VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN MONA LISA SMILE FILM

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the issues of violence against women in Mona Lisa Smile Film by Lawrence Konner and Mark A Rosenthal. This film is an American film which produced in 2003. The sets of this film is American women’s life in 1950’s. Its focus on women character such as Katherine Watson, Betty Warren, Giselle Levy and Connie Baker. This study apply feminist literary criticism to analyze the violence against women on story. This study found three issues of violence occur on the film namely physiological violence, physical violence and sexual violence. This study also analyze the root of violence and women position based on social and feminist perspective.

Keyword : Criticism, Feminist, Violence, Women

Basic Consideration

Generally, women in many places were defined as the object who only serve men. They give a service for men started from wake up until sleep again. Washing men’s clothes, cleaning everything related to domestic task. In simple description that women born in this world just like to be a mother and do the domestic task. In fact, most of women have other dream besides being a mother. This case called by Jennifer (2006) as the concept ideal women.

Base on the history of the women liberation movement, the condition of women above was happened in 1950’s. Women in that era just provided only one choice become a wife or mother. Therefore, Mike Newell want to show up the portrait of ideal women in 1950’s over his work “Mona Lisa Smile Film”. This film produced by Revolution Studios and Columbia Pictures in 2003. This film
talk about smart women, beautiful, rich, but their thought that education is just like the bridge of marriage. In a glance, women it was known that in Mona Lisa smile film showed as the representative of ideal family in America 1950’s.

Base on the data above, it was believe that behind the portrait of happy women, beauty, loyal, rich and smart in American 1950’s, there are the hidden violence happened. Therefore, this research provided an analysis of those issues by using feminist approach.

Research Problems

The problem of the study in this research is “What is the violence against women?”

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to show the hidden violence issues against women in 1950’s that reflected in Mona Lisa Smile film.

Significance of the Study

Academically, this research give an acknowledgement to the reader. Because, this film talk about the history of the women in 1950’s. From this era, the people can combine how the women in past and millennium era. Knowing the history of this film, reader also can understand how the women reflected in literary works art. Theoretically, the result of this project expected to improve and give clear description about the theory of feminist literary criticism. This research expected to be useful for other students who are interested in conducting similar studies. The findings of this research are supposed to give valuable inputs for some parts: firstly, for English students. It is expected would be useful for students to improve their knowledge about critical feminist in literary art. Secondly, this is expected can give significant contribution in teaching English, especially, class of literary criticism.

Scope and Limitation of the Study
This research talking about women issues in a family. Focusing this research is the violence against women. The approach of this analysis used feminist literary criticism theory. To specify this research and to make this research more details, this research was limited to issues of violence in 1950’s based on feminist radical perspective.

**Literature Review**

Most of American women in the 1950 was fallen in discrimination (violence). Society (Cobin: 2005) put high expectation for women to stay at home. They should satisfy in certain parts, for example, a minding mother, an industrious homemaker, and a faithful wife. Society made a standard that a diligent homemaker have a dinner on the table when her husband back from work. Ready for all the times to serve her man's request and agree with him on everything. Truth be told, women also no needed to give a point of view or telling an absence, it would not permit it. American Women in 1950’s was also become a slavery. They required following the social doctrine who make them as the housekeeper. After prepare a dinner (Cobin: 2005), they asked to be fashionable, become a beauty for husband, touch up makeup, put a ribbon in their hair and be fresh looking. The have been with many work-weary people, be a little more interesting.

Here is the common rules of patriarchy that make men as the superior:

> “Don't complain if he is late for dinner. Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soft, soothing and pleasant voice. Listen to him: You may have dozens of things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first. Make the even his. Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or other pleasant entertainments.”

(Cobin: 2005)

Women in 1950’s era was limited their professional career. However, during World War II was happening, women ever placed man’s position. Women handled some professional job. However (Holt: 2006), after man came back from the war, those job must be leaved. Women required to go back to an
usual duty (Cobin: 2005); became a wife or mother who stayed at home as the children minder, clean house and bake cookies.

