

CHAPTER 1

Related Literatures

1.1 Background of the study

In this present day, equality has been existing throughout the day since human being had started to walk the earth. There are forms of equality such as formal equality, moral equality, welfare equality and gender equality. Plato, as stated in the Book V of The Republic, depicted women in a negative light stating that women as creatures only function is to provoke men's desire with their erotic passion. Additionally, he also thought that women are 'weepy, weak and worthy of imitation' (Plato, n.d.) (Allan Bloom, 1968) (387e, 395e, 420a, 431c) thus giving women much lighter workload than men even though they are the same kind of work. Janet Farrel Smith on her article titled 'Plato, Irony, Equality' (1994) had responded towards Plato's view towards woman, especially regarding his style on being ironic. She perceived that Plato's view upon women is very misogynistic and derogatory but yet Plato had acknowledged whether women should be able to be in higher place thanks to their skill. This had concluded Janet that Plato's view on women is ambivalent; women regardless from their inability as long as they could receive equal education, might be fit as a ruler. In the present days, men and women are seen quite as an equal; mostly. There are still sexism and misogyny until this day. In a perfect world, we would see each other as equal with our respective differences between each other. This study discusses the novel titled Good Earth authored by Pearl S. Buck

about the act of misogyny happening throughout the story poured in the novel. Seeing women as lesser beings from men was a view which was popular before reaching the early second millennium when feminism started to rise once again successfully putting women's rights as equal as men's. In this book, that era was not rising as women were still seen as either a slave or object as in trophy. As a slave, a woman is seen as only a cattle, to produce offspring preferably male. As an object or trophy, a woman is used for satisfying men's desires. Misogyny is a form of sexism, a discrimination focused towards sexuality or gender mostly against females. From as simple as satisfying the beauty of a woman to as grim as satisfying sexual needs of men's primal lust. This analysis will be focusing on the act of men abusing women happening in the book. From the main protagonist and the central character of the story, Wang Lung, to minor then turned into major antagonist, the cousin. The purpose of this research is to find, discuss and analyze the act of men abusing women based on the observation of the book. This research will be supported by several theories by experts along with previous studies researching similar problems in order to gather all the relevant data as complete as possible.

For the better or worse, gender equality was not implemented that well in the past. In fact, it was almost nonexistent. Men placed themselves much in a higher hierarchy. Women were mostly seen as an object, being objectified for fulfilling men's desire whether as simple as satiating hunger or as rabid as sexual needs. This story is inspired during the last moment of Qing dynasty thanks to the invasion of communism within China. This leads China to be aggressively changing their traditional moral and values, leaning more towards socialism and materialistic. In early 1900 of China, women were

seen as a mere servant; to help household or simply breed for gaining offspring preferably male legacy continuation. For those fortunate enough, women were seen as trophies; only as walking beauty to satiate the eyes of prosperous men who got the chance of such. Women were living to serve the men for such a long time.

Furthermore in Asia especially in China, gender inequality had been an issue for quite a long time. Many Asian countries consider women to be much more inferior than men would consider them much higher. As in fact, it is quite similar towards every culture around the world when viewing the very position of women, as a servant or even a trophy that men could flaunt and make it their own. One such act in China is this; foot binding for women. The act of binding foot is not exactly done by the men, but by the mother of a daughter. Usually around the age of 3 years old, a daughter's feet would be bound with a bandage and tighten every night. The flesh of women's feet would be rotten. This act was done for the reason to increase arousal of men; this would help for the perspective of women being helpless hence the arousal gain. Another one would be that women are only placed in three social roles; marriage, concubinage and prostitution. All these roles have prevented women to gain any freedom on their actions. All these oppression against women were concluded by Jessica Fulton (Fulton, n.d.) on her journal .

This very situation is being reflected in a novel titled "The Good Earth" written by Pearl S. Buck which also considered by many as modern classic. Pearl S. Buck, being an American trying to portray the life of Asians especially in early 19s China via narrative. She claimed that she could only write what she had known where she presents a graphic

view of a China when the last emperor reigned and the vast political social upheavals of the twentieth century were just distant rumblings and resounding of ordinary people living their fullest of surviving of nature's obstacle courses. She presents the story in a fictional perspective of an honest-living farmer Wang Lung and his selfless and caring wife O-Lan as a reading for the reader to give out changes of the lives of Chinese people during the century Pearl S. Buck has lived in.

One of Pearl S. Buck's famous works is titled *The Good Earth* which she wrote based her own word "I can only write that I know, and I know nothing but China, having always lived there." The story could be briefly summarized as in this sentence, A life of a farmer who gradually become rich and richer until his last breath. From the very humble beginning of farming life until become rich noble that Wang Lung had successfully achieved alongside with his selfless wife. The story itself centered around Wang Lung which his personality would be tempered by the people living around him, which would later also lead to one of his biggest mistake and demise. This very mistake had costed not in financially, but in his morality; becoming regretful and resentful for his whole action against O-Lan. He did helped her later to fulfil some of her dying wishes when he finally realized the state of his wife.

