

**Women's Strategies to Fight against Patriarchal System: a
Feminist Analysis toward Pearl S. Buck's Imperial Woman**

A THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Research

Women's passivity is often considered as a weakness by many circles of feminists. In fact, this matter is considered as a virtue and natural value by patriarchal system. In essence, there are other hidden aspects behind the matter of women's passivity. It can be called as woman's strategies to fight against patriarchal system but this movement doesn't count as the rebellion movement from patriarchal system.

This research is conducted because the various hidden aspects toward women's strategies in Pearl S. Buck's Imperial Women are difficult to decipher. Therefore, a profound literary research is urgently needed. The writer chooses Pearl S. Buck's Imperial Women as the object of this research because this novel implies several of woman's strategies in fight against patriarchal system. Therefore this novel is worth analysis. Furthermore, the core benefit of this research is to enrich the world of literary criticism in Faculty of Letters of Andalas University. Another is to learn more about women's movement implicitly.

Imperial Women is a novel written by Pearl S. Buck in 1956. As a woman Buck is feminist author who writing her literary work mostly from her experience and all the information that she gets from surround her. The one of the writer reasons is because this novel is written by Western people but told about Chinese customs. This novel tells about a Chinese woman, her name Yehonala. Yehonala

was born to lower status of Imperial dynasty. According to the custom, she was moved to the Forbidden City at the age of seventeen in order to be one of hundreds concubines. But she was different from the others, she behaved as passive woman as her strategy. By doing her strategy, she was recommended to be second consort in short time. Later, her thought was supposed to be the thought of the Emperor.

Another reason why the writer chooses the literary work is because the writer finds the fact that many researchers analyze Feminist in context of women's movement of breaking the rule in order to get the equality between man and woman. But in this novel, the writer finds something different because the main character doesn't do such movement but she uses "her inferiority" (from patriarchal point of view) as her weapon to attack patriarchal system and to get the equality.

This research is conducted to show that woman not always passive, weak or inferior side, but she can use her inferiority (from patriarchal point of view) as a tricky strategy to get the equality between men and women. It is described in Imperial Woman, where Ychonala succeeds in arranging many strategies inside the oppression from patriarchal system.

The last reason why the writer chooses this topic and also this novel is because this novel is written by female author so we can see how woman describes a woman character in literary works. So we can see the woman's perspective toward the literary work. Buck describes Ychonala really differently. It must be something the author wants to tell, which makes me challenged to find.

Those reasons above support the writer to conduct a research to describe a figure of woman in this case Yehonala as the feminist figure and also the author's idea in this novel. So the writer chooses the title "Woman's Strategies to Fight against Patriarchal System: A Feminist Analysis Toward Pearl S. Buck's Imperial Woman."

1.2 The Identification of Problem

The problem in this novel is that Yehonala wants to fight against Patriarchal system. In dynasty Manchu, women still inferior. Woman is the object of patriarchal system. They has no right in their life, all aspects in their life are under the control of patriarchal system.

The Patriarchal system limits the women's movement. Woman can not fight against patriarchal system obviously, that's why they have to find another way to attack patriarchal system.

In Imperial Woman, Yehonala as a woman character who lives under the oppression of patriarchal system; she has to become a concubine and serve the Emperor well, not only that she is threatened by another princes in Imperial who jealous with her position.

The condition surrounds her forces her to do something that she doesn't like. But she has no more choice in her life. She sacrifices her self, but she wants something in return.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the novel, the writer finds the novel Imperial Woman written by Pearl S. Buck contains some feminist issues which become the main analysis of the writer. In this novel the writer finds the great power inside the woman, the woman's strategies behind her softness and also her politeness.

By doing an analysis using feminist theory proposed by Elaine Showalter with her Gynocritique which focuses on four aspects in writing, such as: *the biological, linguistic, psychoanalytic, cultural*, the writer sees how a woman creates woman character in literary work, but in this research the writer only concerns and focuses on cultural aspect. The writer uses this aspect because this aspect has dominated the whole novel.

By using Gynocriticism the writer sees how Buck as the author describes a woman in her literary works as a strong figure but never forgets her fate as a woman influenced by four aspects above. That's the reason why the writer explains it in two part; first, Woman's strategies to fight against patriarchal system and Gynocriticism toward Pearl S Buck's Imperial Woman.

Woman's strategies to fight against patriarchal system explain about how buck delivers her idea about Feminist agenda or the step to get the equality between man and woman. In getting her goal Buck describes Yehonala who has to follow some steps before she becomes the Empress of China: concubine, second consort, the Empress Mother and finally she becomes an Empress. In each step

Yehonala has different strategies to move on to next step in her life. Yehonala looks like follow what the patriarchal system wants but behind that she has a big plan and strategies to take over the man's position.

The second is Gynocriticism toward Pearl S Buck's Imperial Woman. In this part explain more about Buck's feeling and her social background which influences her in writing Imperial Woman. In this part we can see the conjunction of chapter III that explain about Biography of pearl S Buck with the literary work itself. And the writer finds that this novel is the reflection of Buck's life. Because many aspects have the similar feeling and condition between Buck as the author with Yehonala as her main character for example; as being mother, being daughter, unhappy marriage, and etc.

So this literary work is using Feminist approach and Buck as a female author teaches and reminds people that woman is a very special creature. Woman is not a weak person. She explores all and she has to attack the man's position and in order to be respected by man like Yehonala did.

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