

CHAPTER V

Conclusion and Suggestion

In this chapter, the writer presents the conclusion to answer the research questions. The writer also provides the suggestion in this chapter. The suggestions divided into three parts; suggestion for the readers of the novel, suggestion for teaching literature, and suggestion for further study.

5.1. Conclusion

In the conclusion, the writer sums up the answers of the research questions in the previous chapter. The research questions are: (1) How does society perceive women and their roles in the society? (2) How does Esther Greenwood perceive women and their roles in the society? The writer divides each answer into five aspects; beauty standard, sexual double standards, object, marriage, and career.

The first question is about how society perceive woman. The first aspect is about beauty standard. Society in the past found that women's appeal comes merely from their physical appearance. Women's worth is defined by their beauty. No matter how smart or talented a woman is, beauty is always comes first. This fact is proven in the novel by the gifts given by Ladies Day Company to the all-woman interns. Almost all of the gifts are related to beauty product, like make up kits, dresses, and hair salon coupon. The company realizes that physical appearance is very crucial for woman. Women are also expected to appear beautiful in every condition. This fact is proven by the patients in the private

mental hospital where Esther stays. They keep still keep appearance beautiful by wearing makeup and fashionable clothes, even though they live in the hospital.

The second aspect is sexual double standard. Women are expected to keep their virginity until marriage, but men are permitted to have sexual relationship before marriage. Society does not approve the fact that men can explore their sexual experience frankly, but it is become unwritten knowledge in the society that most men explore sexual activity before marriage and women cannot protest except that man is bound to marriage. This fact is proven by the article Esther got from her mother. The article shows the reason why women must keep their chastity. Some of the reasons are because men's world and emotion is different from women's world and emotion, men wants to teach their wife about sex, and if a woman loses her chastity before marriage, men will lose all his respect to that woman.

The third aspect is object. With the sexual double standard as explained above, it is clear that society considers woman as the inferior gender. This fact is represented by some male characters in the novel. Buddy Willard, Esther former boyfriend never respects Esther and degrades Esther passion. Buddy regards Esther to be inferior from her by having an affair with other woman and does not consider Esther's feelings. Other male characters like Marco and Lenny also degrade women by calling them with dehumanizing names and touch women without their consent. A character named Eric even compares all women with animals.

The fourth object is marriage. Society considers marriage is the purpose of life for women. Women's purpose in life is to serve their family after are married. Women must make a comfortable home for men in exchange for a secure and cozy life men give them. This fact is proven by Buddy Willard's mother. She always reminds Buddy that man wants a mate from woman and woman wants infinite security from man.

The last aspect is career. Women usually do not build career, because in the end they will only be a housewives. Women usually become secretaries, teachers, or waitresses before they are married. If women want to have a career, they must sacrifice her marriage. This fact is proven by a woman poet Esther met. She is very surprised when Esther said she wanted to get married. The woman poet cries "but what about your career?" to Esther. Even so, having a career as a woman is not impossible at all. This is proven by Dr. Nolan and Jay Cee who has a successful career even though they are women. It is not entirely impossible for women to have a career. It is just way harder for women to have a career than men do.

The second question is about Esther Greenwood's perception of woman and their roles. Like the previous answer, this answer also divided into five aspects. The first aspect is beauty standard. Esther defines her appeal from her intelligent. She does not like the way society defines woman's worth from their physical appearance only. That is why Esther admires women who have intelligence and talent rather than women who have beautiful appearance.

The second aspect is sexual double standard. Esther believes that man and woman must keep their chastity before marriage, but after she discovers that most men are having sexual relationship before marriage and it is natural in the society, she feels that this double standard is unfair for woman. She does not like to be looked down because of her gender. She could not accept that society regards woman as inferior gender. That is why she is desperate to lose her virginity to prove herself that men and women are equal. Women can get the same privilege as men have.

The third aspect is object. Men who have a wife are usually more respected by the society rather than single men. After Esther discovered Buddy's affair, she feels that Buddy only used her to become his wife to raise his status in society. Esther feels it is not fair because Buddy can have relationship with other women, while Esther is waiting for him as a docile housewife does if she marries Buddy. She does not want to be a woman who depend a man for her safety and comfort. She wants to be equal as Buddy and other man.

The fourth aspect is marriage. Most women usually wait for a man come to their life to build a family. Then, woman usually becomes docile housewife who stay in their home to nurture their family. Esther does not like the idea of serving her becoming a docile housewife. Esther knows if she chooses marriage, she will have to sacrifice her other dreams. Esther thinks that marriage can change her mind in reaching her dreams. She knows if she becomes a mother, she will be busy to take care of her children, husband, and house and she will not have time to think about being a poet to serve her family. She has a small desire to get married,

but her desire to become a poet is even bigger. She knows she cannot get both of them and it makes her afraid to choose her future.

