

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE ON PARENTING STYLES IN *PEREMPUAN BERKALUNG SORBAN* (2009) AND *THE VIRGIN SUICIDE* (1999)

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for Gaining the Bachelor's Degree in English Literature



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kami menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang Munaqosyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

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MOTTO

“Don’t be afraid of failure but be afraid of never trying.”

Roy T. Bennett



DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents. Thank you for supporting me in many ways and always praying for the best for me so that I can finish this thesis.

For myself, who has struggled and always tried to be consistent in working on this thesis.

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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this graduate paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this graduating paper. Other researcher's opinion or finding included in this research is quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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**RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE ON PARENTING STYLES IN
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(1999)**

By: Ananda Syifa Qolbu I

ABSTRACT

Religion, which is used as a basis for raising children, should be able to shape children's character for the better. However, parents in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *The Virgin Suicide* educate their children based on religious principles, yet their children fail to follow those rules. This is partly due to the parents' inability to distinguish between guiding and controlling. *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *The Virgin Suicide* explore the complexity of parenting across different religions and cultures. Using descriptive comparative qualitative methods, this research aims to analyze how Muslim and Catholic parents struggle to properly incorporate religious teachings into their parenting styles and identify the impacts on the children. To understand this issue, this research uses Karl Marx's theory of religion, particularly his view that religion distorts facts and serves illusory happiness. This research found that both parents use religion to distort facts and provide illusory happiness for their children. As a result, Anisa from *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* experienced trauma, though eventually able to fight and survive because of support from people around her. Meanwhile, Lisbon's sister from *The Virgin Suicide* was unable to survive and chose to commit suicide due to the lack of support and awareness from those around them. In conclusion, religion in parenting will be ineffective if religious teachings are not applied appropriately.

Keywords: *Religion, Parenting styles, Distorted facts, Illusory happiness*

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Oleh: Ananda Syifa Qolbu I

ABSTRAK

Agama yang dijadikan landasan dalam membesarkan anak hendaknya mampu membentuk karakter anak menjadi lebih baik. Akan tetapi, orang tua dalam *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* dan *The Virgin Suicide* mendidik anak berdasarkan prinsip-prinsip agama, namun anak-anaknya gagal mengikuti aturan-aturan tersebut. Hal ini sebagian disebabkan oleh ketidakmampuan orang tua untuk membedakan antara membimbing dan mengendalikan. *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* dan *The Virgin Suicide*, mengeksplorasi kompleksitas pengasuhan anak di berbagai agama dan budaya. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif komparatif, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana perjuangan orang tua Muslim dan Katolik untuk memasukkan ajaran agama ke dalam gaya pengasuhan mereka dan mengidentifikasi dampaknya terhadap anak-anak. Untuk memahami permasalahan ini, penelitian ini menggunakan teori agama Karl Marx, khususnya pandangannya bahwa agama memutarbalikkan fakta dan menyajikan kebahagiaan ilusi. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa kedua orang tua menggunakan agama untuk memutarbalikkan fakta dan memberikan kebahagiaan ilusi bagi anak-anaknya. Alhasil, Anisa di film *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* mengalami trauma namun masih mampu melawan dan bertahan, sedangkan kakak beradik Lisbon di *The Virgin Suicide* tidak mampu bertahan dan memilih bunuh diri. Kesimpulannya, penggunaan agama dalam pola asuh tidak akan berhasil jika cara penerapan ajaran agama tidak tepat.

Kata Kunci: *Agama, Pola asuh, Distorsi fakta, Kebahagiaan ilusi*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Perempuan Berkalung Sorban and *The Virgin Suicide* tell the story of religious parents who raise their children based on the teachings of the religion they adhere to, but interestingly, both their parenting styles do not seem successful. *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* tells the story of a girl named Anissa whose father is Kiai (religious leader) in an Islamic boarding school in East Java, Indonesia. Anissa's parents raised her in a strict upbringing based on the teachings of the Islamic religion, which is in line with the teaching model and values applied in their Islamic boarding school. Anissa's parents taught her harshly, even with physical violence. They impose many restrictions on Anissa simply because she is a woman, even making important life decisions on her behalf. If Anissa broke the rules, her father would punish her by beating. This made her experience trauma and mental health problems that persisted into adulthood.

