europe. *Daisy Miller* is a story of a young American girl wandering in Europe and trapped in the rigid European culture without being able to understand it. She unintentionally violates the European culture by flirting with her Italian gentlemen, an act, which is condemned by her American compatriots living in Europe. Based on the standard of European culture, Daisy's way of speaking and actions were considered impolite, vulgar and straightforward.

One big question appeared in analyzing *Daisy Miller* is that what language and cultural contrast experienced by the characters in the work. In line with the problem statement, this paper is mainly aimed at revealing the contrast experienced by the characters as reflected in Henry James's *Daisy Miller*. To focus the discussion, the writer limits the problem on revealing the language and cultural contrast experienced by the characters especially the Millers and Giovanelli.

This study is conducted by doing library research, which is focused on bibliographical sources related to the topic discussed. This is done by collecting data from both of the published materials and unpublished materials. This is a work of American studies which emphasizes its principles of the interdisciplinary approach.

Since literary works become the object of this research, literary theories, in this case the objective and mimetic approaches are applied. Literary approach is applied to trace certain phenomenon meant by the author. The objective approach is applied in order to find out the author's concept of the social phenomenon because the approach regards the work of art in isolation from all these external points of reference, analyze it as a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their internal relations, and sets out to judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being (Abrams, 1971: 26). Mimetic theory views the literary work as an imitation, or reflection, or counterfeiting, or as representation of the world and human life. The objects that literary work

represents are those of human action and life not of person (Abrams, 1971: 10-14). It means that literary work is a reflection of human life of a society at a certain time.

In relation to the above theory, Burns, Elizabeth and Tom in *Sociology of Literature and Drama* have suggested, “a literary work should be considered as a social phenomenon” (Burns, 1973: 35). Being a product of certain social phenomenon, a novel reflects worldviews. The content and the form of the novel drive more closely from social phenomenon; thus, the literary work is the reflection of the life of a society. *Daisy Miller* will be examined as a portrait of social phenomenon of the conflict between America and Europe.

This paper is organized into four parts. Part one is the introduction, which implicitly includes the background, problem statement, the objective of the study, scope of the study, approach and method of the study and the scheme of the paper. Part two is theoretical background concerning with the relation between language and culture. Part three is brief account of the writer of the work, Henry James. Part four is the analysis, which discusses on the language and cultural contrast in the work. The last part is conclusion.

B. The Relations between Language and Culture

Language plays a very important role and function in life. Life can possibly stop if there is no language. “The functions of language as means of communication are *an instrument* (as a case of why a certain event happened), *a regulation* (to regulate or to control a certain event), *a representation* (to describe the event), an *interaction* and an *imagination*” (Fananie, 2000: 25). Besides, the function of language can be a part of identities, a personal identity, a tribe identity, or a national identity (Sumanto, 2000: 8). Though the essence of a language is a means of communication, the use of language can have many impacts. All of them depend on the objective of the language usage, and how far the potential of the language is revealed.

The importance of language cannot be separated from the importance of culture (Simatupang, 2000: 19). Language is one of those human artifacts whereby a culture finds expression and production (Malcolm in James, 1996: 123). Language and culture constitute two unseparated things in the society, and they belong each other (Tickoo, 1995: ii). Both, language and culture are the products of human being. In addition, according to Downes, (1984: 337) language is primarily a cultural or social product and must be understood. It is language that differentiates between human being and non human being. In the long terms, human being can make and establish culture through language. (Henly, 1992: 11). By language, people can cooperate, communicate, and interact each other to make culture. Physically, there is almost no difference between human being and animal. It is only about 2 %, which differentiates between man and animal. It is the ability to use the language as a means of communication. The wrong usage of language and culture can cause a contrasts in a certain society because every society has its own language and cultural forms. Culture can be used as a way of distinguishing human behavior from the behavior of other animals (Anonim, 1978: 315).

