

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Feminism argues that women are oppressed or dominated by men and that the structural arrangements that initiate, support, and legitimate that systematic oppression constitutes patriarchy (Farganis 15). In Feminism, actually there is no denial that men and women are fully different in their biological sense. However, they do not agree with the common belief that biological differences, such as physical size, shape and body chemistry, make men naturally superior upon women (Tyson 84). Shortly we can say that the only difference between men and women is in the biological sense, in which women have womb, while men do not have.

In its development, Feminism grows to be some branches such as Existentialist Feminism, Marxist Feminism, Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism, and more. In this study, the writer focuses on Literary Feminism on traditional gender role because this branch of feminism is the most appropriate literary criticism used for the analysis.

2.1.1 Traditional Gender Role

Traditional gender role is seen from how women are positioned in the middle of their families. The value which played in society which is called “gender role “has the main basic in giving order about how women

should act. In this study the gender role system will face the phenomenon of educated women that increase vastly, especially for those who live in America. The gender role system toward women will place educated women in the middle position; they do not totally care the family and hardly focus in developing their potential.

The traditional gender role is used as a system to dig the problem well and by that theory the clear phenomenon that happens in the reality can be explored by another people. The empowerment of women that is implicitly shown in Pastan's lyrical poems will be one of the reasons of the term "feminist" to be used in this study. Besides the empowerment of women, the term "gender role" is also used because the women written by Pastan realize her gender and role in the middle of their family.

The traditional gender role is made an example because Tyson (83) thought that they show some of the ways in which all of us have been programmed to see. *Patriarchal woman* is "a woman who has internalized the norms and the values of patriarchy, which can be defined, in short, as any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender role" (Tyson 83). As Tyson's statement, the women in "Meditation by The Stove", "I Married You" and other Pastan's poems showed how they realize in taking their decision and following most of the rules in Patriarchal System.

Tyson stated that "these gender roles have been used very successfully to justify such inequities, which still occur today, as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision- making positions (in

the family as well as in politic.)” (Tyson 83). This issue in feminist will be raised in the analysis of housewife’s position and their educational experience.

Actually many thinkers give their supporting idea about gender and roles which highly used in this study. Marry Wollstonecraft, one of the important characters in feminist’s world because of their sharp idea about women under patriarchy system and attacked by the construction of traditional gender roles. Based on her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, there are certain points which support this analysis; in the light of the libertarian and egalitarian principles of Enlightenment thought, argued that there could be no logical ground for regarding women as lacking in rationality, nor therefore for preventing their participation in public, political life. Marry thinks that women in a unique creature. Her rational faculty is to be developed only insofar as it helps her to realize these uniquely womanly excellences. Furthermore, Wollstonecraft rejects this distinction between manly and womanly virtue (Stafford, vol2).

The next point is Wollstonecraft initiated a lengthy tradition of liberal feminist thinkers who argued that female biology is accidental to woman's true humanity, rooted as this must be in her equal capacity for rational thought and action (Stafford, vol2). In making this analysis becomes more details, another thinker, John Stuart Mill who has the same idea and he also has the newer data in his writing. The *Subjection of the Women* , written by John Stuart Mill self, as the commonly regarded as one of the core text of

Enlightenment liberal feminism in the 19th century. In this book presents Mill's view toward women emancipation Mill's liberalism as the main philosophical background of his criticism of social condition that subordinated women.

In accordance with his liberal social and political philosophy, Mill stresses the similarities between women and men rather than their differences emphasizing that “any of the mental differences supposed to exist between women and men are but the natural effect of the differences in their education and circumstances, and indicate no radical difference, far less radical inferiority, of nature” (Mill, .1984:.302).

Mill argues that any gap in intellectual achievement between men and women can be explained by the better education and privileged social position which men enjoy. On the other hand, he endeavors to emphasize and positively evaluate the importance of those mental or behavioral traits of women which supposedly differ from men's. For example, while arguing for women's suffrage and their representation in public life, he suggests that “the general bent of their talents is towards the practical” (Mill, .1984:.304). Thus making them fit for a life of public action.

In this study, the writer uses the term of “educated women” and it seems to be more specific because actually the meaning of women as the common term and the educated ones are much different. In this analysis, at least the women in the poems act calmer and they may seem

to be ready for waiting their consequences in choosing their decision; that is marriage.

