

**THE IDEAS OF CONSERVATIVE TRADITIONS IN *PEREMPUAN
BERKALUNG SORBAN (WOMAN WITH A TURBAN) (2009) VS
MONALISA SMILE (2003): A COMPARATIVE STUDY***

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining
the Bachelor Degree in English Literature



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Atas perhatian bapak, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

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The Ideas of Conservative Traditions in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*

(*Woman with a Turban*) (2009) VS *Monalisa Smile* (2003):

A Comparative Study

By Weni Ratminingsih

ABSTRACT

Tradition is inseparable from human life; people have different ways of maintaining their traditions with good intentions. To preserve tradition, especially one that is still ancient (conservatism), some modern-minded people often reject it. They consider the tradition unworthy. In addition, those who support the tradition believe it impacts a better life. This research uses a comparative study with the films *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *Monalisa Smile*. This study aims to explain how the characters in the two films portray the idea of conservative tradition by using the conservatism theory developed by John Kekes. This research also aims to clarify that conservatism is still the best choice in a tradition despite opposition, but it can be broken through the theory of conservatism. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, and the data was obtained using speech and images of the characters of both films. The results of this study show that conservatism is an idea that occurs in both films. They are skepticism, pluralism, traditionalism, and pessimism. The idea shows that the tradition of conservatism is still a good choice. Being skeptical is not just doubt, but the characters in the movie consider the truth they received before the entry of new traditions. Pluralism is a form of acceptance of other cultures, but it still finds the traditional aspects. At the same time, traditionalism maintains the value of thoughts that have been proven to preserve the order of the environment. The last pessimism is a thought that does not readily believe in a belief in another tradition, which aims to be careful so that a new tradition does not damage what has been maintained.

Keywords: Tradition, Idea, Conservatism,

Tradisi Konservatif yang dilihat dalam film *Monalisa Smile*(2003) dan

***Perempuan Berkalung Sorban (Woman with a Turban)*(2009)**

Oleh Weni Ratminingsih

ABSTRAK

Tradisi hal yang tidak dapat dipisahkan dari kehidupan manusia dan manusia mempunyai cara yang berbeda beda untuk menjaga tradisinya dengan tujuan yang baik. Dalam upaya menjaga tradisi, apalagi sebuah tradisi yang masih kuno (konservativsm), sering kali ditolak oleh sebagian orang yang berpikiran modern. Mereka menganggap tradisi itu tidak layak. Disamping itu, bagi mereka yang mempertahankan tradisi percaya bahwa itu berdampak untuk kehidupan yang lebih baik Penelitian ini menggunakan comparative study dengan film perempuan berkalung sorban dan Monalisa Smile. Kedua film ini menunjukkan terjadinya tradisi konservativsm namun mendapat pertentangan dari karakter utamanya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana para karakter dalam kedua film tersebut menggambarkan adanya ide ide tradisi konservativsm dengan menggunakan teori konservatim yang dikembangkan oleh John Kekes. Penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bahwa konservativsm masih menjadi pilihan terbaik dalam sebuah tradisi meskipun ada pertentangan namun dapat dipatahkan melalui teori konservatism. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, dan data yang diperoleh menggunakan ujaran dan gambar pada karakter kedua film. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya ide ide conservatism yang terjadi pada kedua film yaitu skepticism, pluralism, traditionalism, dan pessimism. Ide tersebut menunjukkan bahwa tradisi conservatism masih menjadi pilihan yang baik. Karena bersikap skeptis bukan hanya sekedar ragu, tapi karakter dalam movie mempertimbangkan akan kebenaran yang mereka terima sebelum masuknya tradisi baru, lalu pluralism sebagai wujud penerimaan budaya lain namun masih tetap mempertimbangkan aspek tradisinya, sedangkan traditionalism untuk menjaga nilai nilai pemikiran yang telah terbukti mampu menjaga tatanan lingkungannya, dan yang terakhir pesimism merupakan pemikiran yang tidak mudah percaya terhadap sebuah kepercayaan tradisi lain, yang bertujuan untuk kehati hatian agar sesuatu tradisi yang baru tidak merusak apa yang sudah dijaga.

Kata kunci : Tradisi, Ide, Konservatism

MOTTO

*Every life goes like water. As long as you want to keep flowing, there must be
space and gaps.*

-Weni Ratminingsih-



DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper to:

My great parents Riyanto and Sunarti

My beloved little brother Hasbi Shidqi Aryanto

My lecturers

My dear friends

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Tradition represents a unique aspect or habit that is an inseparable part of human life, encapsulating everything handed down from past generations to the present, as noted by Shil (1981, p. 12). It fosters continuity and encourages individuals to embrace change or preserve traditional values. This dynamic interplay between tradition and change and how individuals negotiate these forces often finds vivid expression in cinematic narratives.

