

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reason for Choosing the Topic

The Pearl That Broke Its Shell is an international bestseller novel written by Afghan-American author Nadia Hashimi. This is her first novel published in 2014 and elected as 2014 Goodreads Finalist in the category of Debut Author and Fiction. Nadia Hashimi was born in New Jersey in 1977 and comes from Afghan family. Her parents migrate to the United States and they become entrepreneurs. Hashimi is graduated from Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts and also works as a pediatrician.

The novel tells about the inferior position of Afghanistan women. The setting of the story takes place in urban area not far from Kabul city. The people in this country hold patriarchy system and Islamic rules. The men are superior and control the women in every aspect. The women have limited access outside the house and burden mainly around the house. They are busy with daily house works to serve the husband, taking care of many children and the house. The women lose their rights in many things. They are not considered as human or woman but they are treated like object that can bring advantages for the men. Their feeling and opinion are not accepted. There are many female characters in this novel who have experienced suffering because of their inferiority for example Shekiba, Rahima, Gulnaz, Raisa, Parwin, Badriya, Khala Shaima and Zamarud. The women try some efforts to get out from their situation.

One of the actions that the women do is to become a *bacha posh*. According to Sabet (2018) in her article *Bacha Posh: An Afghanistan Social Tradition Where Girls Raised As Boys*, “the term *bacha posh* in local Dari language means ‘a girl dressed like a boy’. Parents who have no sons prefer to change one of their daughters into a *bacha posh* to raise their social standing. Once they reach puberty, the girls usually must return to being girls.” It means that the changes to be a boy can be seen from the look. The *bacha posh* girls wear clothes like the boys. They also have short hair, walk like boys, play with other boys, get treatment like boys and they also can work to get some money. Luckily, they can go to school and get education.

The *bacha posh* happens to girls in Afghanistan society who hold patriarchy system. Moreover, Sabet (2018) writes that *bacha posh* is a struggle for a little freedom of girls in highly patriarchal, male dominated society. Sons are more valued in Afghanistan, since tribal culture permits only sons to inherit the father’s wealth and pass down the family name. Families without boys are the object of pity and contempt. It can be seen that there is inequality between boys and girls in Afghan society. To be born as a girl can be something ashamed. The girls get different treatment from the boys based on the tradition.

With this background, the writer is interested to hold a feminism study by using Hashimi’s novel because it represents how inferior the position of women in Afghanistan and how brave the women struggle to get their rights even though they will get violence. The writer is also interested to analyze *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* because the story is based on the true story from most Afghanistan

women. This analysis looks carefully to the sign of women inferiority and struggle in the novel *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*.

1.2 The Objective and Scope of the Study

This research is analyzed by using Feminism approach. There are two objectives of this research:

1. To describe the inferior position of Afghanistan women in the novel *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* by Nadia Hashimi.
2. To describe the struggle of Afghanistan women in the novel *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* by Nadia Hashimi.

For the scope of the research, the writer only focuses on inferior position of women and women struggle in Afghanistan as seen in the novel *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*.

1.3 Formulation of the Problem

According to the objective and scope of the study, the problems of this research are formulated as follow:

1. How are the inferior positions of women in the novel *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*?
2. How do the women struggle in the novel *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*?

1.4 Review of Related Literature

In this section, the writer discusses about the references related to women inferiority and struggle in Afghanistan as reflected in the novel *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*. The reviews are related to previous studies, patriarchy and women inferiority and women struggle in Afghanistan. The discussion is as follows:

1.4.1 Previous Studies

The Pearl That Broke Its Shell has been researched by some previous researcher. First, Roshni C. (2014) in her journal with the title *Representation of Women and Politics of Identity Crisis in Nadia Hashimi's The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*. She discussed about the crisis of identity in Afghanistan women and how women live in victimization and the spiritual strength in two main characters in this novel.

This novel also has been discussed in different views like Katarina Polomska in her journal *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell CGW 4U Summative Book Review*. This research is about gender inequality issues in developed world and women treated inequality in society. She also tells about how Rahima and Shekiba live separated by a hundred years of time but felt the same inequality treatment in their own country, Afghanistan. She also writes about women empowerment to fight gender inequality.

Another research is done by Pam Norfolk (2015) in the website *The Clitheroe Advertiser and Times Book Review: The Pearl That Broke Its Shell by Nadia Hashimi*. He discusses about women empowered in a tradition and male role in the novel that facing restrictions and prejudice.

In this research, the writer applies the same novel with feminism approach but different from the previous researchers. The writer discusses the inferior position of women under male power and how the women struggle to get their rights in Afghanistan.

1.4.2 Theoretical Framework

Based on the objective and scope of the study, the writer analyzes about the inferior position of Afghanistan women. Then the writer tries to explain about the women struggle to improve their life. The focus of the study is feminism. The writer uses the theories from Guerin L. Wilfred, Abeda Sultana and Wali Rahimi to understand more about women inferiority.

1.4.2.1 Feminism and Patriarchy

According to Guerin L. Wilfred (1999: 196) in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, “Feminism theory is a theory of literary work that concerned with the marginalization of women with their being relegated to secondary position by patriarchal culture”. It can be seen from the quotation that feminism is theory about women position under patriarchal culture as inferior in power and men are superpower. The women are limited in activities and their life is decided by men.

According to Sultana (2011: 2) in her journal *Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: Theoretical Analysis.*, “the word ‘patriarchy’ literally means the rule of the father or the *patriarch*, refers to the power relationships by which men dominate women and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways”. It can be seen that patriarch is a system in the

society that put the men to control the life of women. The men are the leaders and the women are the followers. In male dominated society, the women have low position in many aspects.