**Violence against Women**

According to Saraswati (as cited in Sugihastuti: p.171) violence is the act of abusing each other that is done by some people or personal that make each other feeling hurt. It means that the act of make women hurt by telling something, neglecting, deceiving, hitting were categorized as the violence against women. Feminist (Sugihastuti: 2010.p172) formulate that violence is the act of abusing women because of sex differences. According to La Pona as cited in (Sugihastuti: 2010.p172) women violence is the act of man abusing the women by using man’s power that make women hurt physically, sexually and physiologically. Including the act of forcing and treating women as man’s ambition.

**Emotional/Physiological violence**

Physiological violence (Sugihastuti: 2010.p183) is kind of non-sexual violence that affecting women physiologically. This violence is act of abusing women by using hard word, or heating women that make them trauma. This definition can be concluded that the act of supporting of violence, giving a statement who make women ill fill and make the women trauma, forcing women to do something that out of her ambition, it can be categorized as physiological violence. This violence not only done by personally, but also institutionally.

**Physical Violence**

According to Meiyenti as cited in (Sugihastuti: 2010.p179) physical violence is the act of abusing body, kicking, spitting, or hurting by using tools. It means that using women energy to clean house every day, prepare dinner every time, serving her husband when he is eating, then dry her swear like a boss that all effecting women body become low or sick, it is a physical violence.
More detail of physical violence definition, (Sugihastuti & Suharto: 2010.p.182) states that exploitation of women energy such washing the clothes, plates and arranging all family duty as a part of physical violence. This definition give a reminder for all people that women at house is not a slavery. Women also a human have a change to go out from the house and participate in public. Washing a clothes, taking care the baby, cleaning some plate are not the order from the god when they born. Thus, man also have an obligation to do it.

**Sexual Violence**

According to Kalyanamitra and Prasetyo (as cited in Sugihastuti: 2010.p.204) sexual violence is similar with as sexual harassment. The form of sexual harassment such as: whistling, winks, jokes that refer to sex, looking women body from foot under head, statement about women’s body, giving a sign to that relate to the sex, showing a pornography, show women sex body, touch permission, it were shape of sexual violence. According to Gayle Ruben (Tong 2010.p.73) sexual violence is a set a rule that used by society, to transform of biological sexuality become social activity.

According to Fakih (2012:p.18) sexual violence is not only happened illegally that done by others, but also in marriage status. It means that the violence happened if the owner of body not sincere, and the she forced to give a sexual service.

**Violence on Radical Feminist Perspective**

Motherhood biologist is a rule that try to be legalized by patriarchy system. In other that women cannot be equal like man. Jennifer Holt (2006) views that the concept ideal women (Motherhood Biologist) is a stereotype. Because it was the way of constructing gender inequality. Jennifer believes that, in this case, society shows an immense role in the construction of individual gender roles and it created new identity of women. Thus, motherhood biologist is a concept of reducing women role in public stage. According to Oakley (Tong 2010.p.119), there are three basic reason of social and culture
why women should be a mother, “All women have to be a mother, all mother need her children, and all children need their mother.”

From the explanation above, it can conclude that place women be mother biologically is the shape of violence against women. Because in this position women become a mother just because to get their credibility from social.

**Feminist Literary Criticism**

According to Abrams (Witami: 2007.p.11) feminist criticism is a kind of criticism that is taken from feminism view which is fighting for the justice of women existence as the writer or the object in literary. This theory focus on the women writer, how the women are portrait on literary work, how the women relation with man and social.

According to Djajanegara (2002) explain that feminist literary criticism is women desire to analyze women works in the past and to show the women portrait on man works which is described as being suppressed, misrepresented and underestimate by patriarchy culture. It means feminist view that there is inequality between women and man.

**Methodology of research**

**Approach**

Assembling the issues of violence against women in Mona Lisa Smile, this research uses feminist approach based on Feminist literary criticism theory. This theory is suitable for this research because this theory uses feminist view. According to Abrams (Wiyatmi: 2007.p.11) feminist criticism is a kind of criticism that is taken from feminism view which is fighting for the justice of women existence as the writer or the object in literary.

**Technique of Collecting the Data**
Collecting the date, it follow some steps. Firstly, watching the film to understand the complete story and recognize portrayed of women characters. Secondly, Making notes about the story, such as the scene, dialogues of film, and transcript it to the text. Third, identifying and clarifying the data of violence against women. Fourth, analyzing the data that is collected base on feminist radical perspective.

**Technique of analyzing data**

In data analysis, this research used feminist approach with the steps; firstly, identifying the women’s characters who get violence. **Secondly**, classifying the issues of violence such sexual, physical, physiological violence from character that has been found. **Thirdly**, analyzing the characters and describe the kinds of violence, finding the reason why the violence was happened.

**Finding and Discussion**

**Data Finding**

The title of “Mona Lisa Smile” inspired by the famous painting of Leonardo da Vinci. This painting reflected women who was smiling but there was a hidden message from her lips, the writer called “Sadness”. Actually, when watched the film there is no character namely “Mona Lisa”. It was believed that the tittle goes to Betty character who was full of sadness. Actually, the tittle not focus to the Mona Lisa character. This film just took symbol of smile. Sometimes smile is a symbol of sadness. Betty express this idea when she was talking with her mam, Jocelyn. At the moment, Betty holding Mona Lisa Smile picture and she showed It to her mam and said:

*Betty*: She is smiling. Is she happy?

*Jocelyn*: The important thing is not to tell anyone.

*Betty*: She looks happy. So, what does it matter?

*Jocelyn*: Do not wash your dirty laundry in public.

*Betty*: Let me tell you something. Not everything is as it seems.

*(Time: 01.42.04—01.52.45)*
From the dialog above, Betty asks her mom, *She is smiling. Is she happy?* As a good speaker, her mom should answer *yes. She is happy.* However, her mom just answered in a different topic by saying “*The important thing is not to tell anyone.***” and “*Do not wash your dirty laundry in public***”. In a glance, there is no correlation between the picture of Mona Lisa smile and statement *Do not wash your dirty laundry in public.* It means that her mom know that Betty was illustrating her position by using Mona Lisa smile picture. Therefore, it was believed that the title of Mona Lisa Smile was refers to the Betty character.

**Portrait of Katherine Watson**

Katherine Watson was the central point of women liberation. She came from California for fighting women freedom. She also reflected as the radical women. When women in 1950’s happy to marry, she was not. Because in her thought, married is a choice not obligation. Therefore, Katherine decided to leave her boyfriend and choose to live freely with other man without married.

**The Violence against Katherine**

**Physiology:** The physiological violence against Katherine when she came for the first time at college. She was taught to deal with a room rules. When Katherine arrived at new dormitory, senior teacher remind her about several rules:

*Lecturer:* *Just a view rules. No holes in the walls, no pets, no loud, no radio or hifi after eight on weekdays. 10 no hot plate and no male visitor. Anything wrong?*

*Katherine:* *I do not think I can go a year without plate*

*(Time: 04.20-00.04.48)*

In a glance, it was a normal rule. However, there was a rule that make Katherine disagree like “*No male visitor***”. This rule is like a declaration that women cannot to be close with man if there was not an intention to marry. Because, women still portrayed as someone danger for man. Social still judged women use her beauty to influence every man. Therefore, institution over protective to solve
this problem. In fact, not all women were similar with the institution reflected. Many relations were built between man and women, was initiated by man. Thus, why institution or social always the portrait women as the disaster in every relation. This was likely placed women as the source of the problems that must be control. For instance, in sexual relation. Social placed women as the cause of man do the sexual harassment. Therefore, women should keep her body, close her beauty.

