

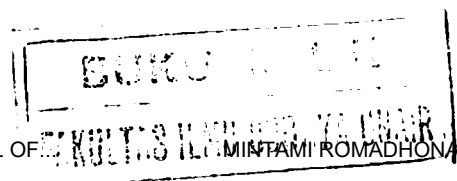
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The discussion among feminists to obtain women's right will continually happen in the social life or even in the public sphere. The idea of the "women and education" is usually in contrast with the idea of "women and family". Most of the women after 20th century, especially the American women, got a better education because they started to enter the universities and got much knowledge. This phenomenon also affected their way of thinking. On the other hand, the system of patriarchal was still applied in the social life where men treated women in accordance with gender and roles. During the period, women were asked to behave like their gender and roles created by the system.

Linda Pastan (1932-) is one of the American modern poets giving the view in her works about the life of housewife. Linda Pastan was raised in New York City but has lived for most of her life in Potomac, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, DC. In her senior year at Radcliffe College, Pastan won the *Mademoiselle* Poetry prize. Immediately, following graduation, however, she decided to give up writing poetry in order to concentrate on raising her family. After ten years at home, her husband urged her to return to poetry. Since the early 1970s, Pastan had produced quiet many lyrics that focused on themes like marriage, parenting, and grief. She is interested in the anxieties that exist under the surface of everyday life (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/linda-pastan>).



Linda Pastan is not the employers; she is the ordinary housewife and caring her family in most of her times. From Linda Pastan's biography, it is make sense why she writes much about housewife's life and family life rather than raise other topic.

In Linda Pastan's poems, the portrayal of a housewife is clearly seen. The poems raise the feelings of housewives who have many dreams but are unable to reach it. In the 20th century, when women started to realize about their position and their education, women tried to see closely about how actually their position is after getting married. However, it is not simply like the classical understanding about the life as a housewife or Cinderella story. Before 20th century or even until this current time, many people, especially women, still think that marriage is the way to get out from the sorrow. Actually why women take marriage has fundamental reason that is why the term of marriage still pretty exists until today. According to psychologist approach about why women take marriage, there is similar pattern and behavior which is illustrated and behavior in Cinderella to . Who wants to be a millionaire which hold that men will attempt to acquire several mates and will be sexually controlling while women pursue high-status mates, are hierarchy enhancing, says Felicia Pratto, associate professor of psychology, then in this case marriage can be recognized as the strategy for women in reaching the better life. Fortunately, women deny their real situation, even when they see that many women are unable to obtain their "happiness" after marriage, or that there is a worse situation in marriage.

From feminist literary criticism, the classical Cinderella fairytale is recognized as the tool in positioning women at subordinate place and that tool is practiced well by the people, especially men. In her book "*Critical Theory Today*" Tyson states that many people still think that "Marriage with the right man is a guarantee of happiness and proper reward for a right minded young women" (Tyson 88).

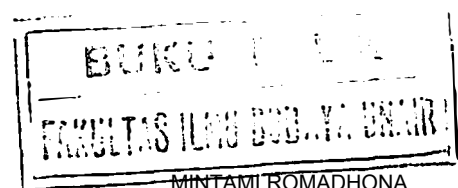
Linda Pastan's poems will be considered as the portrayal of an educated woman who does not feel totally happy from "the way out from sorrow" named marriage. The poems reveal how marriage has certain negative effects toward women's potentials, dreams and ideas. The common obligation of housewife which might become the obstacle in reaching women's dreams are giving birth, mothering, and housekeeping which make them think many times to get a job and it is very hard for them to leave their homes for developing their potentials. Because of this concept, the women finally believe the patriarchal system and think that all of those mentioned above are really the responsibility of women to do.

In patriarchal society, Bubbeck (24-25) stated that there is some exploitation of women which occurs in three types: housework, child care and caring work. Housework which is done by the wives includes the cleaning and the tidying of the household unit (washing, sweeping the house, and ironing the clothes). The preparation of meals and the work related to it such as washing and cleaning up (24). Child care consists basically of looking after children and attending to their needs whenever required. This job involves continuous

availability for feeding, nursing and playing (25). Caring work involves looking after members of the household if required by sickness, physical and mental ability. It also involves looking after elderly relatives, which can be a twenty-four-hour job depending on their needs and their infirmity, and the meeting of the emotional needs of all members of the family (25).

From Linda Pastan's works, the writer also considers those poems as the women's products and they give some ideas within the issue inside. They become the media for women as well as men in stopping the denial about women's and men's position in this current time which is mean that men sometimes ignore women's ability and keep thinking no matter how good women's physically, mentally and brilliant they are, women are under men's control. Tyson states that regarding the human production and experience in literature, gender issues have their effects in almost every aspect. And the gender issues work even when we are not consciously aware of them (Tyson 91). The current condition where the writer writes the research is just to show how the portrayal women as housewives try to pass their every single day inside of marriage and what the women can do in the poems whether they finally ends the patriarchal system around them or still standing under that system.

Pastan's work is actually modern poetry that brings the women's issues which are still applied in this time. The women's problems inside her works also become the new obstacles for women because they are mostly the same with reality problems that face most of women. Goodman argues that



Responsibility for social problems is burdened to women through the disguised face of motherhood. Everything gets so complicated since women are always the ones to blame: when mothers get rich, they are blamed for working and abandoning their children; when mothers get poor, they are also blamed for not working and collecting welfare so they can use much of their time with the children without having to abandon them (Goodman 2).

