

Social Criticism in Barbara Schöneberger's Song

Okky Dwi Hapitta¹ *, Dian Rizky Azhari², Claudina Nova Nurjannah³

^{1,2,3} Sekolah Tinggi Bahasa Asing Yapari, Indonesia

*Corresponding author:
E-mail: okky@stba.ac.id

Abstract

Three of Barbara Schöneberger's songs from the album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* criticize women in society. This study aims to elucidate German perceptions about women. In this study, a descriptive qualitative technique was used as the research methodology. The research's data consists of phrases and words taken from the lyrics of three songs by Barbara Schöneberger from the album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* Document analysis techniques, note-taking, and listening were used to collect data. We then employed careful observation and listening to analyze the data. This study used the Literary Sociology approach, which draws on Alan Swingewood's concept of Literary Sociology. The results of the study show that: (1) From Barbara Schöneberger's album *Jetzt singt sie noch...!*, the first three tracks Three categories can be used to categorize the stereotypes about women: (a) those that focus on how they appear physically; (b) those that highlight how they are perceived as capable; and (c) those that depict women as nothing more than objects for other women's bodies. (2) Examined social issues include the following: Social criticism can be divided into three categories: (a) criticism of morality in society, which breeds stereotypes and discrimination against women; (b) criticism of economics, which focuses on unethical economic growth that fuels social unrest; and (c) criticism of gender, which addresses women's roles as objects of all women and gender norms that restrict women to household duties.

Keywords: *Criticism of social, Literature, Women, and Sociology literature*

Introduction

Social criticism arises in society because of the social problems that arise because of the change in the patterns of behavior that exist in society. Through such social criticism, the society expresses opinions, criticisms, responses, and reproaches to a positive or negative action that exists in the society. Social criticism can criticize all forms of social circumstances, situations and actions in society that are considered deviating from social and moral values with the aim of creating a better social condition. (Oksinata, 2010:38).

Nowadays, songs are an important part of society's life. Almost every time, the song is present as an inseparable necessity of life. Unconsciously, music and songs have an important influence on society's social life. Through songs we can communicate indirectly. Songs with

How to cite:

Hapitta, O. D., Azhari, D. R., & Nurjannah, C.N. (2024). Social Criticism in Barbara Schöneberger's Song. *International Journal of Pedagogical Language, Literature, and Cultural Studies*. Nexus Publishing. Pages 26-33. doi:<https://doi.org/10.63011/ip.v1i2.14>

lyrics that are acceptable to the community and greatly reflect the circumstantial reality, more interested listeners. It's a special concern for the singers. Not many singers sing a song just to please themselves. The lyrics in the songs sung by the singer, also always have meaning and message that can express criticism and opinion in everyday life. Through the song also, a social criticism of a situation in the surrounding environment can be conveyed. One of the German singers, who appears to be bringing social-critical songs, is Barbara Schöneberger. In this study, the author analyzed several songs performed by Barbara Schöneberger on the 2007 album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* The album consists of eleven German pop songs with vocals sung by Barbara Schöneberger. Of the eleven songs on this album, there are three songs that contain social criticism indirectly or implicitly.

The three songs were used by the author as research material because, the songs are easy to find across the music platform, making it easier for the author to listen to them. The three songs also have lyrics that are relevant to the situation and conditions today and can generate negative thoughts about the way of life of the German people. It's also related to the social situation that is being discussed a lot in society today.

Method

In this study, the data analysis used is descriptive-qualitative. Qualitative research method is a method of research that focuses on the in-depth analysis of the phenomena present in the subject. Descriptive means the research findings are described in concrete terms based on the research carried out, without drawing conclusions from the findings of such research (Thabroni, 2022).

The research data is words and phrases in three songs by Barbara Schöneberger from the album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* For data analysis, the document is studied, listened to, and recorded. Then the data is analyzed by listening to the three tracks by Barbara Schoeneberger of the album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* evaluated, intensely listened and observed. The approach used in this research is literary sociology by applying the concept of Alan Swingewood's thinking.