Language is the distinctive characteristic of human beings. Without language, people could not symbolize: reason, remember, anticipate, rationalize, distort, and evoke beliefs and perception about matters not immediately before us (Shapiro in Sumanto, 2000: 8). By language people not only describe reality but also create their own realities--culture.

C. Brief Account of Henry James

Henry James was born on April 15, 1843 in New York city. He remains one of the most fascinating writers in American literature. James was able to travel extensively to Europe. His first trip to Europe occurred in 1843. When he was only an infant, this trip was extended until 1844 where James's family stayed in Paris and at Windsor near London.

Europe was introduced to him very early in his life. He opened his eyes in Europe; then he set his feet on American ground when he was 2 years old. James and his family lived in New York city, and Albany from 1845 until 1855. At these two places, James received his first education.

When James was 12 years old, his family traveled to Europe and lived in Geneva. Geneva is a place where James was so familiar with that is used in Daisy Miller. London was his next places to live in and then he move to Paris, a setting found in Four Meeting. During the years staying in Europe, James acquired his schooling in Geneva, Bonhegne, and Paris at institution of Fezandie. At this stage, he began his youthful writing. His first habit of writing was revealed in his father's letter to his mother dated October 15, 1857. For a short period the family returned to America and lived at Newport, Rhode Island. This very brief sojourn was then followed by their return to Europe (1851) when James was 16. Again he studied in Geneva at institution of Rochette and in Bornn, Germany.

James's writing profession started when he was 21 years old. He begun reviewing books for the North American Review and become acquainted with Charles Eliot Norton, James Russell Lowell and William Dean Howells. During two years, in 1872-1874 he journeyed to England Holland, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland. During these years, he wrote review and travel articles. After spending a year in America, James went back to live in France for a year in 1876. There, he met famous writers: Turgenev, Flaubert, and Zola. James revisited Paris in 1877, the years he published The Europeans, in 1877 Four Meeting and Daisy Miller appeared in 1878.

His attentive observation of the people he met in Europe and America assisted him in drawing a minute picture of their characters. The social scene of the two hemispheres is reflected in James's writings. Daisy Miller is a striking example of James's portrayal of manner (, Power, 1970: 21).

In Daisy Miller, James represented the conflict of the two social

codes, Europe and America (Edel, 1962: 11). Actually, the conflict presented in his work reflected his own personal or inner conflict, namely his marginal state. This is due to the fact that he excessively travels back and forth to both continents. His attachment to Europe grows deeper yet his American conscience is stronger. Therefore, he is torn between the two worlds. Even though he chooses to become a British subject, he cannot deny his being an American. This conflict is never resolved. In other words, James cannot bring the two cultures in harmony (Sosronegoro, 1988: 516).

D. Language and Cultural Contrast in Henry James's Daisy Miller

As stated in the introduction that, contrast between one country and the other country can be caused by the wrong usage of language and culture. Language contrast can be seen through the conversation among the characters, while cultural contrast can be seen through the actions of the characters. To see the contrast, the writer focuses on the use of conversational language and the actions of the characters.

The Millers produced most of the contrast, besides Giovanelli. Hence, this writing tries to reveal the language and cultural contrast experienced by the Millers that consists of three persons (1) Daisy Miller (an American young lady or the daughter of Mrs Miller, (2) Mrs. Miller (the mother of Daisy Miller and (3) Randolph C. Miller (the nine old brother of Daisy Miller or the son of Mrs Miller).

1. Daisy Miller

Cultural contrast begins when Daisy always kept going out any time without being accompanied by her mother.

“there was a great deal said about poor little Miss Miller's going really “too far.” ... that she was going very far indeed. (James, 1962: 196).

Not knowing the culture of Europe, Daisy did something that was considered as ignorance. Daisy came from America, and then she lived in Europe for winter holiday. During the holiday in Europe, Daisy didn't

appreciate the custom or culture where she sojourned in. Otherwise, she did something contradictory from Europe. Daisy's flirting with two gentlemen at the same time, going out at night alone, talking straightforwardly to a man for the first times, and disobeying the advice, all of them are the example of her contrastive culture. It was caused by her ignorance to the neighboring society. The result of this however, was cultural contrast between European and American. In the eyes of Winterbourne, whatever done by Daisy was totally innocent, but for Daisy herself, it was all right and natural. It happened because they have different point of view.

