

THE PROTAGONIST'S EXPECTATION IN DEWI LESTARI'S *PAPER BOAT*

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Abstract

Expectation is a positive mental state about the ability to achieve future goals. The *Paper Boat* novel by Dewi Lestari is one of the literary works that has a positive attitude about expectation. This thesis aims to identify the expectations of the protagonist and how the protagonist achieves her expectations in the *Paper Boat* novel by Dewi. This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method to process and analyze the data. This study explores the way of life and life lessons for a better life goal. The results of this study indicate the expectations of the protagonist pertaining to becoming a writer, making a work, namely a fairy tale book, which includes the hard work and patience seen in the protagonist Kugy, and marrying the person she loves. As for the dominant expectation is the protagonist who really wants to be a writer, because of the optimistic attitude contained in the protagonist, all her expectations come true.

Keywords: *Expectation; marrying; protagonist*

1. Introduction

A novel is a genre of fiction that can be defined as the art or craft of designing through the written word, a representation of human life that instructs or diverts both. Nurgiyantoro (2010: 10) suggests that the novel is a work of fiction that is built by building elements, namely intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. A novel is also defined as an essay in the form of prose that includes a series of stories from a person's life with other people around him by highlighting the character and nature of the author. Sumardjo (1984: 65) novels are often interpreted as only telling stories about parts of one's life, such as the period before marriage after experiencing a period of love or part of life when a character experiences a crisis in his soul, and so on.

The *Paper Boat* is one of the works of the nation's children, namely Dewi Lestari. *Paper Boat* is a teen romance novel published by Bentang Pustaka in 2009. *Paper Boat* is Dewi's sixth novel and her first novel in the popular genre. For the first time, Dewi was widely known as a novelist when her first novel, entitled *Supernova*, was published in 2001. Then, Dewi made several other written works which are also well known among the public, especially literature lovers, one of which is this *Paper Boat*. What is unique about this *Paper Boat* is that originally the script of this story was written by Dewi in 1996, then the script had experienced near death for approximately 11 years. Until finally, The *Paper Boat* was rewritten by Dewi at the end of 2007. Amazingly, Dewi completed the script of this story in 55 days. Of course, accompanied

by tenacity and a reckless attitude. Eight years after the publication of the novel *Paper Boat*, the novel was also translated into English by a translator named Tiffany Tsao.

This *Paper Boat* contains realistic stories that are often experienced by most teenagers. The storyline of *The Paper Boat* is also coherent, making it comfortable to read. Based on the description above. The protagonist's expectations are, becoming a writer, creating a fairy tale, and getting married. According to Tarigan (1986: 21), it defines writing as an attempt to create graphic symbols. The symbol used is a symbol that is already widely known by the public, in the form of writing. So the unification of these symbols is to form a message whose meaning is easily understood by the reader. According to Nurjamal, Daeng et al (2011: 69), writing is a language skill, namely a person's ability to express ideas, feelings, and thoughts to other people or parties using written media. According to Duvall & Miller (1985), marriage is a socially recognized relationship between a man and a woman that provides for sexual relations, legitimizes childbearing and establishes a division of labor between spouses.

The writers were interested in analyzing the protagonist's expectations from the novel. By knowing it, there will be a lot of things to be gained. In the novel, *Paper Boat* describes the protagonist's expectation that is an important part of one's life. Expectation, then, helps the protagonist to achieve her goals, and encourages her to take positive steps that can lead her to positive results. With expectation, she will be able to face challenges with strategies to achieve success and increase her chances of achieving her goals.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Expectation

Expectation is a positive mental state about the ability to achieve goals in the future with two complementary and reciprocal components of pathway thinking and agency thinking to maintain and achieve the goals that individuals want to create and do. Expectation in human life is an ideal, an expected. Humans involve other humans or other forces outside anticipating something that will happen, in addition to the results that have been done and are waiting for the results. So, what is expected is the result of his hard work and the help of other forces. Expectation exists because humans live. Human life is full of dynamics, full of desires or wills. Expectations for each person are different levels. People who think broadly have broad expectations. Likewise, people whose thinking insight is narrow hopes will also be narrow.