Results

From the seven songs on the album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* only three songs were used as data in this study. The songs are *Zu hässlich für München* (later abbreviated as ZhfM), *Ich glaub, 'ne Dame werd ich nie* (later abbreviated as IgDw) and *Das bisschen Haussalt* (later abbreviated as DbH).

The image of a woman appears in the three songs. There are 5 lyrics in ZhfM related to female physic, 6 lyrics related to female capability and 3 lyrics related to woman as object for men. In contrast to the lyrics of the IgDW, there are 5 lyrics related to female physic, 13 lyrics regarding female capability and 5 lyrics concerning woman as object for men. There's no lyrics on the DbH song that relate to female physic, 1 lyric related to female capability and 9 lyrics related to woman as object for men.

A picture of social criticism can also be seen from the three songs above. Social criticisms that emerge are social critics that relate to morality (in the songs ZhfM and IgDw), social critics that relates to economic (only in the song ZhfM) and social critics related to gender. (only in the song DbH).

Discussion

Women and beauty have an identical relationship. Appearance and beauty play a very important role in one's self-esteem.

The standards of beauty in the world vary, it's because of the characteristics defined in its relationship with society always changing over time. The standard of beauty is not only shaped by one's physical but also by the competence, the role of the ideal woman. According to Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* (1973:301) a woman is not born but becomes a woman. In Beauvoir's view, women are born through the social and cultural constructions that exist in their surroundings. Three of the songs on the album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* by Barbara Schöneberger describe the social factors that shape women. Through these three songs on this album *Jetzt Singt sie Auch noch...!* namely zu hässlich für München (zHfM), Ich glaub, 'ne Dame werd ich nie (IgDW) and *Das bisschen Haushalt* (DbH), the representation of women is grouped according to criteria/stereotypes in society namely:

Female Physics

Refers to characteristics related to a person's body and appearance. The relationship between physical and beauty standards is so close because beauty standards are often based on an assessment of a person's physical appearance. According to Paula's () article entitled *Im Wandel Natürlichkeit wird kein Maßstab mehr sein* says that beauty has always been a strong value so far. What is considered beautiful is also considered good.

Those who are beautiful have easier times in life. Anyone who's pretty might earn more money just because she's beautiful. So, there's the assumption, that being beautiful will take you further in life. Therefore, beauty and standards of beauty are very closely linked in life especially in women and this is also true in Germany. The standard of beauty that applies in German society is also described by the songwriter through Barbara Schöneberger's text in the following song.

The image of the woman is stereotyped with the 11th and 13th sentences of the song zHfM: “*kein flichendes Kinn*” there is the word “*flichendes*” means: bending backward. Referring to the song the sentence *kein Flichendas Kinn* means someone who does not have a bending chin.

13th line zHfM song: “*Mittelblond, mittlegroß*” has the meaning of the general phrase that has the normal blonde hair and the normal height of the body. Further on the first line of IgDW's song there is the word “*Hungerdiät*” the word comes from the word “*Hunger*” and “*Diät*” that means hunger (can lose weight) and “*Diet*” means activity where one eats little to lose weight. Referring to the lyrics, the phrase “*Ich bin zu hungrig für Hungerdiät*” means someone who feels too hungry. Refer to the lyrics, the songwriter wanted to describe indirectly the standards of beauty that were still in force at the time.

The Capabilities of Women

In these three songs the first images that appear related to women and their capabilities are on the 2nd and 3rd lines of the song zHfM:

- (2) “*Da werd ich plötzlich depressive*” (Suddenly I feel depressed)
- (3) “*Und dann fühl ich mich so farblos*” (and then I feel uncolored)

In the lyrics, the songwriter describes a person who feels anxiety about himself about how he is seen in society so that he feels sad and unconfident. Such a thing can be attributed to the later lyrics “*Die man sofort erkennt, keinen Stil und keinen Akzent*” (from which you

can see I have no style and accent.) In the lyrics the songwriter describes a person who doubts how easily he is recognized while he has no style and accent. In the lyrics the songwriter wants to convey the presence of a standard of ability that someone does not meet so that the person feels sad and depressed. The standard of ability delivered by the songwriter indirectly leads to someone who does not have an outstanding way of behaving and speaking.