Meanwhile, *The Virgin Suicide* talks about five girls who have parents with a conservative authoritarian religious upbringing in United States, named Mr. and Mrs. Lisbon. They raised her child according to the rules of the Catholic religion they believed in. They imposed strict rules, but not necessarily with violence. They forbade their children to play out and hang out with boys. If their children were caught breaking the rules, their parents would lock them in their rooms and were not allowed to leave, including going to school. This made them depressed and

eventually decided to commit suicide. Despite differences in religion, country, and way of upbringing, *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *The Virgin Suicides* illustrate how religion, intended to serve as a good basis for parenting, can sometimes lead to child's misery.

Religion is the belief in a supernatural entity connected to God the Almighty, that is present in all aspects of human existence, both privately and publicly (Derung et al., 2022). It generally teaches morality and serves as a guide to living a virtuous life. Religion can be applied to various aspects of daily life, including parenting. To some extent, it may shape parents' disciplinary approaches and parenting styles (Purnama et al., 2022). This influence can determine how parents set rules and instill values in their children.

The application of religious knowledge to educate children also depends on their religion since each religion has its own way of applying its teachings. Sulastri (2022) has conducted research by interviewing children from different religions. From the results of the interview, the subjects said that Muslim parents were more likely to educate their children with more strictly and firmly, and it is because there is a lot of commands that must be carried out. Meanwhile, according to the subject, Catholic father's upbringing tended to be more relaxed. The subject felt that his father gave him freedom to choose his own beliefs. Coupled with the fact that there are not too many obligations and demands of the Catholic religion, this made the subjects feel that the Catholic religion is more relaxed.

Apart from that, parents' parenting style also depends on local cultures. Different communities have different ways of caring for and educating their children. In Asia, for example, they still think that children must obey their parents' teachings. Therefore, in Eastern countries, parenting styles tend to be firmer and harsher. On the contrary, the parenting style of parents in Western countries is known for giving their children freedom (Triwardani & Nurwalidah, 2020). This is done so children can live independently and grow according to their choices (Park, 2013).

The parenting style of parents influences the formation of a child's character. Instilling good morals and religion in raising children is essential in shaping children's character for the better. Regnerus (2003) states that religion and parental behavior greatly influence raising children. Baumrind (2024) also argues that parents' spiritual level positively influences children's development. This can even affect the child's delinquency. Therefore, religion, when used as a foundation for raising children, should be able to shape children's character for the better.

However, many parents raise their children according to religious rules, yet their children fail to adhere to these values. One of the possible reasons is that some parents cannot differentiate between educating and restraining. Thus, they end up educating their children in an authoritarian way. An authoritarian parenting approach aims to shape, manage, and assess a child's behavior and attitude (Baumrind, 2024). Baumrind claims that parents who adopt an authoritarian parenting style believe that children who are conforming and obedient will benefit from severe and firm adult dominance. Children are not allowed to voice their

opinions, but when they break the rules, they will just be punished immediately. Authoritarian parents think that teaching their children in a hard way is the best way to teach them.

In fact, children who are always restrained have a greater desire to do things that their religion or parents prohibit. According to Baumrind (2024), authoritarian or restrictive parenting usually causes aggressive behavior and delinquency in children because when children are unable to face and control stress, they tend to rebel and behave mischievously. Ironically, many religious parents raise, regulate, and shape their children's character according to the teachings of the religion they believe in. Still, as a result, they end up implementing an authoritarian parenting style, which makes their children restrained. Ultimately, their children rebel and have characters that do not match their parents' teachings.

To understand this issue better, this research explores some possible explanation of how religion which is supposedly good can be detrimental to children when used as part of parenting styles. By comparing the two films, this research explores the varied impacts of cultural influences and religious teachings on the authoritarian parenting model. Also, this research identifies the varied impacts of religion-driven authoritarian parents on children's lives.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background study above, this research discusses religion. Concerning the issue, the problem answered in this research is as follows:

1. How is religion incorporated into parenting styles in detrimental ways, as shown in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *The Virgin Suicides*?
2. What are the impacts of religious rules in parenting, as seen in both films?

1.3 Objective of study

This study aims to examine how religions, Islam and Catholicism, are incorporated into parenting styles in ways that can be detrimental, as shown in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *The Virgin Suicides*. It also identifies the varied impacts the religion-driven parenting styles can have on children. As already stated, this research uses Karl Marx's concept of religion, particularly his view that religion distorts facts and serves illusory happiness.

1.4 Significance of study

This research serves as a reference for analyzing and comparing the religion-driven parenting styles in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *The Virgin Suicide*. It can expand literary and film studies using Karl Marx's theory of religion and parenting styles, which might be relevant for research mapping in the English Departments. Apart from that, this research can also provide a broader view of religious teachings because many religious teachings end up causing misery, including in teaching children, as seen in the two films in this research.

1.5 Literature Review

Several studies discuss the same film object. The most common discussions in these two films are feminism, patriarchy, trauma, and psychological disorders experienced by the children's characters in the movie.

First, a journal paper by Marasabessy (2021), a student of Airlangga University, entitled *Patriarchy and Women's Emancipation in Indonesian Film: Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts and Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*. This research compares and discusses the differences in the concept of women's emancipation shown in the two films. These two films tell the story of a woman's emancipation in fighting for her rights, but both are shackled by patriarchal culture. Her research uses semiotic theory with a gender approach. The conclusion of this research is the difference in the concept of patriarchy and women's emancipation is due to the character's behavior and different form of patriarchal cultures.

Second, an international journal article entitled *The Feminism Issues on Perempuan Berkalung Sorban Movie and Novel from An Islamic Perspective*, written by Tengku Anuar et al. (2022). This study aims to apply feminist theory to analyze *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban's* feminism from an Islamic point of view. Based on the findings of this study, three feminism-related concerns can be emphasized: women's leadership, rape or domestic violence in marriage, and women's standing and rights to education.

Third, research by Priyoto & Ifriana (2021) entitled "A Psychological Disorder Experienced by Lisbon's Daughters That Leads Them to Commit Suicides

in Sofia Coppola's Movie *The Virgin Suicides*. This research aims to find out the things that make all of Mrs. Lisbon's children experience psychological disorders and the impact of this psychological suffering on Mrs. Lisbon's children. This research uses psychological theory to examine this. According to this study, it is due to Mr. and Mrs. Lisbon's strict parenting methods. As was previously noted, there are two effects of an authoritarian parenting style: first, the children experience depression; second, they develop rebellious, dishonest, and unstable personalities, which are characteristics of borderline personality disorder.

It can be concluded that most of the research that discusses the film *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* discusses the concepts of patriarchy, feminism, and women's emancipation. As for *The Virgin Suicide*, there has been only find one study that discussed the psychological disorders experienced by Mrs. Lisbon's children. In contrast, this research discusses the role of religion used in parenting styles in these two films. Furthermore, what makes this research different is most of the research discusses the child's perspective in these two films, such as how they struggle against patriarchal culture or physical disorders experienced by the child, whereas this research discusses the perspective of the parents, such as parents' behavior and ways of educating their children based on religion.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

1.6.1 Religion Theory by Karl Marx

From a philosophical, economic, political, and social perspective, Marxism is founded on the ideas of Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx from the 19th century. Marxism is an approach to socioeconomic analysis that uses historical materialism

to examine class relations, social struggle, and societal change. According to this idea, historical development is primarily determined by the formation and reproduction of matter. Marx and Engels methodically described historical materialism, which groups societies according to the relations of production in *The German Ideology*. This theory goes from primordial society to capitalism, slavery, feudalism, and communism at the end of history (Sari Aksakal, 2024).