Perempuan Berkalung Sorban (Woman with a Turban), a film released in 2009 and directed by Hanung Bramantyo, is based on a novel by Abidah El Khalieqy. This Islamic movie, set in an Islamic boarding school, explores the complex challenges and real-life problems faced in traditional settings. It follows the story of Anisa, a central character who fights for her intellectual freedom within the confines of her Islamic boarding school environment. The movie effectively captures the tensions between conservative traditions and the quest for personal liberty, illustrating the empirical reality of intellectual stagnation within some Islamic educational institutions.

Similarly, *Monalisa Smile*, directed by Mike Newell and released in 2003, explores the conservative traditions of mid-century America, mainly focusing on the elite educational institution of Wellesley College. Through the experiences of Katherine Watson, a Ph.D. student from Oakland State University who becomes an

Art History instructor at Wellesley, the film critiques the rigid moral codes and life paths prescribed for young women of the time. Despite Katherine's efforts to foster independent thought among her students, she confronts significant resistance from the school's administration and its students, who are conditioned to conform to traditional mores and aspirations. There are pockets of free-thinking, Katherine, but the overall rules of the school generally quash those thoughts and associated actions.

These movies, originating from different cultural contexts, Indonesia and the United States, offer a rich basis for comparison through comparative literature. Toshmatova (2021) describes comparative literature as analyzing literary and artistic works across national borders, languages, genres, and mediums, highlighting the connections and contrasts between diverse cultural expressions. By comparing "*Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*" and "*Mona Lisa Smile*," one can explore how cinematic narratives from distinct cultures grapple with the tension between tradition and individual agency. This comparison underscores the universality of the struggle against conservative traditions and the pursuit of personal freedom, revealing the profound impact of tradition on human experiences across different societies.

The differences and similarities in a literary work are the objects to be compared in comparative literature. Remark explains that in comparative literature, historical events, literary relations, similarities and differences, themes, genres, styles, and tools of cultural evolution are compared. From the above statement, it is clear that comparative literature has a significant role in comparing every literary

work worldwide. Not only does it compare a literary work, but it also studies every social life and cultural element in society. For this reason, the researcher compares the movies *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *Monalisa Smile* in this analysis. Both movies have the same issue related to conservative tradition.

In addition, movies are one of the most common literary works as a product of popular culture. Every shot in a movie is like a paragraph in writing. Movies also provide new knowledge, such as culture and values. The values provided are how it can make us experience something; as explained by Klarer 2004:53, a movie is made by literary techniques. Conversely, the literary practice developed particular features under the movie's impact.” Rather than comparing novels, comparing movies is much more challenging. The researcher is required to explore the two literary works directly through the images and dialogues of the characters. Moreover, both are interesting literary works because both movies come from different backgrounds. *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* (*Woman with a Turban*)) The movie has an Eastern background, and *Monalisa Smile* has a Western background.

According to S Ramlan (2005), Conservatism in Eastern countries is seen as a tendency to preserve what is already established in society, and conservative groups are usually religious groups. They tend to maintain tradition or religion and oppose all forms of social change that deviate from the values that they believe. One example is footage from *the movie Perempuan Berkalung Turban*, which depicts a conservative idea through the thoughts of a father who prohibits his daughter from watching movies.

00.18.13-00.18.50 *Abi:MasyaAllah Annisa* (happen by Allah's Annisa)

Annisa: Demi Allah abi Annisa tidak menonton. (For God's sake, Annisa is not watching)

In Western countries, according to Edmund Burke (1997:21), conservatism is a philosophy that supports traditional values because different cultures have different established values. Some conservatives try to overcome the meaningful status quo (a condition that exists today and is ongoing) without change, while others try to return to values from past times. It is depicted in *Monalisa Smile* that students are not allowed to consume foreign news, and they are required to obey the campus. There is footage of the dialogue between Katherine and her students.

Khatrine: Please apply to Yale Law College

Katherine's Student: No, I have to get married. The campus has prepared my future husband.

From the statements of Western and Eastern conservatives, it can be seen that conservatism is a tradition that still preserves and maintains the old values. Furthermore, John Kekes (2001:31) argues that conservatism is concerned with the political arrangements that enable members of a society to live good lives. Conservatism requires the protection of universal conditions of all good lives, social conditions that vary with societies, and individual conditions that reflect differences in character and circumstance.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher analyzes how conservative ideas are represented through the characters in those movies. The focus is on conservatism, a tradition worth defending if it opposes all forms of social change and causes backwardness.