It is argued that feminist movement began in 1960's, but this is not the first time that women's empowerment was struggled by feminists. Actually, most of the movement appeared in that years. Barry states that;

The feminist literary criticism of today is the direct product of the 'women's movement' of the 1960s. This movement was, in important ways, literary from the start, in the sense that it realized the significance of the images of women promulgated by literature, and saw it as vital to combat them and question their authority and their coherence. In this sense the women's movement has always been crucially concerned with books and literature, so that feminist criticism should not be seen as an off-shoot or a spin-off from feminism which is remote from the ultimate aims of the movement, but as one of its most practical ways of influencing everyday conduct and attitudes (Berry 7).

Then we can say that 1960's is the years of feminist renewable and the issues discussed become more complex. Furthermore, in this analysis, Linda Pastan's poem which were written approximately 1930's are recognized as the shape of one of feminist movement where the women's empowerment can be seen inside the lyric or even the action of the author itself in writing her poems. Feminist literature is not a new phenomenon. Evidence of women's ability to write songs, rear children, and grow roses

and of their skill at weaving and healing survives from early times in sculpture, ritual, dance, needlework, and written texts (Snodgrass ix). Pastan's works are part of written text, so that in the inside of her lyrical poems, she gives women's empowerment.

2.1.2 Feminist Issue

2.1.2.1 Mothering, Women Reproduction, Marriage and Women Subjectivity

In Linda Pastan's poems, the gender role issues will appear like Marry Wollstonecraft who is popular as the "mother of feminist". Marry sees how educated women face the serious problem in their life. Marry realizes how the certain rules and value for women that nowadays known as gender role are recognized as the natural law rather than social structure. Johnson argues that ". . . The female, in general is inferior to the male. The male pursues, the female yields – this is the law of nature; and it does not appear to be suspended or abrogated in favor of woman. This physical superiority cannot be denied – and it is a noble prerogative!" (Johnson 141).

Women's physical appearance made women seems weak towards men's point of view because women are able to pregnant or "produce" the new human and women must take care of their children. In the reality, mothering is not a short period of time because that action must be done in the rest of their lifetime after they got married. The consequences of being a mother positions women in the place of being blamed because mother takes

the first role in developing children. On the other hand, educated married women have the desire to reach their dream and explore their potential. In this case, the blaming runs toward mother if their children become the victim of something bad. And the society will not receive whatever mother's reason and the first people that proper to blame is the mother. The choices between having career with totally mothering become the continually confusing problems for women.

In her writing, Holloway argues that:

Mothers were demeaned under the guise of "liberating" them. In many early feminist accounts, mothering was portrayed as a condition of terminal, psychological and social decay, total self-abnegation, physical deterioration, and absence of self-respect. Women, already victims of an image that denigrated their social identity under the terms of the male American success ethos, now found themselves assaulted by the very group that would liberate them (1- 5).

The acts of mothering have never been concerned with the women's personality condition. The relation in mothering is actually between women and pregnancy. The pregnancy truly needs the good mental condition of a mother in the future and this is not the simple thing. Whatever men reveal that they understand, in reality they will never do that process. In *Of Woman Born*, Rich attempts to see motherhood with new eyes, distinguishing between the "potential relationship" (13) that she envisions existing between

mother and child, free of oppressive social constraints, and the socially created institution of motherhood that, in Rich's view, allows a patriarchal society to control women as they bear and raise children (Ginn 27).

In the book of *Cambridge Companion to Marry Wollstonecraft*, Marry also reveals how the role of education is so much important. The education creates the subjectivity of a person in order to build the personality. Then, women will have the power and role in the society life. However, as stated above, the process of self development faces the term of mothering, therefore women will hard to dig their potential and to build their role among society because they must concern with other things (Johnson 39).

The subjectivity of women among the society supports the decaying of their role in the society if their education is able to reach the university level. John Stuart Mill in his book *The Subjection of Women* indicated that women are directly positioned in the marginal. Mill says that there is no such knowledge necessary for any practical purpose connected with the position of women in relation to society and life (40). The denial of knowing that women are able to stand in the same place with men made women hard to find the chance in developing their ability. Mill also states that "the general opinion of men is supposed to be that the natural vocation of a woman is that of a wife and mother. This is because judging from acts—from the whole of the present constitution of society—one might infer that their opinion was the direct contrary" (41).

Indirectly we can say that women's subjectivity can be shown from the daily life of women in the society and how society treats women as their gender. For this case, the relation of the term of marriage and the role of women in social life has certain affection for each other. Mill also mentions that anyone who forces women to marry someone and close the doors against them actually has become the ones who have the same retort. Men do not make the marriage such a desirable thing for women. The marriage then becomes something that is induced for women to accept for its own recommendations (Mill 42).