Language contrast happened when Daisy first met Winterbourne at Vevey and tried to have a conversation. For Winterbourne, it was a little bit embarrassing because he knew that he had violated the convention. In Geneva a man should not talk to a girl unless he was properly introduced. On the other hand, for Daisy, being ignorant of such culture, she did not feel embarrassed at all. She even told Winterbourne all about her affairs with some gentlemen frankly including her Italian gentleman. She talked to Winterbourne as if she had known him a long time before.

“In Geneva, as he had been perfectly aware, a young man was not at liberty to speak to a young unmarried lady except under certain rarely occurring conditions” (James, 1962: 145).

Before sojourning in Europe, Daisy always visits New York every winter. In New York, she felt that she could not find anything she wished including some gentlemen. Not finding what she wanted to get in New York, then she said that she lost the society in New York. As a result she sojourned to Europe and lived in a very luxurious hotel for a winter holiday. The lost society meant here referred to some friends especially men.

“There isn't any society; ... In New York I had lost of society”. Last winter I had seventeen dinners given to me; and three of them were by gentlemen. I have more gentlemen friends” (James, 1962: 150).

For Daisy, loosing society means she could not find some friends of the same manner and the same culture.

In the eyes of Winterbourne, Daisy was very stubborn, either in the way of speaking or in the way of behaving. Very often she betrayed Winterbourne. She often promised to meet him in a certain place, but when she met him, she always brought another gentlemen. Actually Winterbourne loved Daisy very much; on the contrary, Daisy loved more than one man at the same time. Moreover, Daisy enjoyed flirting with Giovanelli more than with Winterbourne. Being treated and betrayed unfairly, Winterbourne regarded and claimed Daisy as a crudity woman.

“She seemed to him, in all this, an extraordinary mixture of innocence and crudity” (James, 1962: 170).

She acted in such away because she thought that everything she had done was all right culturally. She regarded that Winterbourne had the same outlook as she had.

To show his love and affection, very often Winterbourne advised Daisy not to go out in the night, but Daisy never heeded his admonition. She always went out until late time in the night with some gentlemen. Winterbourne himself did not know whether Daisy's character was her real temper or she did it on purpose.

“He asked himself, whether Daisy's defiance came from the consciousness of innocence or from her being, essentially, a young person of the reckless class” (James, 1962: 198).

What Winterbourne realized was that, they come from the same country (America). At the same time they lived in Europe, but she did something as not smoothly and politely as Winterbourne did.

She seemed that it was all right for her to go out everywhere: in a party, in the boat, on the hill or other places, without being accompanied by her mother. Sometimes she went out with Giovanelli, sometimes with Winterbourne, at another time with another stranger, and often she also went out with her mother's courier, Eugenio. She felt free to have intimate relationship with every men she liked, including with her

mother' courier, Giovanelli, and Winterbourne himself. Intimate relationship means a very close friendship between man and woman that is very personal and private. According to Higgleton, when two people are intimate with each other, they have sexual relationship (Higgleton, 1995: 503). The following quotation reflected her stubbornness.

“She is a young lady ... who has an intimacy with her mamma's courier” (James, 1962: 156).

What Daisy did, flirting with two gentlemen at the same time also reflected the cultural contrast. When Daisy attended the party of Mrs Walker, she brought two gentlemen at the same time. Without considering other people's view, she flirted with the two gentlemen (Giovanelli and Winterbourne) by turns. When Giovanelli sang a song on the stage of the party, she flirted with Winterbourne, and as soon as Giovanelli's entertainment was over, she then move her flirting to Giovanelli without feeling guilty to leave Winterbourne.