The researcher implements John Kekes' theory about conservatism based on Kekes' Conservatism ideas seen from skepticism about ideologies, pluralism about values, traditionalism about institutions, and pessimism about human perfectibility. Many experts describe conservatism, and even though John Kekes explains it systematically, researchers chose to use this theory. This theory is useful in this research because John Kekes uses ideas to explain that the community is conservative and aims to protect its traditions without any changes. Therefore, the researcher uses this theory and intends to do further research, and the researcher intends to explore the moral message related to the two movies.

1.2 Problem Statements/ Research Question

In exploring how conservative traditions are depicted and challenged within cinematic narratives, mainly through the lens of comparative literature, it is essential to study the underlying themes and ideologies. This research aims to uncover the specific manifestations of conservatism as presented in two culturally and contextually distinct films. Therefore, this research focuses on the following question:

What ideas of conservatism emerge in both movies, *A Woman with a Turban* (*Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* (*Woman with a Turban*)) and *Monalisa Smile*?

1.3 Objective of Study

Based on the problem statement, this study aims to know how conservatism ideas emerge in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* (*Woman with a Turban*)) and *Monalisa Smile* movies that are represented through each character. This is

important because conservatism has the power or tendency to protect or preserve. Conservatives tend to be viewed negatively by some people. On the other hand, the researcher analyzes the ideas of conservatism from the positive side. Hence, the researcher intends to further research and explore the moral message of the two movies.

1.4 Significance of Study

The significance of this paper is to show the readers that conservatism can be known through the ideas that occur. Readers can identify a tradition and culture in an environment with a positive view. Conservatism can be seen or represented through the environment and the people's characters. As defined by the two movies *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban (Woman with a Turban))* and *Monalisa Smile*. Additionally, this research's findings can be additional references for related fields such as Cultural studies.

1.5 Literature Review

First, (*Perempuan Berkalung Sorban (Woman with a Turban))* has been analyzed by some researchers. One of the articles entitled *Feminism in Patriarchal Society is reflected in the main character of Perempuan Berkalung Sorban (Woman with a Turban)* by Farida Hannum Siagian (2018). It discusses the feminism varieties and how feminism in patriarchal is reflected by the main character Annisa in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban (Woman with a Turban))* movie. This article focuses on the 14 selected utterances that found that radical feminism is dominant to be reflected by Annisa. In radical feminism, Annisa wants to have the ability to

be a man. In Socialist, Annisa reflects the feminism in marriage as a symbol of capitalism to women. The researcher also points out that this research finds Annisa succeeding in eliminating the patriarchy that uses the term “male power.” The difference from this study lies in the use of theory. In this study, the author concludes that Annisa wants to be like a man, but the researcher focuses on the culture itself in this research.

Second, some researchers have analyzed the Monalisa Smile Movie. One of the articles entitled *The Struggle of Katherine Watson For Getting Equal Rights Of Education In Monalisa Smile Movie* by Oknawiyanti and Ingestry Nunggil(2016). It discusses the actions of the main character, Khatrine Waston, which are the central issue of this research. Therefore, the author applies a liberal feminism approach to analyze it. Meanwhile, in this research, the researcher is against liberalism or continuing to preserve what already exists—judging from the culture itself, namely conservatism.

Third, there is research by Rahma and Fadila (2017) entitled *Representasi Perjuangan Perempuan dalam Movie “Monalisa Smile” (Studi Analisis Semiotika)*. Undergraduate (S1) thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar. This research focuses on representation theory. This research is a representation of women's struggles in the public sector, (1) a representation of women's struggles in changing perspectives of thought in Wellesley, (2) a representation of women's struggles in changing prevailing traditions in Wellesley, (3) a representation of women's struggles in leaving conservative values and traditional culture in Wellesley. The research by Rahma research uses theoretical

representation, so the difference lies in the use of theory because the researcher of this research uses which analyzes the culture and the characters of the movie.