This view is also to be obtained in the poems where women as housewives stand in the hard position and every of their actions easily get many responses from other family members or society. Like what Marso stated that women find themselves within structures, not of their making (the structure is made not by women), that produce and assign meaning to their bodies and desires (ix).

The women's feeling and action related to their obligations will be used to analyze and answer the statement of problem. The writer will show whether certain feelings expressed or actions practiced by the women inside the poems are affirm or support for the patriarchal system. This study is aimed to help many women in order to be more aware of their position and to help them to realize how precious their potentials are and also to look further to marriage's consequences by understanding women's problem in the poems' analysis. From Pastan's poems as the example of the object in exploring the women's role, the reader, especially women, must understand their consequences in every step of their life in marriage. In this case, the study is also used as the tool to understand women's right and how women may have a good deal with their circumstances and their decision.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

This research is focused on seeing the portrayal of the women in some of Linda Pastan's poems. Based on the topic, the formulated problem is listed as follows:

- 1) How the portrayals of the women in Linda Pastan's poems reveal the motion whether they affirm or support patriarchal system through their feeling and action?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- 1) To analyze how actually the housewife in the poems face their problems in daily life?
- 2) To show how patriarchy system positions a woman as a housewife as the one who is appropriate in taking the responsibility for caring the entire of family members.
- 3) To give the overview toward the female reader about the consequences in taking decision such as married and giving birth or deal with patriarchal system.

1.4 Significance of the Study

By analyzing the phenomenon of the portrayed housewives through Linda Pastan's poems, the consequences of being housewife including giving birth, mothering, and housekeeping, women's reproduction, time limitation and other factors, female readers will obtain an overview that becoming a married woman and being a housewife are not easy things. This research is proposed to reveal the lack of women's right under patriarchy system and the reason how they cannot avoid it.

The particular matter has never been discussed before by any other researches in the English Department of Faculty of Humanities. They have never discussed either any women's portrayal from Linda Pastan's poems as the modern poem. The research is also targeted to give some knowledge about the pressure of women's potentials that can be explored after marriage under patriarchal oppression, including the social construction which has created various obligations especially for women and what makes them still stand under that structured.

In addition, this research is also meant to give contribution towards the study of literature, particularly in the English Department of Airlangga University. The writer also hoped that the research can be used as reference for other studies related to women's right and position after married.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

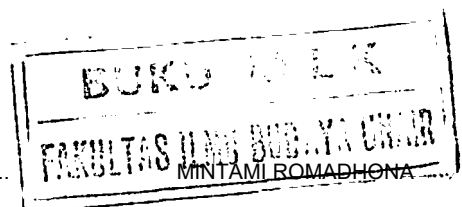
The writer focuses on the meanings which show women's actions that are able to be obtained from the illustration of the poems: "What We Want", "Meditation by The Stove", "I Married You", and "Marks", all of these poems taken from Linda Pastan's poems collection which is written in 1968-1998. She analyzes the expressions of the poems which denote the actions of women in the family because from those four poems the issues of women as housewives can be seen clearer than other Pastan's poems. The writer use Linda Pastan's four poems because from the illustration they have the similarity in topic, that is the life of women inside of marriage.

The research focuses on taking the overview of women's right and position under patriarchy system from their daily life. Therefore, the writer will not analyze any other problems outside the topic of discussion.

1.6 Theoretical Background

In reviewing the problem, the study will use feminist literary criticism and relate the issues to traditional gender roles. The analysis is closely related to the issues of housewife's obligations.

In the daily life where patriarchy system is practiced well, women's right and position are becoming crucial things. Both of them become something unimportant because most of the women as housewives are hard to sound their voice. Tyson in her book "Critical Theory Today" stated that the believe that man are superior to women has been used, feminist has observed, to justify and



maintain the male monopoly of economic, political and social power, or on the other words to keep women powerless by denying their educational and occupational means of acquiring economic, political and social power (84). In this case, the patriarchy also gives the belief that men sit on higher position than women. And as a result, no matter good or potential the women are, the men will never consider that because they believe that “women should be under men no matter how clever they are”.

1.7 Method of the Study

In this study, the main sources or the objects that will be analyzed are taken from the poems; the method will be divided in three steps. In this case, because the poems do not use the direct language, the writer analyzes the poems with certain method that already includes as follows:

1. From the close reading, the theme will be defined, with focus on language. By using close reading the clear illustration and the clear meaning will be obtained.
2. To find the meaning, the illustrations of the poems become the bridge to raise the issues especially about the position of women inside the marriage including many aspects such as education for them. With feminist literary criticism which focuses on traditional gender roles, the women’s portrayal will be described to find their action whether it is against or for patriarchal system.
3. From the feeling expressed actions practiced by the women in the poems, the writer will conclude the motion of their position toward patriarchal system.

The data about Linda Pastan's poem is mostly taken from the website another data which is related to the women's issue such as feminist discussions and ideas are obtained mostly from the books. In order to get the best analysis, the online sources will be used if it is needed.

1.4 Definitions of Key Terms

Housewife's obligation : The obligation that a woman must do including housework, child care and caring work (Bubbeck, 24-25)

Mothering : The nurturing and raising of a child or children by a mother
(<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/mothering>)

Parenting : the raising of a child by its parents
(<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/parenting>)

Patriarchy : social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line; broadly: control by men of a disproportionately large share of power.

(<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patriarchy>)

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW