

THE FORMULA OF CHICA-LIT SEEN IN VALDES-RODRIGUEZ'S THE DIRTY GIRLS SOCIAL CLUB

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Abstract

Chica lit study refers to the study about genre of literary work forms. This is about Mexican-American woman who takes apart as a writer that makes the story by combining chick lit and chicana lit. This thesis aimed to analyze a novel written by Alisa Valdés-Rodríguez entitled *The Dirty Girls Social Club*, and focuses on the analysis about the formula of chica lit and the invention as an additional formula for chica lit study. In this research, theoretical framework provided some theories to help finding out the answer of the problem statement of this research. Since, this research focused on analysis about the formula of chica lit, structuralism approach and genre study approach were applied in this research. Descriptive qualitative method was used to elaborate and to perform the data that have logic correlation to the problem statement. The data is written text in Valdés-Rodríguez's *The Dirty Girls Social Club*. As the result of the analysis, the writer concluded that, there are five stereotypes or forms of chica lit. They are chick lit, single girl, girlfriends, paranormal romance, and culture of poverty are the five basic elements of every chica lit works. That all also is divided into several parts of elements such as love plot, heroine maturation, heroine at work, beauty and shopping or consumption.

Key words: chica-lit, chick-lit, formula, genre

INTRODUCTION

Fiction is kind of imagination that filled in the stories by the author. Then fiction can be divided into several kinds such as romantic fiction, crime fiction, historical fiction and many others kind of fictions. According to (Amelia & Daud, 2020), "Fiction is subjective and evocative. It is made up and indirect in its communication". From the quotation, subjective means that the condition or the story is based on the reader's feeling, perception or imagination. Meanwhile fiction is also evocative. It is not only about experience but also it can be the willingness that cannot be reached in the author's real life or the feeling that combined with the imagination of the author (Febrian & Fadly, 2021).

Fiction can also be as evocative for the reader. It means that fiction story is made to evoke the reader's emotion. Sometimes the story can make the reader feel angry, happy or sad. Moreover if they think and feel the same condition as the story tells about or even they have the same experience (Santoso., 2018). This is what Kurland means that the fiction as a communication which can bring the reader indirectly to feel the same way like the story tells. Fiction is divided into two categories, (Febrian & Fadly, 2021). (Kuswoyo, 2014) explains that literary fiction has the purpose to be reached. It does not only become entertainment but also it wants to make the reader knows that there is the purpose behind

the fiction and the thought of the reader can be evoked by the fiction. Then according to (Kuswoyo, 2016) “literary fiction is fiction that attempts to communicate ideas, concepts, or feelings that transcend the structural elements of the story, e.g., the plot, the characters, the setting.” It means that the literary fiction focuses on the structural element of the story and then, how can the author make the plot, setting of time, place and who the character that will be antagonist or protagonist, or neutral is. So the reader knows what the ideas, concept or even feeling that they get from the story (Amelia, 2021).

Meanwhile, popular fiction according to Gelder has the purpose to evoke the reader’s emotion. Moreover the condition of the fiction story has the same condition as the reader’s condition, their feeling and thought will be more attentive to the story. Then according to (Suprayogi & Novanti, 2021) “The word popular is, of course, used to mean whatever is liked, desired, and approved by a large number of people.” This statement means that we can say something popular if there are a large number of people like it and they have desires to have it. The people will easily access it, because everyone has it. Actually the root of the word popular is “pop” which has the same meaning as erupt or explode or in the other word, it is something that well known by most of people. It is same as the meaning of popular which is something that known easily by the people and then it is liked, desired and approved by the large number of people (Gunawan D, 2020), (Mittal & Patidar, 2019). Then if the two words are combined, the word popular with fiction, it becomes the fiction which is liked, desired, and approved by a large number of people as the communication and entertainment and it becomes known well by everybody (Lestari et al., 2018).