From this case, it was believe that the arguments above were the way of controlling women beauty to influence man. In the normal relation, a sexual relation happened on behalf of love. There no someone influence each other. Because, both man and women, have a similar instinct to have sexual. It means that in a relation, not only women that must be control, but also man. It will be fair, if the institution, erase the assumption (Tong: 2010.p.97) that women as temptress, often use her sexual body to influence man for grabbing man’s wealth. Because this concept is responsible. The assumption of women as the core of problems cannot be proved intellectually. As a good relation, everyone must be fair and nothing to be blame in a relation.

The issue of irrational blaming in relation between men and women was categorize as the physiological violence. In family context, this was said by Gay men’s domestic violence (GMDV) as cited in (http://gmdvp.org/domestic-violence/types-domestic-abuse/) “Irrational blaming of the partner.” (GMDC Ballet point : 24)

**Portrait of Betty Warren**

Betty is a smartest girl who love writing. In every problems, Betty often writing an article to her collage news. She interest on the issue that against tradition. Betty also reflected as the good wife. She is a loyal and care women to her husband. This was showed from Betty’s Attitude when she was serving her husband at dinner moment. Betty cleaning her husband’s sweet to show her love and care. Betty was a orthodox women who believe in tradition as the guide of life.

**Violence against Betty Warren**
**Physical Violence:** Betty Getting physical violence when she has got married. Betty placed as the women who stay at home and happy to work. Historically, Betty’s condition was similar with the portrait of women in 1950’s: washing clothes, proud with kitchen facility, and cleaning house. According to radical feminist (Tong 2010.p.98) that Patriarchy portrait women as the assistant, helper, nurse for man. Women was born just to serve the boss that called “husband”.

Considering the case above, it was believe that Betty was fallen in physical violence. Because according to Marxist (Tong.2010.p.142) that whatever the product of commodity value, it was determined by the energy, intellectual, and capacity. It means that reward must balance with energy; intellectual and capacity. Related to the Betty personality, it was contrast. Betty is a smart girl, have good critical thinking, and a has good capacity in writing an article. However, why Betty just placed at the kitchen and not available as her husband who work at office? Is it wrong if Betty go to the office? It would be fair if social gave a same opportunity for all women without discriminated of sexual differences. Because, sexuality did not take an effect in work place. Social cannot produce women as the weak people.

**Portrait of Connie Baker**

Connie Baker was an actor who have two special character. First, Connie is a melancholies woman. Connie was a smart women who really love music. In dormitory, while her friends take a rest, Connie take a time to play music at training room. Connie reflected as the women who has a dream to marry faster. This showed when she was in dormitory. She talk to Giselle that she was try to perfect but why her boyfriends has not came to take him out.

**The violence against Connie Baker**

**Sexual Violence:** The second sexual violence was happened at Music Hall. At the night, Connie train to play a music to entertain herself from the sadness. Suddenly, Charlie come to speak
with her and without permission, Charley kiss Connie directly. At the moment, Connie do nothing except let her lips was kissed. Connie showed a disagreement about the act and it was clearly expressed by her face. While Charley want to kiss her, she did not show the happiness. From this issue, it can be categorize that Charlie was the rapist.

According to Gay men’s domestic violence (GMDV) as cited in (http://gmdvp.org/domestic-violence/types-domestic-abuse/), Charlie act was unwanted touching (Bullet point: 1). This act was the sexual violence. As good man, Charlie must respect women. He cannot treat women mistakenly. This warming not only Charlie, but also for all man. In this world, women have a right to be free from man coquettishness. As the declaration of radical feminist (Tong: 2010.p.98) that sexuality and gender is the root of violence. Therefore, the assumption of patriarchy ideology must be erased. Men and women must agree that they do the sex as the love expression not men expression.