In general, expectation is in the form of abstract, invisible, but it is argued even sometimes, in the mind and made suggestions to be realized. But sometimes expectations rest on someone or something. In practice, many people try to make their expectations come true by praying or trying. Snyder (2000) states that expectation is the totality of the individual's abilities to produce pathways to achieve the desired goals, along with the motivation he has for using these pathways. Ceavens, Michael, and Snyder in Snyder (2000) state that expectation is a thought process a person has between agency (energy that leads to goals) and pathways (plans to achieve goals), and expectation is a sense of success that comes from agency (energy that leads to goals). That leads to goals and pathways plans to achieve goals.

2.2 Expectation Component

Snyder (2005) identified several components of expectation as follows:

- a. **Goal Thinking:** Goal is mental action targeting individual desires. Goals can be small and large, and can involve objects that are far away temporarily to reach the future. Goals are also very diverse in terms of the level of possibility to achieve them. Even a goal that seems impossible to achieve on time can be achieved with more planning and effort, and a goal will only grab attention if it is of sufficient importance and value to the individual.
- b. **Pathway Thinking:** The goal is not only focused on the concepts in our minds, but it also needs a way to achieve them we want; this is the pathway to functioning. Pathway reflects the view that we get to find one or several main ways to achieve the goals we want. Then, when we face obstacles that hinder the goal, we have to think about looking for alternatives in achieving these goals. Pathway involves time to reach a goal, being blocked and having to find new ways to achieve it.
- c. **Agency Thinking:** The last component of expectation is the intermediary or ability to motivate ourselves to use various means to achieve goals. In this case, we use agency to achieve the success of our goals. As previously explained, how we face obstacles and motivate ourselves will be in vain when used in a limited way, so if we channel our motivation in new ways to achieve goals.

2.3 Characteristics of Individuals with Great Expectations

Snyder (2005) also identified several characteristics of individual with great expectation as follows:

- a. **Optimistic:** A person with great expectations must be optimistic but not the other way around. Optimism seems closely related to will power but not to way power. Those who are optimistic have a mental energy related to achieving their goals, but they do not always have thoughts related to how to achieve goals (way power).
- b. **Having a Way of Achieving Goals in Her Life:** Someone with a great level of expectation tends to have the belief that he himself has control over his life and himself determines the fate of his life. Achieving any goal requires strong self-discipline. It involves being aware of our actions and the ability to overcome some bad habits that may be holding us back. Instilling self-discipline into our lives is no easy task. It takes unwavering attention to our actions and an unrelenting drive to want to achieve something great. In relation to the aforementioned point, 'Having a Way of Achieving Goals in Her Life', as one of the characteristics that need to be gained in this life, it is quite necessary to describe this further due to the fact that it concerns the point in the analysis in chapter IV of this thesis, by reconciling the data from other sources. Her expectation is to become a writer and to marry her love. With her personality that has a broad imagination and broad insight, he deserves to be a writer. Writing will not be complete with reading, because diligently reading is a capital and an important factor to become a reliable writer. By reading, our insight and knowledge of the world of writing will continue to grow, reading will increase and open our minds to new ideas. According to Nurgiyantoro (2001, p.273), writing is an activity to express ideas through language media. Writing is a productive and expressive activity, so writers must have the ability to use vocabulary, grammar, and language structure. Marriage is a ceremony of binding the marriage vows which is celebrated or carried out by two people with the intention of formalizing the marriage bond according to religious norms, legal norms, and social norms. This takes after what Subekti (1996) indicates, by verifying that marriage is a legal bond between a man and a woman for a long time,

and by confirming that marriage has a holy purpose that leads the married couple to happiness till the end of their life. Subekti (1996) also clarifies that the purpose of marriage is to build a happy household based on the guidance of God Almighty. And this is finally made one of the subject matter of the discussion in this proposal.

- c. High Self-Esteem: A person who is accustomed to developing will power and way power related to his goals will have positive self-esteem in various situations. They think positively about themselves because they know that they have achieved their goals in the past and will do the same for future goals. The self-esteem of people with great levels of expectations appearing in a private space is related to feelings of pride in themselves.
- d. Have a Perception of Her Ability in Problem Solving: One's ability to solve problems is related to one's thinking regarding how to achieve goals. When faced with a difficult situation in carrying out the usual way to achieve a goal, they become very task-oriented and resort to alternative ways to achieve the goal. They tend to have anticipated problems by developing plans with a back-up system to overcome the possibility of experiencing a difficulty.

3. Research Method

This research adopts descriptive qualitative because the analysis and the findings are accomplished in a descriptive form. As it is said by H. Bogdan and Taylor (2012) stating that qualitative is descriptive, where data are in the form of words or picture rather than numbers. Pertaining to the discussion in this study, this design generates ideas to conduct an analysis on the protagonist's expectations in Dewi Lestari's novel *Paper Boat*. It brings about the points to be analyzed becoming a proper description, and purposefully becoming the suitable standard kind of literary writing research.

In collecting the data, the researchers pass some procedures as follows:

1. Searching and finding for the data that are related to the subject matter of analysis.
2. Identifying the data in the form of words, phrases, and sentences which are then collected to be brought into analysis.
3. Taking the identified data from the novel, which are specifically matched with the subject matter.

To analyze the data needed, some procedures are important to do. According to Patton (1990, p.103), data analysis is the process of organizing data into a pattern, category, and into analysis. In this study, there are some procedures used to analyze the data. They are:

1. Drawing the data from the novel *Paper Boat* in the form of analysis.
2. Taking the data to be described based on the subject matter of this study.
3. Analyzing the data to reveal the answers related to the study.

4. Discussion

4.1 Becoming a Writer

Kugy is the protagonist in the novel *Paper Boat* by Dewi Lestari. This can be seen from Kugy's many actions in moving the novel's storyline. Apart from quantity, in terms of quality, Kugy has a very strong character in the story. Kugy is described as a cheerful, petite girl who has expectations of becoming a fairy-tale writer, so she often fantasizes and no wonder she is often considered strange by those around him. This is illustrated in the following quotation:

“A petite girl as high as her chin, looks like a junior high school student, her fashion style is messy, her hair looks like she’s just been electrocuted, her eyes widen as if threatening (Lestari, 2009, p.21).”

In the quotation, it describes the physical characteristics of Kugy. The psychic of Kugy’s character described by the author is very complex. The character of Kugy’s character, among others, has a different taste in old music from people her age. The character Kugy has a habit of writing letters to the God Neptune using paper boats. Other Kugy characters can also be seen from the following quote:

“I am actually Neptune’s errand girl sent to earth to be a spy, and coincidentally my zodiac sign is aquarius, magical right? (Lestari, 2009, p.33)”

In the quote above, one of the oddities that is often done by Kugy. Kugy thinks of herself as a messenger girl from Neptune who was sent to Earth as a spy. Although she is often considered strange, she is still confident.

Another Kugy figure is also depicted in this quotation: “This girl is a very good writer, but she can’t draw at all. She said in her heart” (Lestari, 2009, p.40). This quotation illustrates that Kugy is very talented at writing, especially writing fairy tales, but unfortunately, she cannot make illustrations for her own stories. Although Kugy often fantasizes and thinks strangely, she is a person who has a clear purpose in life. It is seen when she wants to be a writer, especially a fairy tale writer. She carries out diligently and optimistically all activities that are considered to support her ideals. Since childhood, she has collected fairy tale books from home and abroad. Until she had time to open a mini library at home. In addition, she is also the editor-in-chief of a magazine at her school. That is why in college she majored in literature.