In the song IgDW, women are marked with the word "*Dame*" (Woman). Other illustrations are on lines 9, 10 and 11 of the following IgDW song.

- (9) "Ich frage nie, was morgen beginnt" (I will not ask what will happen tomorrow)
- (10) "Bin wie der Wind - was kommt, das kommt" (Be like the wind, what comes, comes)
- (11) "Will nichts vom Leben und leb irgendwie" (Don't want anything from life and live somehow)

In the lyrics, the songwriter describes a desperate person who has no ambition in his life by describing himself as the wind and as having no enthusiasm in life to a goal. Based on an article from the website [mdr.de](http://www.mdr.de), it is argued that the German public is known to have a consciousness of the importance of planning. German culture often emphasizes the importance of good planning and arrangement in life. This is reflected in a serious approach to career, financial, family, and future planning as a whole. German women who internalize these values may seem skilled in organizing their lives.

From written works the composer of this song aims to express a number of norms of feminine capabilities that this person cannot meet, including: lacking confidence, a distinctive manner of speaking and acting, a sense of humor, friendliness, and wealth. This relates to an Ipsos study from 2019 that had the following number of respondents: 13,503 respondents to the poll asked, "How important are characteristics for women's beauty?"

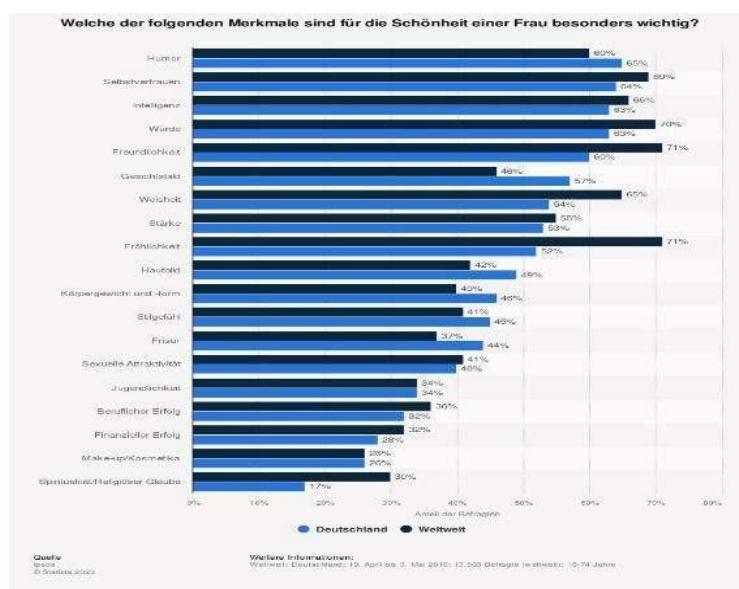


Figure 1. Survey result

Based on Ipsos's 2019 statistical data, which included 13,503 respondents to the survey question "How important are the following characteristics for women's beauty" The songwriter's claim that capability standards were not met can be reinforced by citing the statistics. Therefore, based on the dictionary definition, contextual meaning, and the poll

findings, it can be said that a lady needs to possess the stereotypical qualities of humor, confidence, prominence, wisdom, friendliness, and wealth to be accepted in society.

Objects for Men

In Beauvoir's view and concept the use of the term object refers to the view of women as passive or bound to roles determined by men and placed as a tool to satisfy the needs and desires of men. Women become objects in the concept of Simone de Beauvoir accompanied by roles determined by society and existing patriarchal norms. In Germany, the division of women's roles in society has existed since the Nazi era, but with the advancement of the era the role of women in the society has changed. As women as male companions and objects of fulfilment of male needs are included in domestic roles in the personal life of men it is described in three songs performed by Barbara Schöneberger. The first image is on the line 26, 31 and 32 of the ZhfM songs.

(26) *"Ich hab bisher noch keinen gefunden, der sich ganz zu mir bekennt"* (I haven't found a single one so far, who fully confesses to me)

(31,32) *"Warum fragst du mich niemals, "Ob wir heiraten sollen?"* ("Why don't you ever ask me, 'Shall we marry?'")

In the lyrics, the songwriter describes the confusion of an adult woman who has entered marital age but hasn't committed to a relationship yet. Connected with the 14th line in the same song "Und bald Mitte 30, kinderlos" (Middle of 30 and no children). In this lyrics, the songwriter presents the search for a woman who has entered the age of 30 but has not yet had a child. The author wanted to convey the stereotype of women acting as men's companions through the lyrics in the song. Long time ago based on Brashler's article in the journal entitled "Mothers for Germany: A look at the Ideal Woman in Nazi Propaganda", Stating that having children is a public affair because the state invests in raising its population. The Nazi party used women as a tool for achieving its ideals of the "Superior Race" that could be achieved by the role of women to give birth to many healthy, intelligent, and able to continue the Nazi values.

The other aspect described in these three songs related to women is the object for men is the role of women as objects of fulfilment of men's needs namely women and domestic duties as described in the fourth line on the DbH song:

"Das bißchen Kochen ist doch halb so wild, sagt mein Mann" (little cooking is half so wild, says my husband.)

In the sentence can be described that the woman in her role as a male companion is doing domestic duties like cooking. On the fifth line "Was für den Abwasch ganz genauso gilt, Sagt mein Mann" ("What is the same for the dishwasher, says my husband"). In the lyrics there is role of the woman in the household. Woman should be able to wash dishes. The household duty of a married woman is in the ninth and tenth lines.

„Und auch das Bügeln schafft man ganz bequem, Sagt mein Mann" (And you can make it very comfortably, says my husband)

„Das bißchen Garten, oh, wie wohl das tut, Sagt mein Mann" (The little garden, oh, how well that does, says my husband)

In the text of the song, the songwriter wanted to show the stereotype of women as the object of both women as men's companions and women's roles as male needs. Traditionally, women were considered responsible for domestic tasks such as taking care of children, cooking, cleaning the house, and caring for the family. However, with the development of modern society and awareness of gender equality, the role of women in domestic duties has changed. However, the stereotypes that were abandoned at the time and there are still some that are left behind and are still a problem to this day. Thus, stereotypes such as those presented by the songwriter arose such as: marriage, women as men's companions, women responsible for the beauty of the household and women only do domestic work.

Social Criticism in Barbara Schöneberger's Song (Album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!*)

The study also describes a picture of social criticism in relation to what appears in the three songs by Barbara Schöneberger on the album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* From the data collected, social criticism emerged as follows:

1. Moral social criticism, the criticism indirectly conveyed by the author, is found in the form of discrimination against women, stereotypes against women and the anxiety of women in social life in society because of the standards of beauty that must be met, so that women cannot choose what and how they should be.
2. Schöneberger's album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* conveyed criticism of the economy. The author conveys his criticism through Barbara Schöneberger in ZfHM and IgDW. The author assumes Barbara Schöneberger as a bourgeois actress who could not survive in a large German city but also felt uncomfortable in a small German city through her texts like: "*Bin ich zu hässlich für München? Zu dumm für Berlin? Zu trendy für Bautzen? Zu prollig für Wien? Zu pleite für Hamburg? Zu reich für Schwerin?*" (Am I too ugly for Munich? Too stupid for Berlin? Too trendy for Bautzen? Too loud for Vienna? Too bad for Hamburg? Too rich for a Schwerin?). The author that there was unequal economic growth between cities and municipalities in Germany, which led to the existence of social classes. On the lyrics of the song ZfHM on the 39th line and 40th line 39 & 40: "*Manchmal hab ich das Gefühl Dass ich zu durchschnittlich bin*" (Sometimes I feel that I am too average). On the lyrics it shows that in addition to the upper and lower classes, there is also the middle class in the social class division of German society. The author also wanted to point out the existence of the middle class in Germany described through Barbara Schöneberger in previous lyrics stating that she did not deserve to live in the big cities that exist in Germany but also was uncomfortable to be in the suburbs that were located far from the city center. In the lyrics the author wanted to express the uneven economic growth in Germany by revealing that the city of Hannover is the right city to be lived by people in the middle class. From the lyrics it is stated that city centers with good infrastructure reflect the upper social classes and small towns in the states reflect lower social classes, whereas the city of Hannover reflects the middle social class because Hannover is the economic center in northern Germany with good manufacturing and information technology sectors but the economic scale of Hanover is still smaller than in big cities such as Berlin, Munich or Frankfurt.
3. The author describes a man or a husband stronger than a woman or a wife although not all the housework can be done easily but the man or husband figure in this song assumes that the woman or wife worker is an easy and enjoyable job. Other illustrations showed that men have a stronger role than women in the following lyrics.