Mill's analysis shows how marriage cannot be separated from subjectivity of women and the term of marriage which such locks some ways for women to play in the social field. This matter may produce some reasons toward women that men as husbands feel afraid if their wife got unexpected thing on the outside or their wife will enjoy their activity so that they ignore their job in home. Mill reveals the men's fear in his writing. Mill also believes that fear also becomes the clue to the feelings of those men, who have a real antipathy to the equal freedom of women. Men are afraid not because the women are unwilling to marry them, but they are afraid rather if the women are in equal conditions with them. So the men make some efforts less the women are under them. Men will prevent the women who have spirit and capacity from doing what they like. So, marriage is chosen by men as a tool to make themselves a master upon women, and a master too of all their earthly possessions (42).

However in this analysis which purposed to represent the women's position inside the marriage, actually the first players are women themselves. As the main actors, they will think for the step before they take some decisions such as being married and giving birth. However, the invisible trap after the marriage made it hard for women in developing themselves and this become one of the points that they only become stagnant and always receive the unexpected feedback from men.

To strengthen the argument, Mill adds that

...all that has been done in the modern world to relax the chain on the minds of women has been a mistake. They never should have been allowed to receive a literary education. Women, who read, much more women who write, are, in the existing constitution of things, a contradiction and a disturbing element: and it was wrong to bring women up with any acquirements but those of an odalisque, or of a domestic servant (43).

Indirectly Mills supports the idea that education may have the big role in programming women's thinking. Education actually made them think more about themselves: their position, role and right. In this analysis, the education will become the basic of the object because educated women are represented by Pastan in her poems. The women in Pastan's poems made the housewife's feelings go up into the surface.

2.2.2.2 Housewife within Marriage

The housewife's position becomes the main range for married women's habitual or it can be named as women's territory. The label of married women bring with its rules and obligation. In 1930's where the empowerment of women did not appear in large of number, no matter what shape they are, Pastan's poems already give certain support for female readers in knowing the position of women as housewives in the middle of family and society. Lesley Johnson and Justine Lloyd in their book *Feminism and the Housewife* much reveal how the housewife is given certain way even to pass their life. In their book, the gender relation and the world of home and works are discussed well. The feminist issue inside of Johnson and Lloyd's which is also used in this study is that women should stay home or go to work when their children are young as presented.

Lloyd in long words argues that since the Second World War, the figure of the housewife have appeared to be a problem. Feminists, during the first few decades of second wave feminism, constituted 'the housewife' as 'Other' to themselves as they sought to elaborate a speaking position for feminists and the feminist intellectual in particular. And there are still some problematic issues that make it for feminism to make modern families balance family and work life (1- 3).

Women's position as housewives before World War II still have many similarities because in the 20th century most of women still follow the rules like their gender and are not strongly against the equality. Women's

position might be questioned by them but most of the women's voices much concern for the political sphere and labor. Actually, the 20th century is the years of transition from gender roles that drives women in the circle of patriarchy system and the beginning of working women. The transition period of course needs process and in this case women must give more of their voices through literary works, like Pastan does in her poems.

2.2 Related Studies

There are some studies conducted in literary field that are closely related to the discussion of traditional gender role in patriarchal society, even though the studies are not directly related to the novel discussed in this study. The difference between this study and the previous ones lies on the concern of discussion. This study concerns on the women's position in the middle of the family. This study focuses on the way women act as wife and mothers inside the family and how all the members of the family treat the women. There are two studies that will be the previous ones of this analysis: (1) Ani Wulandari (Airlangga University) in her thesis entitled *Patriarchy and the Act of Mothering: A Reading of "Kartini" Magazine's Rubric "Oh Mama Oh Papa"* and (2) Fony Kurniawati (Airlangga University) in her thesis entitled *The Portrayal of Women as Seen in Anne Bronte's Agnes Grey*.

Ani Wulandari examines the abuse of men towards women in patriarchal society and how patriarchy hands more advantages to men. A

patriarchal oppression may impede the notion of motherhood. Qualitative method is used in examining Kartini magazine by elaborating events and conflicts in “Oh Mama Oh Papa”. The theory of traditional gender role used in closely related with mothering and domestic violence along with its effects. The findings show that the patriarchy subjugates the act of mothering through the myths of motherhood, mother blaming, the double burdens of working mothers, and alienation of women. The patriarchal abuse might at the end lead into trauma that amends the mothering pattern. It could fortify the bond between mother and child, since they are both victims of patriarchy. On the other hand, it could also weaken the bond between them.

Fony Kurniawati examines unfair treatment towards women in patriarchal society. The novel analyzed titled *Agnes Grey* by Anne Bronte. The study finds that the women are oppressed in the family and society because of the patriarchal and capitalism influences. Women do not have enough freedom to show their feelings, choose their own ways, and do anything they want.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS