

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

British reigned over India in 18th Century until the mid of 20th Century. This colonialist applied indirect rule by delegating Local Princes which was Mughal's kings. The local emperor still granted authority over India. However, the local kings were subsequent to British. The local princes governed India under British instructions. The British hold responsibility for India's external affairs while the local princes hold responsibility restricted to only internal affairs. This alliance was distracted by the demands of Male India Nationalist for being granted position in political site in 1885. Indian Nationalists claimed that it was done in the name of reformation. Nationalism had grown rapidly since the time. At first, male Indian Nationalist asked local government to grant self rule. British government tried to suspend it. It did not work. It happened in the later time, being influenced by East European's thinking, Nationalists seek for unity, independent, and democratic India. In that searching there happened India Muslim Nationalist declared that they wanted to separate from India. Because of it, there happened political chaos in 1947 when Muslims were ceased to kill by Hindhu Partisants. This conflict was ended up by the separation of India and Pakistan in the day of India gaining its independence 1947. The era after Independence, India was about to start to re-structure its government and to seek for equality to all

people in India. The thing to notice is that masculine power was so hegemonic in involving in that process.

All parties involved in India political site were mostly men. Masculine power became hegemonic. The consequence was Indian women had no (strong) power in politics even though they gained portion in the creation of independence and democratic India. It mostly happened that any political decisions were seen from male gaze so that patriarchy could not be removed from state structure. It usually ended with Indian women could not speak.

These silencing causes Indian women experienced double oppressions. The first, they unable to be true of themselves that are something “me”. Like most of subaltern woman-- women of color who are the victim of both traditional patriarchy and masculine colonialist’s power -- Indian women “caught in translation, never truly expressing her self (Spivak 67).” They mostly entrap in the dilemma between following traditional norms or western norms whenever they made preference. They are caught between modernity and tradition. The second, Indian women are usually treated as object of state policy. They were often undermined by state regulation. The designating of any state policies are commonly based on male gaze. Whatever is needed is seen from male point of view. Because of it, the needs of Indian women were often ignored. Their being was often considered to disappear from the present. As Subaltern women, Indian women aware those things are rather hard to be avoided therefore their choices are to survive. Unfortunately, these experiences of subaltern women are rarely recorded on historiography because they vanish from the present.

The limited record of subaltern women experience encourage Indian women writer to bring Indian women experience both in the form of literary and non-literary works. They concerned with the female body and gendered inequities in patriarchal India society (Katarak 3). Their literary works promoted the struggle of subaltern women. It portrayed their female protagonists resist traditional patriarchy or masculine's colonial oppression covertly from within the system. It also can be seen as their effort to give Indian women, as subaltern women, to speak.

The story of subaltern women covert resistance within the system can also be seen in Anita Desai's novel entitled *Clear Light of Day*. Desai is a lecturer in America. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Girton College, Cambridge and Clare Hall, Cambridge. She produced some remarkable literary works.

Desai's works mostly deal with the life of Indian subalterns especially subaltern women. In much of her novels and short stories, Desai focuses on the personal struggles of Anglicized middle-class Indian women to the societal limitations imposed by a tradition-bound patriarchal culture in contemporary India (Witaleg). Her narratives commonly validate the importance of familial bonds and explore the tensions that exist between different generations. Desai often insert the issue of hybridity, shifting identity, and "imaginary homelands. Her focuses on uprooted and marginalized identity sometime create the nuance of Eurocentric ("Anita Desai")(Prono). She often presented sensitive portrayal of the inner life of her female characters and used house as the symbol as a place of confinement for

women in much her works. The themes of women's oppressions, the quest to find one's true self identity, family relationship and contrasts, the crumbling of traditions, and anti-Semitism became prominent in much her works. According to Prono, some of Desai's remarkable literary works were *Clear Light of Day*, *In Custody*, *Fasting, Feasting* (all of which Booker Prize's nominees), *Fire on the Mountain* (Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize's winner), *The Village by the Sea* (Guardian Children's Fiction Award's winner) (2004).

Clear Light of Day was published in 1980 when there grew the rebellion against patriarchy in India and also the demand to give subaltern people especially women chance to voice their colonial experience. It is semi autobiographical in the sense its story is about the life of two middle Indian women named Bim and Tara in 1940s and 1970s, the era when the rebellion against British colonization in India were about to start until India succeeded to become independent country. It mainly took place in the house in ex Civil Line. This house belonged to famous muslim poet but then it was given the female protagonist brother, after he married the poet's daughter. He kept the rent at same rate for Bim. *Clear Light of Day* mainly discussed about the reunion of Tara and Bim and the flashback of their adolescence hood. Bim. Tara's big sister and the first child of the family, never leave India and remained staying in their family rent house while Tara leave India for Washington in 1947 with her diplomat husband Bakul and had travelled to many European countries but their house is in Washington.

The theory used by the writer to analyze subaltern women experiences are feminist postcolonial. It is because Feminist Postcolonial concern with

Subaltern women issues. Feminist Postcolonial examined the relationship between colonialism and patriarchy which its focus is gender issue relating to the history of European supremacy toward their non-white which they consider as the *other* (Weedon 284). It speaks about oppression toward Subaltern women and their survival to it. There is the belief that colored women were often subjected to what has been called “double oppression (Tyson 370)”. The writer will analyze women oppressions narrated in this novel by relating it to subaltern women status which is as described in Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak”. The oppressions will be seen as the result of the silencing of subaltern women.

