GEISHA CULTURE AND TRADITION AS REPRESENTED IN ARTHUR GOLDEN’S MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA

A THESIS

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ENGLISH LETTERS STUDY PROGRAME
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ABSTRACT

For more than 400 years, the most famous woman institution in Japan, the geisha, have never exposed the secret veil of their profession to the outside world. Thus, their function in the hanamachi (Flower Town) questioned. Many assumed that they are only prostitutes while some regards them as traditional artists. The emergence of Memoirs of a Geisha by Arthur Golden gave a deeper understanding about the basic core of their profession.

The purpose of this study is to observe the cultural and traditional values of the Japanese and geisha depicted in the novel Memoirs of a Geisha; moreover to profoundly analyze the application of the cultural and traditional values in the daily lives of the
geisha. This study used the sociological approach, a literary approach which tries to find out the relation between the literary work and the society which in this case is the geisha community. Another approach used by the writer is the historical approach where the writer could analyze, compare and draw a conclusion that the facts presented in the novel conform to the historical facts.

The analysis shows that many of the cultural and traditional values give strong flavor in the novel Memoirs of a Geisha. The Japanese society holds their culture and tradition firmly which can be seen from the way they value others by bowing as a gesture of respect. Geisha as a part of the Japanese society holds the culture, tradition and rituals endured by many other geisha hundreds of years before them, sternly. They learn, intensify and devote the traditional arts as an epitome of their profession. The chaos happen from the World War II dragged them to a disadvantageous path. Cultural misunderstanding occurred has triggered an harassment to their profession. Their love and dedication to their profession, culture, tradition and traditional arts proved that basically geisha are traditional artists.


Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat penggambaran nilai-nilai budaya dan tradisi Jepang dan geisha yang terdapat dalam buku Memoirs of a Geisha; kemudian
menganalisa lebih jauh mengenai pengaplikasian nilai-nilai budaya dan tradisi tersebut didalam keseharian para geisha. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi, yaitu pendekatan yang mencoba mencari hubungan antara karya sastra dengan masyarakat, dalam hal ini adalah komunitas geisha. Pendekatan lain yang digunakan penulis adalah pendekatan secara historis dimana penulis dapat meneliti, membandingkan dan menarik kesimpulan bahwa fakta-fakta yang terdapat di dalam buku sumber sesuai dengan fakta sejarah yang sebenarnya.