

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The study elaborates on the female subjectivity performed by the female characters reflected in *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado. In the introduction chapter, the writer presents the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study. All the subchapters of the introduction chapter are necessary for the basis of the study to be conducted.

1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays, patriarchal society still exists in some cultures. According to Tyson (2015, p. 85), a patriarchal society is a culture that gives advantages to male by promoting traditional gender roles in which male is more dominant. It means that the patriarchal culture gives more special treatment to male than female. Furthermore, because the culture promotes male dominance over females, male has more power than female. Moreover, the male's power makes the female powerless. Given the long history of the patriarchal system controlling female, female must speak out for herself and engage in resistant subject positions. At the same time, male works to interpret masculinity, and it is part of the exercising of patriarchal power (Weedon, 1987, p. 173). It means that patriarchal society weakens female because male uses their masculinity to dominate female. Furthermore, female has no power because power is unequally distributed between them in a patriarchal society.

Patriarchal society makes female powerless over male in society because they have different levels of power, and male has more power than female. As a result, female is primarily subjected to male oppression. According to Weedon (1987, p. 14), the oppression of female includes the sexual division of labor, dominance of sexuality, and the relations of reproduction, entrance to education, work, and power. From there, it means that oppression happens in any aspect, including the biological aspect. The oppression shows that male is

different from female in social aspects, such as getting access to education, job, or labor.

That oppression makes female reach gender inequality, which means female should reverse that condition to achieve gender equality between them. Sahin (2013, p. 3) states that gender equality in education means that female have equal opportunities in education to male. Therefore, female can improve her economically, socially, culturally, and politically opportunities to be equal as male. From there, female can be equal to male to avoid oppression, which becomes subjectivity to female. A female's education provides her with a wealth of knowledge and experience, allowing her to think and act in accordance with her desires. Thus, through education, she can defend herself from any kind of oppression in a patriarchal society. Moreover, a female can have the same right to life as a male because she can be equal in all aspects. Ideally, female should have the same rights as male. It means that female must think, act, and speak for themselves as a reflection that female has equal rights to male in terms of the independency to think, act, and speak on her own. It represents what is called feminism.

Feminism is a political struggle to change the existing male-female relationships. These power relations structure all areas of life, the family, education, welfare, job and politic, culture, and leisure. It determines who does what for whom, who we are, and who we may become (Weedon, 1987,p. 1). From there, it means that the existing power relationship between female and male show male is more powerful than female. It is clear from the preceding sentences that the existing power relationship between male and female demonstrates that male is more powerful than female. It means that female can change the power relationship within herself. Because she regards herself as equal to the subject in society, the female has a better chance of achieving certain aspects of life, such as education, job security, and welfare, among others. In addition, female changes her current relationship to make herself the same as male in society because they can think, act, and speak. Thus, the female becomes a subject because she has the same level as the male in the gender equality aspect.

Gender equality can be achieved by female who receives education and understands the importance of getting a job which allows her to live comfortably. Thus, it makes her equal to male. Furthermore, female should not be an object of male attention and should make herself a subject. Female, as a subject, believe that she definitely on the same level as male. It means that she practices subjectivity in her life. Furthermore, subjectivity makes a female able to think and act clearly because of the struggle over power to make herself subject in society. “Subjectivity is a mind and emotion consciously and unconsciously influenced by the existing situation by using language as a tool” (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). It means that female is consciously and unconsciously experienced by subjectivity which used language as a tool. Subjectivity is influenced by the situation that faced by female which forced her to use language to make female as a subject.

The writer tries to examine the book *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado with the theory of subjectivity that belongs to post-structural feminism. The anthology book is the first debut book by Carmen Maria Machado, published in 2017. It published by Graywolf Press in the United States of America. It narrates the life of the female characters, who struggle against oppression in any aspect. *Her Body and Other Parties* consists of 198 pages and becomes a famous literary work. Hence, the anthology book is included in a literary work. Marcus & Sollors (2009, p.1) state that literary work means not only writing work but also what is expressing, what is voicing, and what is inventing in whatever form. Carmen Maria Machado writes this anthology book base on her voice as a queer female who lives in the United States of America. Shirley Jackson and Nebula Awards were given to *Her Body and Other Parties* for the best debut novel in the United States of America. The anthology book contains eight short stories in which female characters are the main characters which will be analyzed in this study.

There are four studies by four writers related to the data and theories in this study—the first previous study by Lopez (2020). The title is Articulating the Terror of Obstetric Violence in Carmen María Machado’s *The Husband Stitch*.

The first previous study is discuss about the oppression of female characters with related in this study. Theory of oppression by Alvin (1984) is used in this previous study. The second previous study is by Jackson (2020), entitled Exploring the Marginalized Voice: Queering Form in Contemporary Short Fiction. The study potrayed the queer character who rejects the traditional gender role and resists herself from the rules of genders with related in this study about the same sex couple. The theory of Nisen (1989) about queer is used in this previous study. The third previous study is The Patriarchal Perspectives on Female Subjectivities in the *Selected Plays of Atamjit and Mahesh Elkunchwar* by Kaur (2019). The previous study demonstrates female as victim of the caste, class and gender discrimination. Inferior conditions of middle class women, sexual issues like violence, extramarital affairs, murder, gender discrimination, exploitation, psychological disorders have been examined with special reference to construction of a female's subjectivity with related in this study. This previous study used Weedon theory of subjectivity (1987). The last previous study by Khuankaew (2015), entitled Femininity and Masculinity in Three Selected Twentieth-Century Thai Romance Fictions. The last previous study depiction of female subjectivity by the female character that faced male's masculinity in the Thai romance fictions with related to this study. Weedon theory of subjectivity (1987) is used in this previous study.

Those previous studies have not told female subjectivity in *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado. Thus, the previous studies have not yet discussed the exhibition of female subjectivity against oppression and the oppression challenged by female characters in *Her Body and Other Parties* as analyzed in those studies. Therefore, novelty must be produced here by conducting the study about "Females Subjectivity Reflected in *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado."

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the elaboration of the background of the study. The writer will formulate the research questions as follows:

1. What are the oppression experienced by female characters in Carmen Maria Machado's *Her Body and Other Parties*?
2. How do the female subjectivity portrayed by the female characters in Carmen Maria Machado's *Her Body and Other Parties*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The research objectives of writing this study are:

1. To show the oppression experienced by female characters in Carmen Maria Machado's *Her Body and Other Parties*
2. To describe the female subjectivity portrayed by the female characters in Carmen Maria Machado's *Her Body and Other Parties*.

1.4 Significances of the Study

The writer is expected to provide two benefits, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research is expected to be more familiar with the field of literature, especially the feminism theory of female subjectivity by Chris Weedon (1987). Practically, it is about understanding how to apply Chris Weedon's (1987) feminism theory in the study that refers to others. Hopefully, this study makes the readers, especially female, to think, and act about herself as a subject in society.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study uses female subjectivity in *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado as the source of data. Feminism theory of subjectivity by Chris Weedon (1987) is used in this study. Feminism is used to analyze the subjectivity of female characters in *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado.

The limitation of this study is focused on the dialog between the characters in the source of data, entitled *Her Body and Other Parties*, which discusses female subjectivity. Then, reveals the female subjectivity exhibited by the female characters and the oppression challenged by female characters are analyzed by the related theory, which gives answer to the research questions of the study that conducted by the writer.