In the *Paper Boat* novel, there is an optimistic attitude of the protagonist which is described as that whatever happens, she will always believe that she will achieve her goals despite the many obstacles she will go through, and she also does not easily give up on the surrounding circumstances. This can be seen from this quote: “Kugy is making a fairy tale? Wow that’s great, when will it be published?” (Lestari, 2009, p.110). So, optimism is a social and personal attitude of humans both individually and in groups, a belief in the importance of effort in achieving a better or even perfect life. The optimistic attitude above is seen in the relationship between woman and herself and the relationship between woman and her God. The protagonist’s relationship with her God, apart from trying, is usually individual between humans and their God. Like an attitude of gratitude and patience, humans must also continue to pray for God to grant everything we want to achieve. In addition, humans must have a good attitude towards God in order to get good results. In the *paper boat* novel, there is an attitude of gratitude that the protagonist does in dealing with all the events that occur. The depiction of the attitude of optimism in the protagonist includes the development of adolescents who occur at the age of 12 to 18 years. Usually, teenagers have a fairly high ego and uncontrolled emotions and can-do things without thinking. In the *Paper Boat* novel, Kugy’s character is a teenager who leads to maturity because she can do something according to the realities of life. Where she has an expectation to become a writer, especially a fairy tale writer, which she finds exciting and fun. In the development of the transition process from adolescence to adulthood produces changes that can make him mature in making choices in her life. In essence, the protagonist’s optimism

involves the relationship between woman and herself and the relationship between woman and her God. This is done with the aim of achieving the desired life goals and so that they can be examples in everyday life and provide useful lessons for the lives of other humans to take the positive values contained in them. Therefore, what is done faithfully will get satisfactory results.

4.2. Creating Fairy Tale

Kugy really wants to create a fairy tale book that she made herself. Kugy, who has been mature and realistic thoughts about her life. She is obsessed with being a fairy tale writer. However, she is aware and realistic about the fact that fairy tale writers are not a common job in her environment. However, Kugy still chooses another path in her life by pursuing the world of writing. It is proven that she is studying Literature, even though she does not focus on being a fairy tale writer. She has a mature mind. She still achieves her dream of becoming an unrealistic fairy tale writer by becoming a serious writer in order to be established as a stepping stone to achieve her main goals. In achieving what she wants, the protagonist feels confident and believes that with the effort she puts in, all of that will come true, because belief alone will not be enough without effort. In this case, it can be described as how the protagonist tries to achieve her desires, namely as follows:

a. Doing Hard Work

Hard work is something that shows you like to do positive things and do not like to be silent in doing a job. Hard work is also having a blazing spirit and having the will and ability to achieve personal targets that are considered slightly beyond our own limits. People who work hard will spend their share of failure faster so that they will reach the point of success faster. In addition to success, with hard work we will also get many valuable life experiences. The series of processes that we go through during hard work will provide many things that are stored neatly in our memory. All these processes will make us wiser, more grateful, and more patient. In other words, hard work is an effort to do a job seriously so that it can get good results. If it is related to the *Paper Boat* novel, the attitude of hard work can be seen in the following quote:

“That afternoon after her students returned home, Kugy sat in her small hut wrtining stories about the Jenderal Pilik dan Pasukan Alit (Lestari, 2009, p.104).”

Based on the quote above, it can be seen that Kugy has worked hard as the protagonist. Even though all the work was accompanied by college, she always tried to do all the activities outside of her campus, including writing her fairy tales. Besides that, she also became an intern at the advertising office. In the end, Kugy's hard-working attitude had an impact on the results she got, even though at first she was just an intern, but that didn't mean she didn't get the opportunity to give her diamond ideas in the meeting room. Besides that, she also occasionally writes fairy tales in between her working hours, which can be seen in the following quote:

“I really can't say much, but I will not waste this opportunity. I'm sure one day what we call a hobby, will eventually become my new profession. It's a little money but I don't care (Lestari, 2009, p.362)”

As illustrated in the quote above, Kugy's hard-working and optimistic attitude to achieving her expectations can be an example for readers, especially teenagers who

often waste time and easily give up on achieving their expectations. Because with hard work the impossible becomes possible. Besides that, Kugy's passionate and unyielding attitude finally made her find a way and a place to channel her hobbies and talents which are part of her ideals. Therefore, she worked very hard to make it happen. Kugy's hard-working attitude is a positive attitude that can be used as an example by teenagers and adults. In the end, the attitude of hard work can sharpen the mind of someone who does not know whether to know.