As cited in Sari Aksakal (2024), Karl Marx wrote the introductory theoretical text *Das Kapital* and the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Marx popularized the term "capitalism" in the modern sense through this work and introduced it to the social and scientific spheres at the start of the twentieth century. Capitalism is a way of life and a system of accumulation that allows societies to make money to buy and sell goods, produce goods, or supply and sell labor based on services.

The capitalist system still functions on the axis of the struggle between labor (the proletariat) and capital (the bourgeoisie) or within the framework of the antagonistic relationship between the two groups. According to Marxist terminology, the class that controls the capitalist system's means of production and appropriates the surplus value created by workers is the bourgeoisie. The group's class definition concerning their place in production is known as the proletariat. It emerged when individuals lost their property due to the end of feudalism and were forced to sell their labor for a set price.

Apart from the production and socio-economic class, this research mainly focuses on Karl Marx's perspective on religion. As cited in Lü et al. (2014), Karl Marx maintained that religion is a tool the ruling class uses to maintain social order and that it is nothing more than a spiritual opiate that paralyzes the revolutionary will of the disadvantaged general population. Marx explained his concepts in detail and provided a general explanation from three perspectives below.

First, religion serves as the "universal basis of consolation and justification" in the **inverted world**. Marx said in the "Introduction" that because this state and this society are an inverted world, they produce religion, which is an inverted belief of the universe. Marx held that it was precisely humans who created religion or God in their image; however, religious society operates in the exact opposite way, as though God had made humanity in His image. Marx argues that religion distorts facts, claiming that following or accepting religious precepts will spare people from suffering.

Second, religion provides "**illusory happiness**" and adorns the chain that binds individuals by putting "imaginary flowers on it." According to Marx, people are exploited and live in misery in societies, but religion assures them that if they can put up with and accept their suffering, they will be rewarded in paradise. Karl Marx claimed that although religious adherents may find spiritual comfort, religion also compels them to hold onto their suffering.

Third, religion is both an "expression" of and a "protest" against real suffering. In the "Introduction," Marx emphasized the claim that religious suffering

is both a reflection of and a protest against actual suffering. The scream of the suffering creature, the soulless conditions, and the heart of a heartless world are all represented by religion. That serves as the populace's opiate.

From the three theories above, this research uses the first and second theories about religion according to Karl Marx, where religion is an "inverted world" or distorts facts and religion as "illusory happiness". This research examines whether the religion used as a parenting style for their children in the two films mentioned is in accordance with the religious perspective presented by Karl Marx.

1.6.2 Parenting Style Theory by Diana Baumrind

This research will also use the theory of authoritarian parenting proposed by Diana Baumrind (2024) to examine the parenting styles in the two films under discussion. This theory explains that there are three types of parenting styles, one of which is authoritarian. Authoritarian parenting aims to shape, manage, and assess the child's attitudes and behavior in line with a predetermined code of conduct. When their child's behavior goes against their teachings, they educate harshly and aggressively to suppress the child's freedom. They think submission and obedience are virtues. This theory is related to the authoritarian parenting style.

1.6.3 Film Theory

This research uses films as objects to be analyzed. Therefore, film theory is needed to support this research. Researchers use the *mise-en-scene* theory by Ed Sikov. In his book *Film Studies: an Introduction, Mise en-scene*, often known as *mise-en-scène*, refers to the main characteristic of cinematic representation (Sikov,

2010). Understanding *mise-en-scene* is crucial to comprehending how movies create and convey meaning. French in origin, the term refers to everything that has been placed onstage or in the scene.

Everything positioned in front of the camera to be photographed, including the setting, properties, lighting (key light, a fill light, and a backlight), costumes, makeup, and figure behavior (i.e., actors' gestures and facial expressions), is known as *mise-en-scene*. Additionally, *mise-en-scene* involves cinematography, which is merely photography for motion films, as well as the actions and angles of the camera. *Mise-en-scene* is the entirety of the image's expressive substance. According to film studies, every element in the picture has an expressive significance. We can start to understand their meanings by examining *mise-en-scène*.