1.4.2.2 Inferior Position of Women

Sultana (2011: 7) writes that “the term women subordination” refers to the inferior position of women, their lack of access to resources and decision making, etc. The feeling of powerlessness, discrimination and experience of self-esteem and self-confidence jointly contribute to the subordination to women.” It means that the inferior position of women make the women become weak. They become dependent to the men and treated in inequality.

To support Sultana’s theory, the writer also uses the theory from Rahimi (1991) in her paper *Status of Women: Afghanistan*. She writes that “the position of women in Afghanistan has traditionally been inferior to that of men. This position has varied according to age, socio-cultural norms, and ethnicity. In fact, Afghan women are the slaves of their father, husband, father in-law, and elder brother”. It can be concluded that women inferior position starts since childhood to adulthood. It means that the men around the women can put her in low position as long as she lives.

According to Sultana (2011: 8) there are practices that the women face in daily life as inferior:

The norms and practices that define women as inferior to men, impose controls on-them, are present everywhere in our families, social relations, religions, laws, schools, textbooks, media, factories, offices.

Thus, patriarchy is called the sum of the kind of male domination we see around women all the time. In this ideology, men are superior to women and women are part of men's property, so women should be controlled by men.

The inferiority also can be seen through discrimination that happens to women. Sultana (2011: 7-8) divides discrimination in the specific forms as:

A specific form of discrimination and a particular aspect of patriarchy such as son preference, discrimination against girls in food distribution, burden of household work on women and young girls, lack of educational opportunities for girls, lack of freedom and mobility for girls, wife battering, male control over women and girls, sexual harassment at workplace, lack of inheritance or property rights for women, male control over women's bodies and sexuality, no control over fertility or reproductive right.

From the theory, it can be known that inferiority on women makes them get the discrimination in many parts in life. Because of their inferiority, they cannot have the same right in education, mobility, inheritance and many ways compared to the men. The worst thing is every women's right is ruled and controlled by the men.

Furthermore, Rahimi (1991) writes that the inferiority to women happens since the daughter is born. Afghanistan men prefer male child and they like to have many sons. In short, the inferiority happens to women since she is still a child. She describes about the position of Afghan women as follow:

The essence of attitude towards women could be clearly seen in the relationship of the family after the birth of a female baby. Such a birth was considered and judged as unpleasant event and unfortunate for the entire family. Girls were usually raised to be good mothers and tolerant housewives.

It can be concluded from this source that the women in Afghanistan do not have freedom since they are born. Their life is full with burden and duties. It is difficult for them to solve their situation. That is why to study the women struggle as seen in the novel *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* is very interesting.

1.4.2.3 Women Struggle

To get out of the situation that takes the women's rights, the women must do some struggle. Millet in her book *Sexual Politics* (1970) writes that:

Women to be aware of their situation both in the society and at home, to form their self-consciousness as women, to demand their equality with men and to obtain their autonomy. The resistance is the one way to achieve equality, dignity, and rights (such as right to education, right to birth control, right to divorce, and to participate in decision-making).

It can be concluded that the struggle for women is how they can return their rights. If they struggle, they can live as a normal human being. Women lose their rights in many fields. Therefore, women also can struggle in many fields for example to get their right to speak and give argument, the right to go outside, the right to get education and the right to make money and to get some job.

1.4.2.4 Historical approach

To analyze the inferiority of Afghanistan women based on the facts that happen to them, the writer uses historical approach. The writer makes sure that the discussion about women inferiority in patriarchal society really has connection. According to Kennedy and Gioia (1995), “Historical approach seeks to understand a literary work by investigating the social, cultural and intellectual context that produced it – a context that includes the artist’s biography and milieu.” It means that the historical approach in literature studies about the moment or the history when the literary work is written. In other words, the literary represents the situation of the history at that time. Therefore, the writer needs a fixed source to prove the women inferiority in Afghanistan from experienced author.

1.5 Method of Research

In this study, the writer applies close reading technique. Jacobus (2001: 6) in his book *Literature: An Introduction to Critical Reading* writes that “Close reading takes the form of writing, discussion or silent observation, should be based on questioning the text. Close reading requires that you take the text seriously enough to study it, to read and read it, search for details that might otherwise go unobserved, examine the text for special words and term and refer to the dictionary to be sure of their meaning when necessary”. It means that to do this research the writer reads the novel carefully again and again. The writer makes sure about difficult words. In this research the writer pays more attention to feminism issues to women.

To find the detailed information, the writer studies the statements from the female characters. According to Roberts (2003: 66) in his book *Writing about Literature*, “Character may be defined as a verbal representation of human being. To find out the data about the character, the writer sees from the action and speech of the main character, the description and commentary of the narrator and the other character about the main character”. It means that to explain about women inferiority and struggle the writer can get the data from the action of female characters, behavior, statement, description from the author of novel and also from the other character in the novel.

In this research, the writer follows some steps, first in collecting the data, the writer reads and rereads the novel and analyze the part of the story that shows women inferiority and struggle. Second, the writer takes notes and highlights related data through the action of female characters, speech, think, and dialogue with other characters. Third, classifies the data in the right classification. Fourth, the writer processes the data based on the theories applied that are feminism and historical approach. The last technique is the writer searches the journal or references to support the explanation and to make sure that the analysis is different from previous researchers.