It can be concluded that these studies use different theories compared to this research. These studies use feminism theory, focusing more on the main character, women. The research highlighted the issue of women's struggle for justice. Meanwhile, this research uses the same film object, Monalisa's smile and the woman in the turban, but with different theories. This research focuses on explaining how the issue of traditional conservatism occurs in both films. Therefore, this research also focuses more on other characters than the main character. It aims to see how each character in the movie represents the idea of conservatism. This research also explains the positive side of the conservatism tradition that influences the characters to live a better life by using John Kekes' conservatism theory.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

In this research, the researcher uses conservatism theory. Conservatism is defined as an ideology and philosophy that upholds traditional values. According to Kekes (2001:31), the central concern of conservatism is with arrangements that create the conditions for people to live good lives. Those conditions include, but are not limited to, civility, equality, freedom, a healthy environment, justice, order, peace, prosperity, rights, security, tolerance, and welfare. These are conservatism ideas, according to John Kekes:

- a. Skepticism is translated as questioning attitude or doubt towards knowledge or belief. Skepticism gives the character in conservatism to be cautious in accepting

reasons, in wanting reasons to be concrete, tried, and accurate, attested to by experience, without pretending to be a quixotic pose of the wholesale rejection of the effort to be as reasonable as possible. According to Kekes (2001:31-33), in a century torn by rationalist and irrationalism political experiments that exacted an incalculable toll on human suffering, a skeptical attitude towards political arrangements anyway is surely a reasonable one if we care at all about human well-being

- b. Pluralism is the second part of conservative political morality. According to Kekes (2001:35-36), Berlin argued that society could not maximize all good things at once: there is always a trade-off. “ he sees pluralism as a medium between absolutism (truth values or objectively objective reality) and relativism (considering science, truth, and morality about culture, society, and historical context)
- c. Traditionalism, conservatives characteristically look to traditional cultural institutions to curb humans’ base and destructive instincts. In Burke’s words, people need “a sufficient restraint upon their passions,” which is the office of government “to bridle and subdue.” Families, churches, and schools must teach the value of self-discipline, and those who fail to learn this lesson must have discipline imposed upon them by the government and law. Without the restraining power of such institutions, conservatives believe, there can be no ethical behavior and no responsible use of liberty Kekes (2001:38). The traditions are keeping the arrangement in which individuals take part because the reason of society fosters

good lives in terms of the beliefs, values, and depends on individual participation in the traditions which society believes.

- d. The final conservatism, according to Kekes, is Pessimism. Pessimism leads conservatives to reject the “Enlightenment Faith” in human perfectibility shared by liberals and socialists. No human is perfect; all humans are capable of committing crimes. However, conservatives do not go to the opposite extreme of viewing human nature as irredeemably corrupt; even thoroughly evil societies witness acts of decency, generosity, and sacrifice.

1.6.1 Movie theory

The movie theory used in this research is the theory proposed by Ed Sikov called mise-en-scene. According to Sikov (2010: 5), mise-en-scene is the first stage to understand how movies produce and reflect meaning. He assumes that everything within an image has expressive meaning. Mise-en-scene consists of elements, such as setting, props, lighting, costume, makeup, camera action, angle, and cinematography, emphasized by the camera. The framing techniques in cinematography are:

1. Extreme Long Shot (ELS): in which one can barely distinguish the human figure.
2. Long Shot (LS): in which the human is distinguishable but is dwarfed by the background
3. Medium Long Shot (MLS): in which the human is framed from the knees up
4. Medium Shot (MS): in which the camera moves slightly to the human's waist up

5. Medium close-up (MCU): in which the camera is slightly closer and sees the human's face from the chest up
6. Close-up (CU): in which the camera only frames one portion (face, mainly)
7. Extreme close-up (ECU): The camera shoots a mere portion of the human's face (eyes or mouth). (Villarejo, 2007: 38).

1.7 Method of Research

A method of research is one procedure or technique in a study. Research methods involve data collection, analysis, and interpretation, which the researchers propose for their study (Creswell, 2016, p. 3). This part explains the types of research, data sources, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques.

1.7.1 Type of research

The type of this research is qualitative. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975: 5), the qualitative method is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in words from people and observable actions. This means that the data are collected and presented in the form of words, not numbers. It aims to provide a clear description of the research. Thus, this research applies it to explain the conservatism cultural ideas as seen in the movies *A Woman with a Turban* (*Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* (*Woman with a Turban*)) vs. *Monalisa Smile* based on the data.

1.7.2 Data sources

According to Lofland (1984: 47), the primary data sources in qualitative research are words and actions, while the secondary data sources are documents. The primary data sources are from both movies, *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*

(*Woman with a Turban*) and *Monalisa Smile*. Those come from the description of the scenes and the dialogue. Meanwhile, the secondary data are taken from other data that contain information and ideas related to the problem. Those come from compatible books, scientific writings, journals, articles, and other documents.