Wang Lung had been in arranged marriage with O Lan. He did not really show much affection towards her but nevertheless he absolutely could not deny that he was feeling very grateful towards her, especially during one of his most ferocious time him and his family had endured such as famine and the raiding of his house done by raging

townsfolk. That gratitude towards her slowly but surely became less and lesser; this was more apparent when Wang Lung had become much more successful, meaning more power for him to do as he wanted. He later shown less and less respect towards O Lan and even blatantly ignoring her pleas when he had acquired a concubine for him to satisfy with.

Even though this novel was written in 1950s, the issue of misogyny is still relevant in our present situation, especially in Indonesia having similarities in cultural background and values of Eastern culture. A man would see his opposite, woman, as unequal; not worthy to be spent much hence the inequality in viewing female as their equal. A man could see his peers as one the same but as for women would not

Inequality are portrayed quite firmly in the novel. This would often lead towards being misogynistic. What one would describe being misogynistic? To put it simply, according to a quick internet search, being a misogynist is being hateful towards women in order to put them in a lower social status towards men

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1.2 Research Questions

The research questions are formulated as

1. What types of misogyny are embedded within the novel *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck?

2. How do the characters included in the act of misogyny react towards it?

The study is about the analysis of the act of misogynist happening throughout the story from the book of “The Good Earth” in order to understand the very act and whether there is any act against it

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to analyze the types of misogyny happening from the story of Good Earth. Understanding the act of misogyny happening throughout the story is expected to be achieved by the reader of the study.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is hoped to bring more attention to how destructive on having misogynist perspective in present living condition. Knowing this would give more people awareness to not do that or at the very least, acknowledge the very pattern of misogyny. Further benefit, people could also learn to become a better person by interacting with each other, striving to improve living condition .

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study will be based mainly upon Kate Manne (2017)'s misogyny theory which is taken from her book titled "Down Girl". According to her, misogyny is not simply hatred of women, but as a system policing and enforcing gender norms; particularly towards women defying patriarchal norms. Misogyny is used as sort of "law enforcement arm of patriarchy". It is a tool for punishing women who dares to challenge patriarchal norms or simply fail at pleasing male interest. Based on that, misogyny could be interpreted as a social mechanism that rewards "good" women and punishes "bad" women for maintaining male privilege and power.

The author's theory could also be implemented for understanding:

- Systematic patterns of misogyny across institutions and cultures
- Why women are punished regularly for the same behavior men are rewarded for
- The backlash women had to face when they are in position of power or leadership.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study focuses on any form of misogynies happening within the story. All the characters, especially male ones, who has done the act of misogyny from the novel The Good Earth.

1.7 Definition of Key-terms

Here are the key terms used in this study. There are two key terms which are misogyny and the novel “The Good Earth” by Pearl S. Buck.

Misogyny

Misogyny derives from the Ancient Greek word *misos* (μῖσος), meaning “hatred,” and *gynē* (γυνή), meaning “woman.” Literally translates to “hatred of women”. This word entered the English language in the early 17th century and has since evolved in both usage and meaning (Oxford English Dictionary, 2024). Traditionally, misogyny refers to:

“Dislike of, contempt of, or ingrained prejudice against women” (Oxford English Dictionary)

It may manifest as individual hostility, systematic discrimination, or social norms which devalue and marginalize women. It can takes many forms; ranging from overt action such as violence and harassment to more subtle mechanisms such as gendered stereotypes, social exclusion, or unequal treatment in institutions. Kate Manne, the author of “Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny” and “Entitled: How Male Privileges Hurts Women”, stated that misogyny is reconceptualized as a structural force rather than a personal emotion in which she defines it as “ the system that polices and enforces women’s subordination and obedience to patriarchal norms”. From her point of view, misogyny’s purpose is to uphold patriarchy by punishing women challenging male

authority or deviate from traditional gender roles. Not for mere hatred, but as a method of social control.

The Good Earth

The Good Earth is a novel authored by Pearl S. Buck and published in 1931 and renewed the copyright at 1958. It served as a first book in her “House of Earth” trilogy which followed in “Sons” (1932) and “A house Divided” (1935). The Good Earth was written based on the author first-hand observation of Chinese village life. The story follows the life of simple yet humble farmer named Wang Lung when it begins with his wedding. We would witness the ups and downs of his life until he later becomes successful. The book that the writer used is borrowed from Widya Mandala Catholic University’s library. This book was the Washington Square Press trade paperback edition September 2004.

1.8 Organization of the Proposal

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, the theoretical framework, the definition of key terms, and the organization of the study. Chapter II presents the review of the theories used in analyzing of literary work as well as the review related literature. Chapter III views the research method of the study. Chapter IV presents the findings and the analysis of the study. Chapter V presents the conclusion of the study followed with the suggestions.