The novel entitled *The Dirty Girls Social Club* that written by Alisa Valdés-Rodríguez which describes about chica- lit. This novel was published on 2003 and since this novel published, chica lit being popular. The novel talks about friendship between six girls, they are called as Mexican- American women or Mexican who lives in America (Liu et al., 2020). The author of this novel is also Mexican- American women. In the novel, the author explains each of the six Mexican- American women per chapters. Those six women met each other in the University of Boston. Their names are Lauren, Elizabeth, Amber, Usnavys, Sara and Rebecca (Liu et al., 2020), (Sasalia & Sari, 2020). The story tells about girlfriends that have their own problem with their relationship such as relationship to parents, husband, or even boyfriend. Then how they are success as a single girl and the women who has not gotten the best man yet until in the end of the story, even though in the end of the story some of them find the right man. (Teknokrat, n.d.) Then the story also tells about how they are as carrier women. There are several elements more inside of the novel that construct it become chica lit, and then they are called as the formula (Fitri & Qodriani, 2016) (Sasalia & Sari, 2020).

The writer chooses chica lit as the analysis, exactly is about the formula of chica lit seen in Valdés-Rodríguez’s *The Dirty Girls Social Club* novel. Chica lit is the newest genre in the field of literature. (van Eijck, Michiel; Hsu, Pei-Ling; Roth, 2009) This is interesting to be discussed because it gives the knowledge to the reader about new culture, such as Mexican

that live in America, and then how they survive their life. It is not easy become someone who intimidated as a Hispanic or illegal immigrant who gets the protests. The formula deals with the structures that form the story line (Rido et al., 2017),(Alita et al., 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Study

Analyzing this thesis, the writer thinks that it is important and needed to know about some point of chica lit form or the other discussion of related issue from the previous writers who have done the research. (Prasetyawan et al., 2018) This purpose is to know the parameter of classifying chica lit and to find the formula of chica lit seen in the chosen novel, of the novel, Valdés-Rodríguez's *The Dirty Girls Social Club*. Actually, there are some points that can be used by the writer to investigate this topic from the previous writer like Muhammad Eral in the term of chick lit and Erin Hurtin in discussing the novel *The Dirty Girls Social Club* written by Alisa Valdés-Rodríguez (Kardiansyah, 2016).

Structuralism

According to (Suwarni & Handayani, 2021), "Structuralism is distinctive for studying its objects explicitly as wholes and the parts which make up those wholes as parts, that is, never purely intrinsically but in terms of the contribution they make to the whole they are part of". This quotation means that the object can be seen as a whole then the whole of the object can also be seen as parts which constructed the object. It emphasizes in structure organization of the text of literary work which has the meaning behind the text (Jobli et al., 2011). In the other hand, Habib stated:

"Structuralism regards "meaning" not as substantively self-identical but as relational, the product of a shared system of signification. Structuralism examined literary texts and broader cultural phenomena as patterned after language, as a structure of sign systems." (Habib, 2005: 568)

The quotation means that meaning is not as substantively self-identical but as something that has correlation each other, so meaning can be constructed. This is about the source of meaning and how it is used by the literary texts, and in the wider condition structuralism will examine the cultural phenomenon as the pattern after language. It deals with the real condition around then it becomes the structure sign system and the people know about the language. (Mardinata & Khair, 2017),(Kuswoyo, 2014) This is no longer talking about the experiences of the reader or even the author that will construct the meaning but the operations and oppositions which govern language. Meaning is no longer determined by the individual but by the system which governs the individual.

Chica lit

The classification of literary works can be seen into different types of genre according to the field of popular literature, and the famous one is known chica-lit now. Within the genre of chica lit, this thesis will be conducted. Chica lit is one of subgenres from chick lit that tells about women literature. Before chica lit, there are so many subgenres that produce after chick lit, such as hen lit which is (Lina & Setiyanto, 2021),(Wantoro & Priandika, n.d.) chick lit focused on women over forty and on the other to adolescent chick lit usually

called as chick lit Jr. Besides that, there is mommy lit which focuses on motherhood. Subsequently, there is also Christian chick lit or church lit which emphasizes in the Christian values and the other one is Bridge lit within the mainstream literature focus on white, middle-class twenty and thirty something professional women, more specifically on the job world. Then the other one is in the case of crossing the racial divide, there is Ethnick lit, including such subgenres as “Sistah lit” and “Chica lit”.