**Discussion**

Base on the data finding, the issue of violence just around domestic area. This talking about marriage, sexuality and mother/wife. Therefore, in this part, it discuss about the issue of mother/wife on feminist perspective. Because mother/wife issue cover the subject marriage, sexuality. This discussion focused on the issues why the violence was happened and analyze the root of those violence. Based on the data finding, the violence bring women to the mother/wife status. This act was social construction. The root of this violence happened because of patriarchy ideology. Here is some explanation about women role as mother on feminist perspective.

**Women Identity on social construction**

Women identity in Mona Lisa Smile Film was created by social construction. Because, some character such as Betty, Giselle, and Connie was drive to be a mother. Base on the radical and Marxism
feminist view that women identity (Mother) it was influence by social. In similar view, Oakley (Tong 2010.p.120) as the vice feminist view that the issue of mothering actually is not related to the biology, but refers to the social and culture. It means that, the women character in Mona Lisa Smile was influence by social construction. As the evidence, when women go to college, they got some lesson how to serve husband, how to present food on the table, and how to be loyal women. Impact, they did have a dream except being a mother. Here is the example of process of generate of women identity.

Nancy states this issue when the class was opened.

*Nancy Obey: A few years from now your sole responsibility will be taking care of your husband and children.*

*(Time: 00.28.05- 00.28.40)*

The statement above is a social voice that related to the patriarchy ideology. Automatically, women accept the lesson as the new identity that must be achieved. Surprisingly, there is no women protest about it. It seems like normal and good for all women. They did not realize that a violence. From this case, it was believed that Nancy doctrine was similar with Oakley’s perspective (Tong 2010.p.119) that “All women have to be a mother, all mother need her children, and all children need their mother.” Patriarchy view (Tong 2010.p.119) that there are two reason why women should first, all mother need her children, and all children need their mother. Because patriarchy view that only woman can born children, and children really need her mother to grow up. Responding that argument, it can be categorize as the stupid argument. Because, In fact, many of children in this world was born and they grow up without mother. As the evidence, how about orphan children? They grow up happily; even they did live with their mother. Thus, the reason of women have to be a mother is not that children need a mother. Nevertheless, social want women to stay at home and did not carry away of man position in company or industry.

Historically, women in 1950’s was success as professional worker. They get a good position when man was busy with World War II. Many of man leave their work. At the moment, women stand
as the professional. They got a good position and did what the man did advance. Unfortunately, after man go back from War, they try to take back the position. The problems was happened. Most of women choose to keep their position. Automatically, this choice make man being stress. They uses education institution and media as the gun to bring women go home. As Betty Friedan’s view (Holt: 2006) that magazine (Media) become the part of propaganda in the process of stereotype. In this issue, it was clear that women become a mother just because man want to get back their position. This is not related to the biological differences.

The second reason, women should be a mother because only women who have a vagina and can born. That is why women called as mother. Nevertheless, mother status must not to be an identity. Because biological can be acceptable to make women become a mother. Because a mother is a choice. Women have right not to be mother, then be a wife. As radical feminist view (Tong 2010.p.119) that not all women should be mother biologically. Women being a mother is only a choice not obligation. This case similar with Giselle statement when they discuss about Katherine status as a single women who choose not to marry.

*Giselle: Women like Katherine Watson do not get married because they chooses not to. 
Betty : No women chooses to live without a home, unless she is sleeping with her Italian Professor.*

*(Time: 21.00- 21.10)*

Giselle supported women not to marry because mother is a choice and not a wrong way. Women have a freedom to count her life. From the problems above, can be concluded that academic institution and personal paradigm have a strong effect to created new women identity. Therefore, women have to against social construction by thinking rationally.

**Conclusion**
The violence happened because of social construction. It construction contradictive with most of women. Because it limited women movement. Beside it, it has to believe that not all women have a dream to be a mother. Therefore, the social tendency must be rejected. Women was independent human in this world that have a same right with others.

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