Researchers use this theory to understand the meanings of the scene in these films by examining the settings, props, lighting, costumes, makeup, and figure behavior. Apart from that, researchers also analyzed the shot or camera distance of the film which consists of:

- Extreme close-up: An image that shows any object isolated at a very close distance (person's eyes, mouth, or nose, etc.)
- Close-up: the character's face fills most of the screen.
- Medium shot: appears to be taken from a medium distance; in terms of the human body, it's from the waist up.

- Long shot: The character now appears in a full spatial context because the camera has shifted back even further.
- Extreme long shot: The character appears dwarfed onscreen due to the camera's extreme distance from him/her.

1.7 Methods of Research

1.7.1 Type of Research

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method because the data is in the form of word descriptions, not numbers. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research is based on assumptions that differ greatly from quantitative designs.

1.7.2 Data and Source of Data

This research has two types of data: primary data and secondary data. The primary data for this research are the films *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *The Virgin Suicide*. Meanwhile, the supporting data is taken from academic articles related to the topic in this research.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

Researchers collected data for this research by reading and observing parenting styles in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *The Virgin Suicide*, as well as writing scripts and scenes that show forms of parenting towards children. Researchers also collect data in articles and books related to research.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

The researcher analyzed data on parenting styles involving religion by categorizing the data into symbols, discourse, and practice. Then, Karl Marx's theory about production relations and social class in both films and his analysis of religious parenting styles are applied using two of his three perspectives on religion, which are illusory happiness and distorted facts.

1.8 Paper Organization

This research consists of four chapters. Chapter one contains the background of the study, research questions, objectives, significance of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, method of research, and paper organization. Chapter two contains aspects of the film and its intrinsic elements, such as film summary, characters and characterization, setting, and plot. Chapter three is a discussion and analysis of the problem statement using the theory of Religion by Karl Marx. Then, the last chapter has conclusions and suggestions from the results of the analysis in the previous chapter.

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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.2 Conclusion

Religious teachings should have a positive impact when used for parenting, but it is clear that this ideal does not seem to be perfectly realized by the religious parents in the films *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *The Virgin Suicide*. They misuse power and religion in their parenting styles. Karl Marx's concept of religion has been quite useful in explaining this matter. Kiai Hanan, as a proletarian, is willing to sell his child's happiness by marrying her to Samsudin in order to get financial assistance for his Islamic boarding school. Meanwhile, Mrs. Lisbon, as a petite bourgeois, is willing to isolate and seize her child's right to go to school in order to build a good reputation.

Kiai Hanan and Mrs. Lisbon also distorted the facts of religious teachings to overly regulate and control their children. They also use religious teachings and rewards to provide illusory happiness to their children. Religion in both films seems to be merely a tool to control and cover up the real motives behind religious behavior. Coupled with the way they implement religious teachings with a conservative and authoritarian parenting style, this causes their children to suffer and be tortured.

Even though the authoritarian styles in both films are quite similar, the impacts on the children vary. Anisa experienced trauma until adulthood because of the physical punishment previously given by her father and felt desperate, but because of the support of Khudori and her mother, Anisa managed to survive and

tried to fight for her dream again. Meanwhile, the Lisbon sisters were unable to bear the suffering they experienced. The lack of support from the people around them, coupled with a lack of awareness and guilt from their mother, made them give up and choose to commit suicide. Based on the results of the analysis above, it can be concluded that the use of religious teaching will not be successful if the parents do not convey religious teachings in the right way.

4.3 Suggestions

After completing research on the films *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *The Virgin Suicides*, the researcher recognizes that a lot of potential could be developed. Previous research on these two films mainly discussed feminism, gender equality, psychological approaches, or theories that addressed the child's perspective. For future researchers, the researcher suggests discussing other perspectives in these two films, such as using a cultural studies approach or analyzing power relations and social class perspectives in these two films. However, the researcher realizes that this research still has many shortcomings. Therefore, the researcher accepts constructive criticism and suggestions from readers for better further research.

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