Line 19 & 20 : “*Er muß zur Firma geh’n, tagein tagaus, Sagt mein Mann*” (He must go to work, day by day, says my husband). “*Die Frau Gemahlin ruht sich aus zu Haus, Sagt mein Mann*” (Wife resting at home, said my husband). On the lyrics on criticism of gender inequality is still visible. The lyrics strongly state that women have easier roles than men. The author conveyed in his lyrics that the role of the husband was more difficult than just doing the housework it was shown in the lyrics the husband said that he had to go to work every day out while the wife could be at home and more rest. The author criticizes the attitude of men who disregard the role and work of their partners in the household. In other lyrics the author also shows gender-related criticism that patriarchal values are formed so that women cannot choose what they want to do.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the Social Critics study in the song Barbara Schönebereger, the following conclusion can be drawn: Of the three songs that Barbara Schöneberger sang on her album entitled *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* describes the existence of stereotypes about women in society. Women can be accepted in society if they meet the following standards and criteria: (1) Physical, women depicted in this song, there is a stereotype created by the presence of the ideals of beauty in the Nazi era. As the evolution of the era of beauty ideals in the German society changes, there will be still some old stereotypes that are endless.

Thus, the standard stereotype of German women's beauty is that women should have an ideal body shape, blonde hair, have a tall body and have a modern accent and style. (2) Furthermore, the stereotype described in the three songs of Barbara Schöneberger describes the existence of a stereotypical capacity that should be applied, namely, to the three tracks of Barbara Schöneberger's album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* namely: a woman must have a good ability to socialize in her society, about her future and the ability to do domestic duties as a member of the family. (3) Objects for men, in the three songs of Barbara Schöneberger in the album *Jetzt singt sie auch noch...!* Women become objects in which women are determined by society and existing patriarchal norms. Like women as male companions and objects of fulfillment the needs of men are included in the domestic role in the personal life of men.

Then there are the social problems that were criticized in the three songs of Barbara Schöneberger in the album *Jetzt singt sie noch...!* which included: (1) the moral issues that were criticised by the author in all three songs, namely that the attitude of the public toward women with the standards of beauty it created discrimination and stereotypes of women that formed in society. (2) The problems related to economics, the problems that are criticised related to the economy is the existence of uneven economic growth in Germany. This led to the formation of a social class in which the existence of social classes was detrimental to some parties. (3) Gender-related criticisms included women as objects of male domination and about the division of work in households that were still underestimated by men.

References

Brashler, K. L. (n.d.). *Mothers for Germany: A look at the ideal woman in Nazi propaganda.* <https://doi.org/10.31274/etd-180810-3905>

Endraswara, S. (2003). *Metode Penelitian Sastra*. Pustaka Widyatama.

Koonz, C. (2010). *A tributary and a mainstream: Gender, public memory and the historiography of Nazi Germany*. Gender Politics and Mass Dictatorship, 63-82. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230283275_4

Oksinata, H. (2010). *Kritik Sosial Dalam Kumpulan Puisi Aku Ingin Jadi Peluru Karya Wiji Thukul(Kajian Resepsi Sastra)*. <https://www.kajianpustaka.com/2016/03/pengertian-dan-masalah-kritik-sosial.html>

Ringel, S. (2018). *Representations of the German woman's body in the official Nazi women's magazine*. Feminist Media Studies, 20(2), 238-255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1546204>

Beauvoir, S. de. (2015). *The second Sex*. Vintage Classics.

Swingewood, Alan and Diana Laurenson. (1972). *The Sociology of Literature*. Paladine.

Thabroni, G. (2022). April 27). *Metode Penelitian Deskriptif Kualitatif (Konsep & Contoh)*. <https://serupa.id/metode-penelitian-deskriptif-kualitatif-konsep-contoh/>