“Mr Giovanelli had finished singing; he left the piano and come over to Daisy. Won't you come into the other room ...” (James, 1962: 191).

Daisy was regarded to be frank when she always compelled Winterbourne to bring her for excursion in a boat in the moonlight. For Winterbourne, who was Europeanized American thought that, going away with unusual girl is poor and prohibited.

“Well, I want you to take me out in a boat! Daisy repeated” (James, 1962: 165).

Daisy also compelled Winterbourne to say something frankly and formally. Linguistically, to say something frankly in the first meeting was regarded as impolite manner.

“I like gentlemen to be formal! She declared. I would make you say something, Daisy went on” (James, 1962: 165).

On the other hand, for Daisy who is very innocent young lady, it was all right. Being Europeanized American, Winterbourne felt impolite to say something frankly. Then Winterbourne said:

“You see it's not very difficult, said Winterbourne. But I am afraid you

are chaffing me” (James, 1962: 165).

In the conversation with Winterbourne, Daisy always said something straightforwardly, or directly.

It was very clear that, Daisy demanded Winterbourne to visit her only and forbidden him to visit his aunt at the scheduled time in Geneva.

“I don't want you to come for your aunt, said Daisy; I want you to come for me only” (James, 1962: 171).

Besides, she often felt free to call Winterbourne as a stiff and horrid man explicitly. She said directly and straightforwardly toward him.

“I have half a mind to leave you here and go straight back to the hotel alone. And for the next ten minutes she did nothing but call him horrid” (James, 1962: 170).

In addition, she wanted him to treat her as she wanted. When Winterbourne flirted her, Daisy felt that his flirting was not as intimate as the other man's flirting. Directly she called Winterbourne that his flirting was very stiff.

“... you were as stiff as an umbrella the first time I saw you” (Henry James, 1962: 199). “...these rooms are too small; we can't dance... As I have had the pleasure, you are too stiff” (James, 1962: 190-191).

Daisy never thought of her own health. Even though she was ill, she always went out in the middle of the night without feeling afraid to be tempted by some men. Moreover, in a certain time, she tried to find the gentlemen to go and to flirt with.

“Don't forget Eugenio's pills! Said Winterbourne. ... I don't care, said Daisy, in a little strange tone, whether I have Roman fever or not!” (James, 1962: 204).

She never worried of things that possibly caused her in trouble condition. Whatever she did, she felt it happily and joyfully. She felt confidence that she could stay in the hotel during the winter. The condition of the place was the most wonderful and the most luxurious hotel. Besides, she never worried of being isolated by her friends or relatives. When she became more intimate with Giovanelli, an Italian gentleman, all her American

compatriots isolated her. For her, there was nothing to worry about.

2. Mrs. Miller

Cultural and language contrast also happened in Daisy's mother, Mrs Miller. She always permitted her daughter to go out with a stranger at night. Mrs Miller practically did nothing to stop her. She just let her daughter go and meet her young Italian friend, Giovanelli. Mrs Miller practically let her daughter do almost everything she wished. It was Daisy, not her mother, who decided everything. Finally the girl visited the Colosseum with Giovanelli late at night, got her Roman fever, and died because of it. If only she were not too permissive and ignorant, she could have stopped Daisy from going along most every midnight with Giovanelli, and saved both, the girl's life and her reputation.

Besides, she let her courier; Eugenio ate together with her daughter and her family. She permitted her courier to be more intimate with Daisy. Moreover, Daisy's mother went out from her daughter's room when she had or received guest at 11 o'clock at night.

“Flirting with any man; sitting in corners with mysterious Italians; dancing all evening; receiving visits at eleven o'clock at night. Her mother goes away when visitors come” (James, 1962: 185-186).

Her leaving Daisy's room because of a gentleman's presence was meant to provide them (*Daisy and the gentleman*) an occasion to do something they pleased. Even though they were very intimate, they were not married yet. Daisy often said that she was “engaged”, but it was not true. In the beginning of the meeting with Winterbourne, Daisy always said that she was “engaged” to Giovanelli. In the end of her life, after being insisted by Winterbourne, Daisy admitted that she was not “engaged”.