The last aspect is career. Most women do not think about their career at all, because women mostly wound up to get married and become a housewife. Esther is different from majority of woman. She has a strong desire to become a poet, due to her passion to poetry. Esther realizes that becoming a poet is very challenging; moreover she is a woman. Poetry world is dominated by male poets. It was very rare for women to have a successful career as poet. This fact makes Esther doubt herself and her dream and cause her to break down. In the end, her failure to get a first step to reach her dream gives a major factor to her depression.

In conclusion, almost all Esther perceptions of women are very contradictive to society perception. Esther does not like how society treats woman as inferior gender. She has internal conflict to prove herself that men and women are equal, but she does not know how, so she becomes desperate to lose her virginity and starts to show signs of depression.

5.2. Suggestion

5.2.1 Suggestion for the Readers of the Novel

After doing the research, the writer hopes the reader of the novel can get better understanding of how society in the past perceives women and their roles. The writer hopes that the readers can realizes the differences between how society view women in the past and in the present, so the readers, especially female

readers, can be grateful of the privilege they get which are not available for women in the past.

5.2.2 Suggestion for Teaching Literature

The writer finds it interesting to learn a literature in feminism aspect. Learning literature in feminism aspect can give knowledge of how society perceive woman. The writer realizes that to learn about feminism in literary works, researches must analyze the intrinsic elements of the novel first. The writer analyzes the intrinsic elements first to get better understanding to the story before move to other aspects in the story.

The writer suggests literature teacher to direct the students to analyze the intrinsic elements like setting, character, plot, and theme before moving to analyze other aspects. The teacher also may asks the students to relate the events in the novel to the reality to get better understanding of the novel and the cultural aspects that happened in the novel.

5.2.3 Suggestion for Further Study

The writer realizes that this study only covers the feminism aspects in The Bell Jar, particularly the perception of woman and their roles. The writer suggests the other researchers to study different aspects in this novel such as the cause of the main protagonist mental illness, the inner conflict of the main protagonist, and many more.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M. H. (1999). *A Glossary of Literary Terms (7th ed)*. Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle
- Agustin, Rika. (2011). *The Patriarchal Oppression Faced by main Character in Sylvia Plath's The Bell jar*. Retrieved January 9, 2017, from <http://elib.unikom.ac.id/gdl.php?mod=browse&op=read&id=jbptunikomp-gdl-rikaagusti-27135>
- American Psychological Association. (2010). *APA Style Guide, 6th ed*. Retrieved June 13, 2017, from http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/laupuslibrary/upload/apa_style_guide_6th_ed_oct09.pdf
- Bærevar, Elise. (2007). *Esther Greenwood's Panopticon Female Identity Through Self-Policing In The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath*. Retrieved November 20, 2016, from <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/25481/Esther.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Barry, Peter. (2002). *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory (2nd ed)*. Manchester: University Press
- Beauvoir, Simone de. (1949). *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House, Inc.
- Blackstone, Amy. (2003). *Gender Roles and Society*. Retrieved May 30, 2017, from <http://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu>
- Campbell, Anne. (2002). *A mind of her own; The evolutionary psychology of women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- DiYanni, Robert. (2000). *Fiction: an Introduction*. Singapore: McGraw Hill Higher Education
- Eagleton, Terry. (2004). *The English Novel: An Introduction*. City of Manchester: Wiley-Blackwell
- Freytag, Gustav. (1900). *Technique of the Drama; An Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company
- Holmes, Mary. (2007). *What is Gender?: Sociological approaches*. London: Sage Publication.
- Hooks, Bell. (2000). *FEMINISM IS FOR EVERYBODY; Passionate Politics*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press

- Kennedy, X. J. And Dana Gioia. (2007). *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama (Compact Edition, Ch. 3, pp. 74-112)*. New York: Longman Publisher
- Kennedy, X. J. And Dana Gioia. (2007). *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama (Compact Edition, Ch. 4, pp. 112-152)*. New York: Longman Publisher
- Klarer, Mario. (2004). *An Introduction to Literary Studies (2nd ed.)*. London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Plath, Sylvia. (2005). *The Bell Jar*. New York: Harper Perennial
- Smith, Rosi. (2008). *Seeing Through the Bell Jar: Distorted Female Identity in Cold War America*. Retrieved 17 February, 2017, from <http://www.aspeers.com/sites/default/files/pdf/smith08.pdf>
- Vikman, Jonna. (2010). *Breaking the Bell Jar? Femininity in Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse and Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar*. Retrieved November 20, 2016, from <http://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:345409/fulltext01.pdf>