

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the research questions, the reason for choosing the topic, the scope of the study, the objective of the study, the research methodology, clarification of terms and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of The Study

The issue about women is interesting to investigate because they are often seen as “the other” in society. This is in accordance with Beauvoir (1953, as cited in Bressler, 2007) who states that since women are not men, they are always seen as “the other”. This means that people in authority in the society perceives women’s place is after men because they are “the other”. This implies that women are inferior to men in society.

Women inferiority is one of the examples of women issues which is potential to be analyzed because women can be seen as victims. Women inferiority can be reflected through the roles between husband and wife where authority is established through male’s domination. This situation indicates that men are seen to be the one who have authority to control women. The inferiority of women shows inequality, which places women under men’s domination. According to Cohen and Orbuch (1990) women are stereotyped as weak, sentimental, and kind. Therefore, these stereotypes have made women inferior because this gives the power to man to control

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women which is sometimes reflected in literary works including the novel. This study analyzes the issue of the roles between husband and wife in establishing spousal authority in a novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini published in 2007. The story was written based on the true story of an Afghan wife who experienced domestic abuses in her marriage. In the novel, the main character Mariam was a young woman who was forced to marry Rasheed, a 40 years old man. She also experienced domestic abuse by her husband. This practice shows the unequal treatment given to women in which she wants to struggle to be equal. In addition, the setting of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* took place in Afghanistan in 1974-2003 when the wars were happened. This war happened between the Soviet army and Taliban so that since Taliban controlled Afghanistan, the women were forbidden to get education, work, and go outside without their men relative. Thus, this condition forces the women to be placed under men's legitimation.

It has become a common issue where family authority is maintained by men, so that it makes women to be inferior. This phenomenon is clearly described in *A Thousand Splendid Suns's* novel. Therefore, this study aims at observing the issue about the roles between husband and wife in establishing spousal authority which are depicted in Khaled Hosseini's novel. Nevertheless, the inferiority of women that is experienced by Mariam, the main character, is different from some other texts because her life experience is unique in which Mariam is a strong woman who fight

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for her terrible life in her marriage in Afghanistan, so that it is interesting to be analyzed.

The issue of the role between husband and wife in establishing spousal authority in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is appropriate to be analyzed by utilizing gender studies, power, and patriarchy. Therefore, this study is going to utilize theories grounded in gender roles and stereotypes, power and patriarchy.

Theory of gender roles and stereotypes can be used as important tool to analyze the role between husband and wife. Gender is a cultural construction in which male and female differences are defined by dominant socio-cultural values (Connell, 2009). It means that gender is socially constructed between men and women identity. In line with this, traditionally, gender roles between women and men cannot be changed in society (Wienclaw, 2011). It points out that women and men have their own responsibilities in their life which cannot be changed. For examples, women have responsibilities to be a good wife, take care of their children, and stay at home while men have responsibilities to earn money and protect their family.

In addition, power and patriarchy theories are also utilized to analyze the way spousal authority is established in the family. Power is the ability to influence consciously or unconsciously the emotions, attitudes, cognitions or behavior of other people (Komter, 1989 as cited in Pyke and Adams, 2010). As proposed by Wearing (1996, as cited in Collis, 1999), in the family which at least consists of husband and

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wife, husbands have more power than his wife because of their gender where their traditional position as the head of the household, economic, and physical power. Thus, these theories can be used as important tool in analyzing the issue of spousal authority in the roles between husband and wife in *A Thousand Splendid Suns's* novel. It is also used to identify the roles of husband and wife in the family and to discover the way spousal authority is established in the family.

1.2 Research Question

In order to focus on the study, the research question is formulated to the issue of the roles of husband and wife in establishing spousal authority in the family.

The research questions of the study are stated as follows:

1. What roles do husband and wife character play in the family?
2. In what way spousal authority is established in the family?