“She gave me a message; ... to tell you (Winterbourne) that she never was engaged to that handsome Italian” (James, 1962: 205).

She said in such away to protect herself from being mocked by her compatriots. Besides, she wanted to show that whatever she did was all right culturally.

3. Randolph

Randolph's behavior also reflects cultural contrast. Even though he was quite young, his behavior and thinking was like an adult. He was nine years old, but he acted as if he was an adult. He stayed up in a hotel parlor until one o'clock at night. When he was suggested by his mother to leave the parlor for sleep, he did not heed it much. He kept staying up until night by stealing Winterbourne's candy to eat. Besides, he seemed so straightforward when he met Winterbourne for the first time. He tried to introduce his family to him. He shown off his wealthy family and mocked Winterbourne straightforwardly. The following quotation shows pride and language contrast.

“My father's ain't Europe; my father's in a better place than Europe. My father's in Schenectady. He's got a big business. My father's rich, you bet” (James, 1962: 148).

Linguistically, saying something proudly and sarcastically tends to underestimate another people.

4. Giovanelli

Another language and cultural contrast can be seen through the action of Giovanelli. Giovanelli also produced language and cultural contrast. When Winterbourne advised him, he always disobeyed him. He advised him no to be too vulgar or too intimate with the girl, because the European culture did not permit such action. He suggested Giovanelli that he shouldn't countenance such a terrible indiscretion with Daisy. Giovanelli responded the advice ignorantly.

“Ah, said the handsome native, for myself, I am not afraid” (James, 1962: 202).

Besides, he also felt free to love and flirt with Daisy without considering the social condition. He always accompanied and overtook Daisy everywhere (in the hotel, party, street and anytime, night, day, or evening). It seemed that he never gave time to the other man, Winterbourne. Winterbourne actually also loved Daisy.

“He (Winterbourne) could have believed he was going to elope with her” (James, 1962: 167).

Language and cultural contrasts above appeared because of the different outlook. During the late nineteenth-century both the American and the European have their own views upon each other. The images that they have are in opposition, that is, they repel each other in the sense that they both have negative opinion. The European generally thought that American lacked manners. The American social texture was thin, raw, monotonous, and undefined (Holder in Sosronegoro, 1988: 513).

Daisy, the main character in Daisy Miller, actually represented some young American ladies in the latter part of the 19 centuries. She and her family do not realize that European custom is different from those they have known in America. Accordingly, she and her family behave in Europe as they normally behave in America. For example, Daisy flirts with two gentlemen at the same time; Mrs Miller herself lets her son, Randolph of nine-year-old stay up until one o'clock in the morning in hotel parlor eating candy; and the mother also permits her daughter, Daisy to go for a moonlight drive with a third-rate Roman. All their actions represent their failure to understand the culture of European society (Sosronegoro, 1988: 515).

In America, the fact that a young girl is flirting with a man might be considered quite normal. Otherwise, in Europe and by the European standard adapted by Daisy's compatriot, the same action will be considered improper or even vulgar. This is exactly what happens with Daisy. Being a young American girl who is ignorant of the European code, and at the same time stubborn and emotional, she violates the code and culture without being aware of it.

E. Conclusion

Language and cultural contrast really appeared in Daisy Miller. The appearances were produced mostly by the Millers (Randolph, Daisy Miller, and Mrs Miller), besides Giovanelli. The contrast occurred

because there was different viewpoint between the two countries, America and Europe. In one side, Americans regarded whatever they have spoken and done were all right culturally, in another side, European regarded what Americans have spoken and done in Europe were totally contradictory with European culture. In it's turn, the different view might produce clash between the two countries unless they should understand each other. To have a better picture or understanding of the story and symbolism stated inside the story, it is suggested for the other researchers to analyze the same work using different approach and finding different aspects.

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