METHOD

Research methodology is needed by the writer to help analyzing the problem, then to help contributing and support the research. According to Robert, “Research is inquiry, deliberate study, a seeking to understand (Mustika et al., 2018). Meanwhile Methodology according to Polit and Hungler, “Methodology refers to ways of obtaining, organizing and analyzing data”. (Al Falaq & Puspita, 2021). The quotation means that how the writer gets the data, and organizes the data and also how the writer analyzes it. Then dealing with this thesis, the writer applies some research methodology in conducting the paper. Those are research design, data and data source, data collecting technique and data processing technique (Mustika et al., 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Love Plot

Plot is important in forming the story and describing the story line. Love plot can be seen in the novel from Valdés-Rodríguez’s *The Dirty Girls Social Club*. The formula that will be the center of this research will be focused on general plot events, including a happy romantic ending. The writer believes that there is love plot element in chica lit inside *The Dirty Girls Social Club* novel. Romantic is closed tie with love.

Heroine Maturation

Actually there are many literary works that tells about heroine maturation. The writer believes that in this analysis Valdés-Rodríguez’s ’ *The Dirty Girls Social Club* as a chica lit focuses on the heroines of the character inside the novel that makes the people or readers sympathy with the effort of doing job or anything through the characters of the novel by being far more humane than their selfish and make mistakes. This stereotype emphasizes in the feeling of the readers. The writer want to specified heroine’s maturation in more specific issue such as effort in marriage that also makes the people or the reader sympathy. The writer believes that one of the elements of chica lit is heroine maturation.

Heroine maturation can be seen in every aspect of her life. Then in Valdés-Rodríguez’s *The Dirty Girls Social Club* will also tell about heroine’s fortune in marriage and how the heroine struggle in her marriage and how the marriage can be maintained.

“I know he doesn’t mean to do it, that it’s just the way he was raised. His dad was (still is) a drinker, and when he was drunk he lost his temper. Poor Roberto used to get beaten, I mean really beaten, chica, with tire irons, things like that, until his bones broke and he had to tell the doctor he fell off his bike. I’m the only one knows about it.”

The quotation above is stated by Rebecca, because she tries to make the marriage better. In the story Roberto, her husband is often to hit her. Then sometimes Rebecca is also doing

the same thing. From the previous quotation states *I know he doesn't mean to do it, that it's just the way he was raised. His dad was (still is) a drinker, and when he was drunk he lost his temper*, it shows that the character use her maturation toward her marriage problem. She tries to receive the background of her husband's family which makes him like what she looks.

Heroine at Work

Giving the best is important, not only for the receiver but also for the giver. So chica lit also shows the professional life with giving the best in the work. The other quotation shows how Usnavys gives her best in her professional life and support the previous statement.

"Usnavys is ordering one of her assistants to schedule a very important press conference for next month, and she's rattling off the details of what needs to be supplied, counting them off on her meticulous, chubby fingers" (Valdés-Rodríguez, 2003: 29).

The statement above tells above heroine at work. One of major character inside the novel is Usnavys. She gives her best to make herself discipline. To be discipline is not easy, moreover to discipline ourselves. In the other hand, she makes what should she do in details and what needs to be supplied. The quotation states that she is *counting them off on her meticulous*. She does not want to get mistakes so she does it accurately.

Beauty

Women need to be beautiful and to be respectful by the people around them, not only men but also the other women. Beauty is important for women, it is one package to be a success girls. In chica lit beauty is important to be discussed, because it has also relation with shopping and consumption. How to be a beautiful girl, they have to choose what the things that match in color or even appropriate dress when they wear the skirt or cloths, what the shoes that should they use.

