

## *Social Problems in Manbiki Kazoku's Movie by Hirokazu Koreeda*

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### **Abstract**

*Social problems can be found in many literary works, especially in movie. This research aims to analyze social problems in Japanese society in the Manbiki Kazoku's movie by Hirokazu Koreeda based on the sociology of literature theory by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren. The method used to analyze the data in this research is a qualitative descriptive method as a guideline to analyze text containing information in the movie. Data was collected by using reading and note-taking techniques. This research's data sources are quotations from words, phrases, clauses, and snippets of the text or manuscript in the movie. Furthermore, academic books, articles, journals, and theses will be used to support this research. This research indicates social problems in the Manbiki Kazoku's movie by Hirokazu Koreeda. The form of social problems that appear in the Manbiki Kazoku movie by Hirokazu Koreeda includes (1) Poverty, (2) Gender issues (3) Child abuse and neglect. **Keywords:** Manbiki Kazoku; Social problems; Japan movie.*

### **A. Introduction**

In the book Theory of Literature, Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1994) said that there are three classifications of the sociology of literature, those are; the sociology of the author, the sociology of literary works, the sociology of readers, and the social influence of literary works (in Wiyatmi, 2013: 25). The sociology of literary works usually examines the problem that often occur in society related to norms, social groups, social changes, et cetera. However, not all of these problems are desired by the community concerned. Problems that cause

disappointment, suffering, et cetera are often referred to as social problems. Social problems are a problem that interferes with social values and societal institutions (Soekanto, 2012: 311). In order to examine the social problems that exist in society, it is necessary to use a sociology of literature approach to obtain the expected results. According to Damono (1979: 2), a sociology of literature approach is used to understand the social problem in a literary work more deeply. Social problems can occur in various fields, such as economics, education, morals, culture, et cetera. Examples of social

problems in various fields often found in the community include poverty, unemployment, gender inequality, et cetera.

Social problems are also found in a Japanese movie called *Shoplifters* or in the Japanese language known as *Manbiki Kazoku*. Researchers are interested in analyzing *Manbiki Kazoku's* movie because the movie tells about the reflection of poverty in Japan. In addition, *Manbiki Kazoku* is a Japanese movie by Hirokazu Koreeda that has achieved many impressive movie achievements, one of which is winning an award in a prestigious event called the *Cannes Film Festival*, which is very strict in selecting candidates. *Manbiki Kazoku*, which means shoplifter family, tells the story of a low-income family living in Tokyo who survives by shoplifting to meet their economic needs. The cast consists of Shibata Hatsune (grandmother) as an elderly housewife, Shibata Osamu (husband) working as a construction worker, Shibata Nobuyo (wife) working as a laundry worker, Shibata Aki (younger sister) working as a comfort girl,

Shiba Shota (son) did not go to school, and Yuri (daughter) was a young child whom the Osamu family adopted due to being abandoned by her biological parents. They often steal or shoplift in supermarkets or stores to fulfill their daily lives. Although the central theme of this movie is raising the issue of poverty in Japan. But in the story, there are many social problems that Japanese people often face. In the *Manbiki Kazoku's* movie, researchers found data showing social problems. For example, child abuse and neglect in Japan, where the number of child abuse in Japan reportedly increased fivefold from 1999 to 2013. Research reported that about 28.9% of children in Japan are subjected to torture, and the death toll due to neglect also has almost the same percentage, 27% (Yamaoka, in Aprilia 2022: 166). There are also other social issues, such as gender issues. These social issues will discuss in this research.

## **B. Research Methods**

The method that will use in this research is the descriptive qualitative method. According to Wekke et al.

(2019: 15), The descriptive qualitative method is collecting data in words instead of numbers to describe or discuss the research results theoretically and thoroughly. The procedure for data collection used the method of reading and note-taking techniques. In the first step, the researcher will watch and listen to *Manbiki Kazoku's movie* which lasts about 2 hours and 1 minute. Then, the researcher will collect and take note of data in the form of quotes, dialogues, snippets, and sentences related to social problems in the movie.

### C. Result and Discussion

The social problems in the *Manbiki Kazoku's movie* are as follows;

#### 1. Poverty

When viewed from its economic factor, Japan is one of the most developed countries in the world. Therefore, many people often consider that the poverty level in Japan is low and almost non-existent. However, in its statement Aprilia (2022: 162) said that according to research in 2004, the poverty rate of

Japan has the highest index compared to other developed countries. Poverty in Japan is due to several factors. One of the factors is the prolonged economic recession that occurred in Japan in 1990, causing an increase in the percentage of bankruptcy, poverty, divorce, et cetera. In the *Manbiki Kazoku's movie* there is a dialogue that shows poverty in one of Japan's families, namely the family of Osamu. It is shown in the following data;

#### a. Data-1

しょうた しやんぷー わすれた  
 (祥太) シャンプー 忘れた

'Shota : I forgot to take the shampoo'

おさむ いや 今度にしよう  
 (治) いや 今度にしよう

'Osamu : Let's get it next time'

(*Manbiki Kazoku's movie*, minute 03:52)

#### b. Data-2

はつえ としより ねんきん あて  
 (初枝) 年寄りの年金 当てにして

かいしょう  
 甲斐性なし

'Hatsue : You live off my pension but you're so unreliable'

(*Manbiki Kazoku's movie*, minute 6:00)

Based on the two data above, there is a social problem called poverty, as evidenced by the conversation between Shota and Osamu. They have returned from shoplifting goods in the supermarket. However, they forgot to steal or

shoplift shampoo and will come back next time to steal again. It shows that the Osamu family, make ends meet, committed crimes such as shoplifting or stealing goods in supermarkets near where they lived. They usually use stolen goods from supermarkets for their families. This crime of shoplifting is one of the realities of the poor families in Japan. Aprilia (2022: 162) Japan's National Police Agency said that shoplifting has been the highest crime in the last ten years in Japan. Then, in 2012, there were also 135,000 documented cases of shoplifting.

Meanwhile, the second data shows a snippet of Hatsue's dialogue that satirizes Osamu because he came home with Yuri to live in their house (a four-year-old girl who neglect by her family), not bringing extra money for their lives. Hatsue tells Osamu to go home with more money and not just rely on his job as a construction worker. Because the Osamu's salary is low, they also had to live relying on their grandmother's pension. Her grandmother earned pension money from her ex-husband's pension.

#### 1. Gender Issues

Basically, men and women have the same rights and responsibilities. However, in reality the position between men and women is unequal. Because of that many gender-related problems, one of them is patriarchy. Patriarchy is a culture that has been inherent in people's lives that men have the highest position compared to women (Nirmah, 2015:2). The impact of patriarchy usually includes discrimination, objectification of women, et cetera. Gender-related issues involving the impact of patriarchy are also found in *Manbiki Kazoku's* movie as follows;

##### a. Double Burden

Discrimination is one of the effects of patriarchy. One type of discrimination is a double burden. Double burden is discrimination that treats one gender to work excessively compared to the other (Sasongko, 2009: 10-11). There is data showing double burden in *Manbiki Kazoku's* movie, as follows;

##### 1) Data-3

おまえ きょう ち でかけん  
お前 今日 遅えんだな出かけん  
のが

'Hey, You're going to be late for work today.'

(*Manbiki Kazoku's* movie, minute 24:28)

In the snippet dialogue above, Nobuyo washed dishes and cleaned up the house, but suddenly Osamu told her to go to work immediately so that she was not late. Nobuyo also works as a laundry worker. It proves that Nobuyo has a double burden as a housewife who takes care of the house and as a laundry worker. Even though Osamu can also do household chore, he chooses to do nothing. Sasongko (2009: 11) said that various research shows that 90% of women do household chore, and it is also normal for women to work outside. These examples show the social issue involving gender in terms of double-burden discrimination.

The double burden of Japanese women is also an actual reality in Japanese society. Ishii-Kuntz (in Sari, 2020: 361) states that the apparent gender differences in household management participation and the division of labor in the family in Japan create a habit in a society where women with a percentage of 74.9%, take care of almost all households chore even though they also work outside.

b. Objectification of Women

In the *Manbiki Kazoku's* movie there is a dialogue that shows one of the effects of patriarchy, namely that women are used as sexual objects, as follows;

1) Data-4

<sup>おさむ どうき</sup>  
 ( 治 の同期) かわいいうすね  
 Teman kerja Osamu: 'She's cute  
 (While looking at Aki in seductive  
 way)'  
<sup>おさむ</sup>  
 ( 治 ) ばあちゃん?  
 'Who? Grandmother?'  
<sup>じんぼ</sup>  
 ( 神保 ) いや...  
 'No, the other one...'

(Manbiki Kazoku's movie,  
 minutes 21:36)

The dialogue above tells that Osamu's workmate brought him home because he had a work accident until his leg got injured. In this situation, his co-workers should be concerned about Osamu instead of focusing on Aki and her clothes. It shows that Osamu's workmates look like he is harassing Aki. It is considered sexual harassment because he sees Aki with a seductive look, and Aki feels uncomfortable with that. Sexual harassment is a common thing that often occurs in Japanese society, especially experienced by women. It is because men think women have a lower degree than themselves.