This study is about to define how the status as subaltern women lead Bim and Tara to fall in double oppressions. Their choice is no other than to survive to the oppressions. It is interesting to be discussed since it is a part of the critique toward the silence of subaltern women.

In analysing *Clear Light of Day*, the writer found that the status as subaltern women bring bad impact toward Bim and Tara. It did not cause them able to speak their experience. Because of that there are forced to occupy minor position. Being in such position endangers them to get oppressions. The oppressions are doubled since they own status as subaltern and women at the same time. They either should follow tradition teaching or modern teaching. Also, they are undermined by the state policy. They realize it and their choice is no other than to survive. It is a self-consciousness resistance. It comes in the form of the decision to take risks and confront domination selectively and strategically in the interest of self-preservation. However, it is implied that they did so since they are already

enlightened by western. The title *Clear Light of Day* connote the moment when Bim and Tara get enlightened so that they could examine the unsaid problem from their childhood and could evaluate the way they see each other. It was implied that western is involving and is influential to make that moment to come true.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1. How do Tara and Bim survive from the oppressions portrayed in the novel?

1.3 Objective of the Study

1. To discuss how Tara and Bim survive from the oppressions portrayed in the novel

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is aimed to know about the life of Indian women under the British colonization in 1940s- 1947 and independence India in 1947-1970s through the character building of Bim and Tara as depicted in Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day*. This study wants to see how they survive to double oppressions. The writer expects that the reader could gain a comprehensive understanding about the life of middle class Indian women in the mid 20th Century and see subaltern women in different view that is as active victims. Moreover, the writer also wishes that more students will be interested in Desai's works and be encouraged to take

Desai's work for their thesis so that there will be greater number of people are interested in discussing literary works produced by women of color author.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study will analyze the female characters named Bim and Tara in novel entitled *Clear Light of Day* which was published in 1980. The novel narrated the problem of women of color. Here are implied that Bim and Tara as subaltern women can not speak therefore they experienced double oppressions. Realizing that, Bim and Tara had no choice but survive to the oppressions. It was resulted from the very fact that they are subaltern women. The silencing of subaltern women status will be discussed by adopting Spivak's argument about subaltern women in developed essay *Can the Subaltern Speak*. It is part of Feminist Postcolonial discussion since it is related to the effort to reveal women of color experience

1.6 Theoretical Background

Since this study will discuss the experiences, including oppressions and struggle, of woman of color, Feminist Postcolonial Theory will be applied. This theory examined the relationship between colonialism and patriarchy which its focus is gender issue relating to the history of European supremacy toward their non-white which they consider as the *other* (Weedon 284). It traced back "double oppression (Tyson 370)" encountered by subaltern women and their resistance.

More or less, Feminist Postcolonial attempts to speak about the experience of subaltern women.

The term “Subaltern” was introduced by Gayatri Spivak. It refers to those “of inferior rank” which is identified as the oppressed. In the case of subaltern women, their oppressions are double. Spivak argued that subaltern women can not speak. She “caught in translation, never truly expressing herself (Spivak 67)”. “Translation” has two connotations. The first is that subaltern women could not make preference from her own point of view. It often happened that they decide something not based on what she think is good for her but which of modern or tradition say will be good for her. The second is that subaltern is the object of constitution. What matter should be considered in the formulating constitution was often based on male point of view. Since subaltern women are represented, the rule becomes sexist. The constitution seemed support subordination to subaltern women.

1.7 Method of the Studies

The writer use qualitative method in conducting this study. To do so, the writer is about to do the following steps:

1. Close Reading

Several issues regarding subaltern women/ woman of color oppression are founded in the novel. The most noticeable is women domestication which was supported by Hindhu Personal Law and British colonial space policy. The other, still related with the previous, is male-female relationship where

the oldest male, although he 'absent' from the family, still hold firm authority to control the house. The other issue about inheritance came along with marriage matter. There also the issue of widow treatment. However, the writer will focus on Hindhu Personal Law since British Politic of colonial space. Since this study deal with revealing hierarchy of subaltern and of women so it will be analyzed by Feminist Postcolonial Theory. It will be supported by Spivak's argument of subaltern people particularly women in a essay *Can the Subaltern Speak*

This is aimed to collect data from the novel. There are three considerable things to be noted. First, summarizing the characteristic of subaltern women represented in the novel. The writer will define what kind of subaltern women Bim and Tara are. Second, defining the consequences of subaltern women status reflected in the novel. Bim and Tara status as Subaltern indicate they are disempowered party so that the writer will define what oppressions they experienced. Third, the resistance of Bim and Tara as subaltern women elaborated in the novel. The writer is about to find how Tara and Bim resist double oppression they experienced either by indigenous or colonizer oppressions

3. Finding the Theory

Here the writer makes preference of the proper theory to analyze the novel. The writer decides to use postcolonial feminist theory since this study deals with the experience of subaltern women. The writers would first define the characterization of subaltern people based on Spivak's essay *Can the*

Subaltern Speak. It helps the writer figure out how subaltern women are posed. Then the writer will infer how this status affect the life of subaltern women.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

Subaltern : Spivak use this term to refer people of color. This term is chosen to encompass a range of subject position which is not predefined by dominant political discourse. Spivak refers subaltern to group of people whose history was not acknowledged. She argued there is tendency to force subaltern people occupy minor position in political arena

Subaltern women: women of color who are the victims of both traditional patriarchy and masculine's colonialist power

Double oppression: It refers to condition of subaltern women where they were oppressed either by indigenous or colonizer patriarchy

Caught in translation: it refers to the situation where subaltern women can not speak from her point of view what she thought to be good. She stands between moderen and tradition