"Beneath the coat she's wearing yet another elegant pantsuit this time in the pretty pale green wool... She gets he brows waxed at a salon near the projects every three or four days... and her makeup is always perfect" (Valdés-Rodríguez. 2003: 29)

The statement above tells how the women look at the other women. How they cloth, what the cloths that they wear, and then what the brand are. Beauty is needed by women, it makes women feel perfect. Lauren tells about what Elizabeth wears when they meet each other. She tells about how Liz maintain her body beautiful trough waxed at salon three or four days and still uses her makeup perfectly.

Shopping or Consumption

The other formula of chica lit is shopping or consumption. Actually, shopping and consumption is about what is the women prefer to be aware and this is also about how the girls who try to find the right and correct man for them. Shopping or consumption that exist in Valdés-Rodríguez's *The Dirty Girls Social Club* novel is not only about shopping cloths, jewelry, or handbags based on their willingness, but also it is about "shopping" for men.

Single Girl

The other formula of chica lit is single girl. Single girl is actually the combination of two words, such as single and girl. Single means that there is no husband or wife. Then if both of them combined, the meaning becomes a girl who does not have husband or a boyfriend or the other guy that has the relationship with the girl. Subsequently in the other words, single girl can be as an unmarried woman, especially a young one, who supports herself and lives on her own and she prides herself in independence and freedom. She is the life of the party, and the inventor of fun. Then the life of single girl is more focus on their career, even though the relationship with somebody else, like has boyfriend is also their needed.

Girlfriends

All the people around the world need friends, moreover best friend to share the good story or even bad story or the other condition that happen. Girl is familiar with their girlfriends; wherever they go together, gossiping, laughing, crying, sharing, motivating or even making an event together. Chica lit in Valdés-Rodríguez's *The Dirty Girls Social Club* novel is also telling about girlfriends. There are six girls that make a relationship that most of them know each other in college. They are Lauren, Sara, Elizabeth, Usnavys, Rebecca and Amber. They are all Mexican- American women or Latina.

Paranormal Romance

The other element of chica lit is paranormal romance issue. This paranormal issue is not like the story with characters of ghost or vampire, but in Valdés-Rodríguez's *The Dirty Girls Social Club* novel, it is more dominant telling about, how Mexican people believe something that called as prognosis or oracle. They believe that it gives the influence to their life. It can be also called paranormal issue. Sometimes they live according to those oracles and believe the life and fate is arranged by it. The quotation from Valdés-Rodríguez's *The Dirty Girls Social Club* novel states that "You can tell what stage I'm at in my doomed relationship by the state of my fingernails. Good nails: bad relationship, keeping up appearances. Ugly nails: happy Lauren letting herself go" (Valdés-Rodríguez, 2003: 14). From the statement shows about paranormal romance that will happen in Lauren's relationship according to her fingernails. The fate that she believes is when she has a good nails, she will have a bad relationship, while when she has a ugly nail, she will have happy relationship.

Culture of Poverty

The other element of chica lit is culture of poverty. Dealing with Mexican people or more specific Mexican women or Latina, it will tell about their real state which is Mexico, and then poverty becomes one characteristic of Mexico. So in chica lit, the author makes culture of poverty as one the element that exists. It because the author wants to shows the readers, even though they live in America, but still poverty condition happened in their life. Poverty becomes a culture that existing in their life, even though they have already become a career woman and succeed. They are still in poverty condition; it is seen when they become materialistic girls that searches on the rich man. It shows that they still feel poor even though they have everything and can buy everything they want by themselves.

CONCLUSION

After accomplishing the research, the writer draws a conclusion based on the analysis which has been done in the previous chapter. This thesis analyzes about the formula of chica lit generally and the invention which appears through the novel Valdés-Rodríguez's

The Dirty Girls Social Club. (Sinaga & Oktaviani, 2020),(Sinaga & Oktaviani, 2020),(Almuafiry et al., 2017) There are five elements that usually appear in chica lit novel such as chick lit that also divided into love plot, heroine's maturation, and heroine at work, beauty, shopping or consumption. Subsequently the other elements of chica lit are single girl, girlfriend and culture of poverty. The next element of chica lit is paranormal romance element that tells about the belief of fate and the other one is culture of poverty(Ardyanto & Pamungkas, 2018).

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