b. Being Patient

Patience is an attitude that always accepts what it faces, even if it is bad. Patience also means it is the key in solving various life problems. The higher the level of a person's patience, the more prepared she is to face a problem. Patient people are people who have high values in life and their environment. Patience may involve persistence in the face of procrastination. Patient behavior is used to refer to a steadfast character trait. Human life is actually full of struggles, and victory in these struggles is very dependent on the extent to which a person has patience in dealing with those struggles. Because patience is a way that can lead someone to the desired victory, an effective weapon to conquer the enemy, whatever its form, whether hidden or visible. In this case, there will be a lot of trials for people who are patient. But in the end, she will get everything she wants. This can be seen from the following quotation:

“Yeah, the important thing is that you're home. There's nothing more important than that. As if advising herself. Kugy can only be silent, she is aware that her position is very weak, there is no point in defending herself (Lestari, 2009, p.360).”

From the quote above, it can be seen that Kugy is trying to be patient with what happened to her. Because with patience she will not make the problem wider and even more chaotic, but with patience it will make her more able to learn how to live and achieve her expectations. Patience is also reflected when the protagonist feels guilty for doing work that might harm others. By admitting mistakes and being patient in accepting all the consequences that must be accepted. Kugy also tries to correct her mistakes so that she no longer makes others feel aggrieved by her behavior.

4.3. Getting Married

Kugy is a unique girl who has a high imagination and is talented at writing, while Keenan is a teenager who is smart and talented at painting but does not have the support of his own father to pursue painting. The two of them accidentally meet because they are both continuing their studies at the same university in Bandung. Keenan's character, who has an introverted character, is smooth, does not like crowds, and is talented at painting, which can be seen in the following quotation:

“He secretly observed his two sons who were six years apart in age, and realized that they were different. Jeroen is extroverted, athletic, diplomatic, likes to socialize and organizes, while Keenan is introverted, gentle, doesn't like crowds, and prefers to be alone to paint. (Lestari, 2009, p.15)”

Since meeting each other for the first time, Kugy and Keenan have felt that there is something different between the two of them. They fall in love with each other, but they both disguise and bury their feelings for each other. Because they both prefer to focus on their respective dreams and expectations. They prefer to harbor feelings of love because, for them, there is something more important than love. It can be seen in the following quote:

“Because the heart doesn’t need to choose, it always knows where to anchor (Lestari, 2009, p.430).”

Over time, Kugy and Keenan become close friends. Kugy has told Keenan that she is writing a fairy tale. And Keenan also tells Kugy that he really likes painting, and Keenan also shows some of his paintings to Kugy. Kugy also thinks that she could work with Keenan, Kugy, who writes the fairy tales, and Keenan, who paints the pictures. It can be seen in this quote: “Yeah, we can still work together. And we’ve always been best friends.” (Lestari, 2009: 412). Love is meant, in this case, as a love affair with the opposite sex. However, that does not mean we do not need to be concerned about it forever. It is just that when we are teenagers, especially at the age when we are students, we should explore ourselves as well as possible. Many things can be done and realized at a young age.

Like Kugy and Keenan, who have to go through the twists and turns and various controversies in realizing their expectations, but with persistence they are finally able to achieve their expectations. At first, Keenan does not get support from his own father because his father feels that the wealth from painting is not much. Keenan’s father feels that Keenan’s intelligence is better channeled into continuing the family business. Kugy also has doubts about her abilities; she feels writing is just a hobby which, if continued for work, would not have much benefit. But in the end, Kugy and Keenan worked according to their respective interests. Kugy becomes a fairy tale writer and Keenan becomes a painter with the blessing of his father. It can be seen in the following:

“Opportunity to choose love, and surrender to the flow that carries it. Wherever it is. The heart always knows (Lestari, 2009, p.431).”

Without the need to speed up or slow down, the mooring will come on time. Kugy and Keenan are separated for a long time and a long distance. There is gripping sadness because of missing someone. Sometimes, this longing takes over the mind, which makes it difficult to think of anything other than that person. Longing will arise if we have an emotional bond or experience that really imprints on something so that when we lose or do not find something with it, we will feel lost. High longing will arise if we have a high intensity for something. If not, then the longing will be felt normal. That is how Kugy feels when Keenan leaves her without any news. She always writes her sadness on paper and folds it into a boat and then drifts it into the lake, hoping the writing would reach Keenan.