Culture in Japan created a patriarchy that defined men as dominating women. Because of this position, women were often regarded as objects.

According to a survey conducted by the Tokyo Metropolitan in 1997, 79.1% of women have experienced sexual harassment at work and in public places. Then, in 2009 as many as 6,000 people were also arrested on suspicion of sexual harassment by taking photos without permission. Sexual harassment in Japan continues to increase in percentage from year to year by approximately 35%. (Saleha, 2010: 10).

### 3. Child Abuse and Neglect

In the *Manbiki Kazoku's* movie, there is data shows that Yuri experienced neglect and child abuse by her parents, which is as follows;

#### a. Data-5

はつえ だして  
(初枝) だ... 出してないのかね  
そ... 捜索願を

'Hatsue : They haven't reported her missing to the police?'

(のぶよ) ん... 今頃せいせい  
してんじやないの?

'Nobuyo : Hm yes, I bet they're relieved she's gone.'

(*Manbiki Kazoku's* movie, minute 18:42)

#### b.Data-6

2かげつじょうりょうしん  
すでに2か月以上両親はこの  
かんそうさくねがい ていしゅつ  
間捜索願を提出していない  
'She has been missing for over two months, but her parents never filed a missing persons report with the police.'

(*Manbiki Kazoku's* movie, minute 39:30)

The neglect evidence was found in a snippet of the data-5 dialogue, a snippet sentence of the news on the data-6 stating that although her parents lost Yuri, they did not look for her and only reported the loss after more than two months. Usually, when parents lose their children, they must feel sad and worried and try to find it all way. It shows that Yuri was abandoned or neglected by her parents. Furthermore, child abuse is also experienced by Yuri as follows;

#### c. Data-7

うで みせて  
こっち... 腕見せてごらんなに どうしたのこれ

'Let me see your arm. What happened here?'

ころんだ  
(ゆり) 転んだ

'Yuri : I felt'

はつえ いたい  
(初枝) 痛い?

'Hatsue : Does it hurt?'

はつえ からだ みせて  
(初枝) ちよっと体見せてごらん.

きずだらけ  
傷だらけ...

'Hatsue : Let's have a better look at you. You're covered in scars.'

(*Manbiki Kazoku's* movie, minute 06:10)

d. Data-8

えっ <sup>ほしく</sup>欲しくないの？

'You don't want it?'

なんで？

'Why not?'

(ゆり) <sup>たたかない</sup>叩かない？

'Won't you hit me?'

<sup>のぶよ</sup>(信代) え？

'Eh?'

(ゆり) <sup>たたかない</sup>あとで叩かない？

'Won't you hit me later?'

(*Manbiki Kazoku's* Movie, Minute 46:44)

In data-7 and data-8 prove that Yuri was subjected to abuse by her parents. The first time Yuri was taken to Osamu's house, their grandmother found Yuri in a body full of scars. Furthermore, in data-8, when Yuri is about to be given a shirt by Nobuyo, she refuses because she thinks she may be hitten like her biological mother used to. The case of child abuse and neglect in the *Manbiki Kazoku's* movie vividly reflects the social problems that often occur in Japan. Child abuse and neglect is often underestimate even though the number of children who experience neglect shows a reasonably high percentage. (Yamaoka, in Aprilia 2022: 166). Furthermore, the Ministry

of Health and Labor article written by Aprilia (2022: 166) stated that in the survey results in 2017, there were around 26,818 cases of children in Japan who were neglect and subjected to violence.

**D. Conclusions**

Based on the analysis that has been discussed, researchers can summarize that in *Manbiki Kazoku's* movie social problems often occur in Japan's society. Social problems include poverty, gender issues, violence, and child neglect. The Osamu family represents the conditions of poverty in Japan. They commit crimes to keep themselves alive by shoplifting or stealing in supermarkets. Second, the gender issue in *Manbiki Kazoku's* movie is a social problem that still occurs in Japan. One example in the movie is Aki, who is seen with a seductive look by Osamu's workmates. Third, there are social problems related to child abuse and neglect. In Japan, this issue is often underestimated and ignored even though the percentage of child abuse and neglect that occurs in Japan is still high. The *Manbiki Kazoku's*

movie exemplifies the situation obtained by children who have experienced violence and neglect in Japan, represented by Yuri's character. Yuri often accepts the violence committed by her parents, causing many scars on her body, and also, when her parents lose Yuri, they do not even report her to the police for about two months.

After analyzing *Manbiki Kazoku's* movie, researchers realized that this research is far from perfect. Therefore, the researcher suggested to the next researcher that it would be better to analyze *the Manbiki Kazoku's* movie to discuss not only social problems but also solutions.

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