1.3 The Reason for Choosing the Study

Recently, news, newspaper, and television report many cases of spousal authority are maintained through oppression and abuse towards wives which are done by their husbands in society, such as domestic abuse. Literary works are examples that can be used to investigate the roles of husband and wife in establishing spousal authority such as domestic abuse, especially in the novel. In a novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini, Mariam, the main character, had

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experienced difficult situation in her life. In the novel, Mariam was forbidden to go outside without her husband. She also had to wear *Burqa*. Then, after four years of her marriage, Mariam realized that her husband was always treated her badly such as complain everything that Mariam did. For this reason, this study aims at identifying the issue about spousal authority which comes up in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*'s novel.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The analysis of this study is focused on the gender roles and stereotypes of spousal authority in the novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini (2007). This study analyzes the way spousal authority is shown through the husband and wife's role in the novel.

1.5 The Objective of the Study

Since the focus of this study is analyzing spousal authority in a novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the aims of this study are to find out the roles of husband and wife in the family and to identify the way spousal authority is established in the family. Thus, the result of the study is expected to give more knowledge and illustration about spousal authority in social life. In addition, the present study is

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expected to give advantageous information about spousal authority in the roles between husband and wife for the literary studies.

1.6 Research Methodology

This study is conducted under qualitative research which uses descriptive method. Qualitative research and descriptive method are connected to each other. In qualitative research, the research problem focuses on some processes, events, or phenomena (Otieno, 2001 as cited in Strauss and Cobin, 1998). This approach is considered appropriate to analyze the data deeper. In addition, descriptive method produces more accurate and factual description of study. According to Nazir (2003) descriptive methodology is a method in analyzing people, system of thought, or another object at the current time. The aim of this method is to describe facts, characteristics, and relationship among the phenomena systematically, factually and accurately. Moreover, textual analysis technique is also suitable in analyzing the novel because this study deals with text where this approach focuses on gaining the meaning by identifying words, utterances, expressions in the text. Textual analysis can be defined as the method that emphasizes significant influences on qualitative interpretation which reveals hidden meanings and it is used to gain understanding of human nature (Byrne, 2001).

1.6.1 Data Collection

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The data are collected from *Thousand Splendid Suns*, a novel by Khaled Hosseini. In investigating the issue of spousal authority this study highlights and underlines several classifications such as: the selected words, phrases, sentences, expressions, and utterances which are considered important in gaining the findings in the text.

1.6.2 Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, this study uses gender studies by Winclaw (2011), power and patriarchy by Komter (1989) and Lukes (2005). In conducting the study, the following steps have been taken. First, the writer selects the subject of the topic, reads the novel several times, and collects textual evidence which is related to research questions. Then, to answer the first question which is looked at the husband and wife role in the novel, the theory of gender roles and stereotypes are used as theoretical framework. Second, to answer the second question which is purposed to identify the way spousal authority is established, theory of power and patriarchy are used as a tool in gaining the finding in the novel. After finishing these steps, the next step is presenting data analysis. The last step is making conclusion and suggestion based on data analysis.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

In order to comprehend the ideas underlying this study some terms are clarified as follows:

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1. Family: Family can be seen as a group of people who have biological, emotional or legal ties to each other (McDaniel et al, 2005)
2. Gender: Term denoting the cultural constitution of notions concerning femininity or masculinity and the ways in which these serve ideologically to maintain gendered identities (Wolfreys et al, 2006:45).
3. Patriarchy: Creating an imbalance of power that marginalizes women and their work (Dobie, 2009:104).
4. Power: The ability to affect consciously or unconsciously the emotions, attitudes, cognitions or behavior of someone else (Komter, 1989 as cited in Pyke and Adams, 2010:755).
5. Spousal: It relates to a husband or wife (Encarta, 2007)

1.8 Organization of the paper

The present study is organized as follows:

Chapter I

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Chapter II

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This chapter explains the theoretical framework of the present study, regarding gender theory, power, and patriarchy in a novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini.

Chapter III

This chapter deals with the research questions and the research method of the study. It presents data collection, data analysis, procedures of the present study, and data presentation.

Chapter IV

This chapter provides the result of the present study. It represents the finding and discussion.

Chapter V

This chapter is conclusion of the present study and suggestion for further studies.

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