“Wherever you are, I hope this message reaches you, even without a boat. I miss you so much. Kugy wrote on a piece of paper that was shaped into a boat, and drifted into the lake (Lestari, 2009, p.232)”

Keenan and Kugy separated because Keenan had to study painting in Bali and left his studies in Bandung. Meanwhile, Kugy continues to study literature, majoring in

Bandung and still holds fast to continue her fairy tales and become a writer. This can be seen from the following quote:

“Even if one world makes a fool of me, but this is what I want. I want to be a fairy tale writer. From then until now, not changed (Lestari, 2009, p.362).”

After years, they are separated, but in the end they meet unplanned according to the will of the universe. Even though they have been in a relationship with other people, in the end their hearts will flow to find a true partner. This is true love. Kugy and Keenan never expect to meet again; they only think that their story would end just like that, but God says; otherwise, they meet in the same situation as adults, and already understand their respective feelings. They still love each other, from the past until now, and that feeling remains in their hearts. “Kugy? How are you? Keenan called her in a low voice. Fine. Short answer Kugy”. (Lestari, 2009, p.328). Once they meet again, the feelings they used to harbor can no longer be hidden. Even though when they meet they already have their respective partners, but still their hearts cannot be lied to, Kugy and Keenan are honest with their girlfriend, that they love each other, and Kugy and Keenan’s lovers accept that. Because they do not want to force what should not be for them. Kugy and Keenan have harbored these feelings for years and pretend to be friends. The two of them have been through a lot, even when they separate and have their respective partners, Kugy and Keenan still have feelings of love for each other. Successive hurdles that the two of them went through, and now they have finally decided to express their feelings for each other and decided to get married.

In the midst of the calm blue sea, a small group of hands slid out of the lip of the fishing boat. She deliberately takes a ride to wash her paper boat away. It is not from the pond, not from times, not from a creek. This time she wants to release it in the middle of the sea. Her last letter to Neptune.

*“Neptune,
I don’t write letters to the headquarters every year. Do
not be angry.
But we really want to stop being agents.
Not more secrets.
Not more expectations.
Because we have lived that expectation.
Now and forever.
K&K
(and little K is still in the stomach) (Lestari, 2009, p.433).”*

So far, Kugy has always poured out her heart and thoughts to Neptune on a piece of paper in the shape of a boat. She always tells whatever she experiences during her life in this world, always has a good imagination and has big dreams. But for today, Kugy stops being Neptune’s agent, she stops writing to Neptune. Her life journey had a happy ending. All her dreams and expectations have been fulfilled; she has gone through the ups and downs of her life. She has also earned the title of writer, and marrying the person she loves has also come true. Now there is no Neptune agent anymore, just her and two K. Kugy, Keenan, and little baby K in Kugy’s tummy. The paper boat rocks alone. It slowly abandons the wooden boat that departed back to the shoreline, carrying Kugy, who immediately runs down to break the water. Someone is

already standing waiting for her with outstretched arms, ready to grab her and lift her tiny body into the air.

5. Conclusion

In the *paper boat* novel, it can be found that the main character lives her life by being optimistic and always thinking positively to achieve all her expectations. In the novel, it is not always about love, although there are a love story of the main character and her struggle to achieve her expectations. The main character in the novel experiences an inner conflict that appears in her life. But even so, the main character in the novel does not give up on all the obstacles that occur. She is always optimistic and full of enthusiasm in the face of all events that occur. In this case, there is a moral value in the form of an optimistic attitude in the novel, namely being patient and working hard.

The main character in this novel is an excellent example for today's young people and adults alike. From the attitude and struggle of the main character in achieving her expectations, the findings highlight the role of optimism as a narrative device that reflects personal growth in Indonesian contemporary fiction. Besides that, we can also apply the moral values contained in the novel to our daily lives, namely to always work hard, think positively, and never give up on the situation until our expectations come true.

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