1.7.3 Data collection technique

According to Lexy J. Moleong (2005: 58), the data collection technique is a strategic way the researcher uses to collect data, which aims to get relevant and complete data. The researcher chose a documentation technique to collect the data for this research. Documentation is the document prepared for research. The researcher divides the data collection technique into three steps. Firstly, the researcher watches *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban (Woman with a Turban)* and *Monalisa Smile* movies. The researcher intensively takes the primary data from the screen capture of the scenes. Secondly, the researcher looks for secondary data from compatible books, scientific writings, journals, articles, and other documents to support the data. Thirdly, the researcher classifies all data into some categories to make them easy to analyze.

1.7.4 Data analysis technique

According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975: 79), data analysis is formal planning to find themes and formulate hypotheses as suggested by the data and an effort to assist with those themes and hypotheses. The researcher divides the data analysis technique here into steps. First, the researcher chooses the main points of the data. Second, the researcher analyzes the intrinsic elements of both movies,

Perempuan Berkalung Sorban (Woman with a Turban) vs *Monalisa Smile*. Third, the researcher analyzes the problem by using the data. The researcher also uses movie theory. Meanwhile, in applying movie theory, the researcher explains the scenes based on the elements of mise-en-scene. Fourth, the researcher concludes with the final statement from the analysis.

1.8 Paper Organization

This graduating paper has four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction that consists of the background of the study, problem statement, literature review, study objective, significance of the study, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization. The second chapter is about the intrinsic elements, including the summary of themes, plot, settings, characters, and characterizations. The third shows the analysis of *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban (Woman with a Turban)* and *Monalisa Smile*. The fourth chapter is the conclusion and suggestions for the research.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

After conducting this research, the researcher has several conclusions related to the analysis of conservatism in the two films, *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *Monalisa Smile*. Each character in both movies represents an idea. The researcher found that although the main character is against the conservatism tradition in both films, it can be broken through the ideas that are occurring. Each character has its reasons for maintaining its tradition. The conclusion, with the aim that the reader can understand the whole concept, is explained below.

First, researchers found that there is an idea of skepticism, which is caution manifested by suspicion of new traditions. If they are not skeptical, they will be easily influenced by the negative impact of outside traditions. Second, researchers found the idea of pluralism in both films. Pluralism bridges traditions that can still be tolerated and positively impact the previous tradition. Third, researchers found the idea of Traditionalism in both movies, which is the idea of traditionalism in this research in the form of image data, speech data, and thoughts that aim to show that each character can maintain their traditions. Fourth, researchers found the idea of pessimism. Each character shows distrust of new things.

From these four ideas, each character in both films believes that the value of tradition itself is preserved, as when someone destroys something valuable and replaces it with something of equal value. Each character believes conservatism is

not to keep the rating value high but to maintain the things that now contribute to the rating.

Furthermore, Hanung Bramantyo, the director of *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, and Mike Newell, the director of *Monalisa Smile*, build the characters to maintain tradition through the idea of conservatism. The traditions they create are closely related to the plot or how the story goes. In developing the plot, both directors depict how a neighbourhood maintains its traditions. Therefore, the comparison of the two films can produce similarities and differences that have been found. In addition to the storyline, differences in the story's ending occur in both films. The main character of the woman in the turban can accept the traditions in her environment and agree to maintain them, but insert new things that do not erase the old traditions. In *Monalisa Smile*, the main character's ending could not survive in a conservative environment, so she chose to leave. This proves that each character claims the conservatism tradition is worth maintaining. However, another side of the conservatism tradition may make the main character choose to leave his environment. In addition, conservatism remains the best choice of tradition that creates conditions for people to live a good life because the tradition that emerges is not to hurt but to educate firmly and show that conservatism exists in human life.

4.2 Suggestion

After completing the research, the researcher found that many aspects can be studied using the Conservatism theory. First, related to culture and tradition, future researchers are very likely to apply the theory of conservatism to other cultures and other comparative studies besides English-Indonesian. Second, related

to data, data analysis of conservatism in movies is not difficult to obtain. It is suggested that future researchers take data from novels, comics, or other print media in which there are traditions or cultures. It depends on what context they want to use. Thirdly, since this study shows the relationship between comparative movies regarding conservatism and literature, it is suggested that future researchers can connect the idea of conservatism with another idea of literature. In the future, researchers can connect the idea of conservatism in comparative analysis with other branches of literature, such as psychological analysis or cultural studies. By doing so, they can conduct diverse research concentrations to make the knowledge gained more prosperous.

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